

TEAM VITALITY

Bruce Fordyce Comrades silver medal

A note from Bruce:

“We now know that it is only possible to train specifically and hard for a marathon or ultra-marathon for about 8-10 weeks so my programmes are for that specific period. I am assuming that all serious runners have been training for a while beforehand and that they have a base and a running foundation on which to build. I have also allowed a few days to taper and build up strength before race day.”

| | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat | Sun |
|--------|------|--|---------------------|------|----------------|---|-----------|
| WEEK 1 | 10km | 15km on a hilly course or hill session | 15-25km steady pace | 15km | 10km easy pace | Time trial, parkrun or cross country race. 15km total including warm up and cool down | 30km slow |
| WEEK 2 | 10km | 15km on a hilly course or hill session | 15-25km steady pace | 15km | 12km easy pace | 15km at comfortable pace | 60km slow |
| WEEK 3 | 10km | 15km on a hilly course or hill session | 15-25km steady pace | 15km | 10km easy pace | Time trial, parkrun or cross country race. 15km total including warm up and cool down | 30km slow |
| WEEK 4 | 10km | 15km on a hilly course or hill session | 15-25km steady pace | 15km | 12km easy pace | 15km at comfortable pace | 40km slow |
| WEEK 5 | 10km | 15km on a hilly course or hill session | 15-25km steady pace | 15km | 10km easy pace | Time trial, parkrun or cross country race. 15km total including warm up and cool down | 30km slow |
| WEEK 6 | 10km | 15km on a hilly course or hill session | 15-25km steady pace | 15km | 12km easy pace | 15km at comfortable pace | 50km slow |

| | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat | Sun |
|---------|------|--|---------------------|----------------|----------------|---|-----------|
| WEEK 7 | 10km | 15km on a hilly course or hill session | 15-25km steady pace | 15km | 10km easy pace | Time trial, parkrun or cross country race. 15km total including warm up and cool down | 30km slow |
| WEEK 8 | 10km | 15km on a hilly course or hill session | 15-25km steady pace | 15km | 12km easy pace | 15km at comfortable pace | 25km slow |
| WEEK 9 | 10km | 15km on a hilly course or hill session | 15-25km steady pace | 12km hilly run | 8km easy pace | Time trial, parkrun or cross country race. 15km total including warm up and cool down | 15km slow |
| WEEK 10 | 10km | 8km light jog | 5km light jog | rest | rest | rest | race |

This is a sub 7:30 (silver medal) training schedule for the Comrades. Specifically, it is a 7:30:21 training schedule, which is exactly the time I ran in the 2011 Up Comrades. I was in my mid-fifties however, so someone with younger, fresher legs should comfortably earn silver. This is an 8-10 week programme which assumes you have been running steadily beforehand and have something of a foundation and training base. This is the hardest training phase and allows for an 8 week hard training phase followed by a two week taper to race day.

Monday: Usually I schedule a rest day on a Monday but training for a silver medal doesn't really allow time for scheduled rests. Rest when you are unduly tired or heavy-legged. You will be the best judge of that.

Tuesday: Hilly route or specific hill raining session running up a steep hill of 300-500 metres long 5-8 times. Jog down to recover for a total of 15km or so.

Wednesday: The midweek longer run. Run this session at a brisk, even pace, close to Comrades race pace. 15-25km

Thursday: About 15km at a steady pace.

Friday: 'Rest day' One easy 10-12km run.

Saturday: Race day. Race a time trial, parkrun or cross country race every fortnight. This is the best session for being able to monitor your progress. As your times improve so your fitness level is improving. On the alternative Saturday run one easy 15-18km run. A PB or fast time in the last session is an extremely encouraging sign.

Sunday: Long SLOW run. This session is important for the time you spend on your legs not for the speed it is run. You will develop speed in other sessions. Alternate a long run each Sunday with an ultra-long run.

