



## **From Da' Coach** by Coach Will

### ***HOW MUCH IS ENOUGH AND HOW MUCH IS TOO MUCH?***

When you began running you read articles or were advised by running friends to start out slow and gradually add more running as you progressed. But once you had achieved a certain level of fitness you were bombarded by the “Schedule of the Month” in Runner’s World and similar running magazines about this elite runner’s training program and how it had worked for them.

Your friend who was training for a marathon was adamant that you HAD to walk during your runs if you wanted to succeed and not get injured, but your other friend swore that if you did you would never be able to qualify for Boston or run a PR if that was your goal.

They were both right and wrong, no wonder you were confused about what to do. Hopefully I can help you to answer the question that is the title of this article.

The first question that needs to be answered is what is your “running age”? Not your chronological age, but how many years have you been running? There are a multitude of stories about runners who did not begin running until they were 50, 60 or even 70 and have had unbelievable success, but these are the are occasion. For most of us beyond the age of 30 “chronological age” and “running age” begin to each affect our ability to train and race for extended distances and time.

So, how much is enough? That varies according to your genetics and biomechanics. I have trained athletes that only raced short distances but trained to the same total mileage as some of the elite marathoners I have coached. It is not higher mileage that necessarily causes injuries, but too much speed for too long a period of time. Everyone is an experiment of one and you have to “test the waters” to find the level of “sustained” running you can complete without excessive fatigue and without constant muscle soreness.

If your goal is to be a recreational runner that runs a few 5Ks and 10Ks and are not planning to race for awards you can get by on 20-30 miles a week and long runs of 4-5 miles for 5K and 6-8 miles for 10K. But if you want to compete for awards you will need to run higher mileage and add some speedwork to your training. Speedwork doesn’t necessarily mean trackwork, speedwork can be done on the road with pick-ups, tempo runs and fartlek runs.

So how do you determine how much is too much? For my athletes this is where a heart monitor becomes a valuable tool. If you know your morning resting pulse (MRP) and your predicted max heart rate (MHR) you will be able to set zones of training and monitor your fatigue level by checking your MRP each day to determine how your body is adapting to your training. With proper distance, pace and recovery you will see your MRP decrease as your fitness level increases.

To maximize your training you have to allow for adequate recovery and this will not happen if you are constantly training and racing. You need to pick certain races as “A” races and certain races as “B” races and work them into your schedule. You can train through a “B” race to prepare for an “A” race but if you attempt to “race” every event you enter and not allow adequate time for recovery, you will have only mediocre success in all of the events. We need to monitor our gluttony if we want to have many years of happy and injury free running. We need to monitor our gluttony if we want to have many years of happy and injury free running.

*See you at the races...*

***Coach Will***