



BLUE COLLAR TRAINING DEFINITIONS

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Section One

EFFORT RANGES

Effort Ranges

Easy

A conversational effort where it is easy to hold that conversation. Imagine a dining hall or lunch conversation. If you're not having a dining hall conversation you should slow down.

SJ/R

Supplementary jogging/recovery days are shorter easy runs that promote recovery by getting the blood moving. Often used following higher-quality days. Early in a training cycle, you may see more of these. In normal blocks, they usually show up once a week.

Neuromuscular

The goal of Neuromuscular work is to improve coordination, not fitness. Fast, but relaxed reps with full control. Strides, hill bursts, or flat ground bursts all fall under this category. You should feel sharp and smooth, not strained. Neuromuscular work is very often implemented after easy runs.

Aerobic

All easy running is technically aerobic. However, when I say aerobic I'm referring to an effort where conversation is still possible, but it's noticeably more labored.

The most important cue:

If you were on the phone, the person on the other end, should know you're running. You should still be able to talk, but it won't sound relaxed.

Threshold

Threshold is an effort, not a pace. It can change from day to day depending on the weather, the terrain, the shoes you're wearing, what you did two days before, what you ate. It's dynamic, not fixed.

Threshold work, we want to run at a controlled but higher-end effort that can be sustained aerobically. Since we don't use lactate meters, we use these cues to "find the pocket":

- You can get out one clear sentence if a coach spoke to you mid-rep.
- If you can't do that at any point, you're going too quick.
- Measure/spread out your effort appropriately.

Here are three ways to tell, if you're in the right effort pocket:

- Your splits will be fairly consistent.
- You may have a hint of leg heaviness, this heaviness shouldn't be intense.
- You should feel like you could go another mile, or even two.

True vs. Pressed Threshold

Some workouts will fall slightly more on one side of the threshold range. You can distinguish the efforts with these terms:

True Threshold:

You can get a clear sentence out. Controlled and sustainable.

Pressed Threshold:

Talking drops to 2–4 word phrases. Still controlled, but breathing is a hint more labored.

Lean toward True Threshold unless specifically instructed otherwise.

Tolerance Work

Tolerance work is used mainly in race-specific workouts. Talking should be limited to 1–2 words max. It builds your ability to handle rising discomfort and hold your mechanics together under fatigue. Should you be falling apart? No, we don't want to practice bad habits. However, you should definitely be uncomfortable.

Simply put, Tolerance Work is a rare opportunity to practice executing under stress. If we're not staying smooth, then we're not practicing how we want to run the race.

Easy Jog Recovery

Used between reps to allow your breathing to come back under control. It's not a walk, but it isn't fast. The goal is to recover without shutting down your aerobic system.

Sprinter's Recovery

A slower, more complete recovery. Used when recovery is more about getting your legs back under you rather than building fitness. In other words, this is like a slow pitter-patter jog, shuffle, or a half-jog and half-walk recovery.

Float

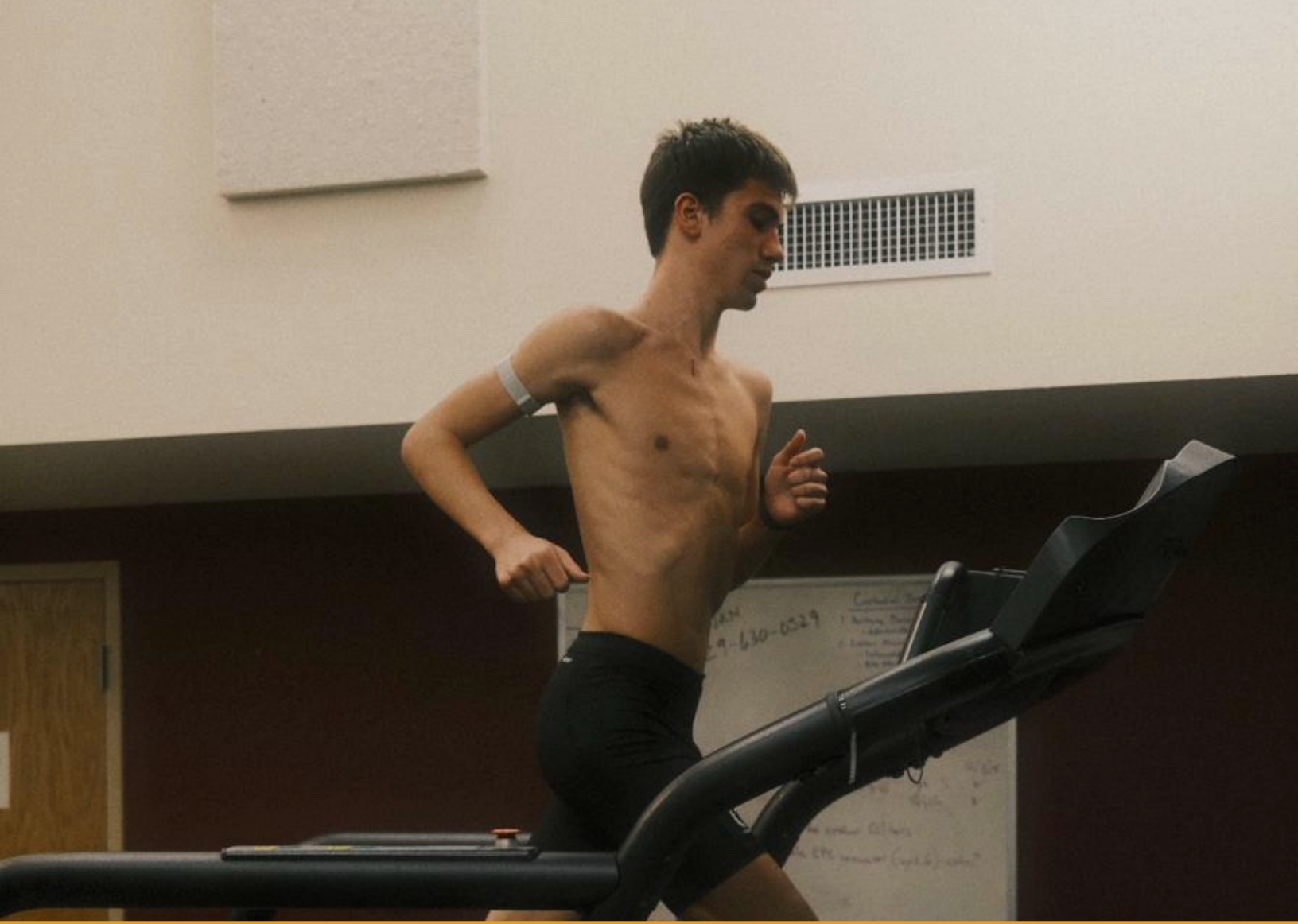
A float is a steady, controlled recovery between reps. Faster than an easy jog, but slower than threshold.

These recoveries help handle the changing flows of racing.

Floats should feel like aerobic autopilot. You're moving smoothly, and you're not forcing the pace.

Standing Recovery

No movement, just standing still or walking around between reps. It's best used when smooth mechanics are an important part of the workout. Heart rate drops the most with these recoveries.



Section Two

TRAINING ELEMENTS

Training Elements

Weekly Volume

The total distance or time you run in a week. Your training should be built around how much weekly volume your body can handle sustainably over time.

Long Distance (LD)

The longest run of your week. The Long Distance run is a valuable tool for aerobic development that has stood the test of time. It's typically placed on weekends for practical scheduling.

Medium Distance (MD)

Shorter than your Long Distance run, but longer than your typical runs. It's typically placed mid-week and can help double down on aerobic development when complemented with a weekend Long Distance run.

Warm-Up

Warming up prepares your body as a whole for higher quality work. You should aim to break a sweat, wake the legs up fully, and get the heart pumping. A warm-up should ideally be 15 minutes of easy running or 2 miles at the minimum.

Cool-Down

Although not as important as warming up, cooling down is a good way to shift mentally towards recovery, and get some extra quality out of the day through fatigued easy running. Some elite athletes get creative and add progressively slower threshold work, mobility exercises, or strength training into their cool-down.

XC Surface

Grass, gravel, dirt, or clay. Anything that's not road, paved, or a track.

Quality Day

Generally describes a day with an intentional purpose to create an adaptation. Quality might come from a Long Distance run, intervals, continuous efforts, or even a double workout. Sometimes the quality comes from intensity, sometimes from volume, and sometimes from how the session is structured. This could be shorter recoveries, longer reps, or higher density. The rest of your week is structured to support these days.

Double

A second run done later in the day. These are used to increase weekly volume without overloading a single run. Doubles are typically shorter, easier, and often placed in the afternoon on quality days.

Race-Specific

Training that closely mimics the effort, rhythm, and demands of a particular race. Race-specificity can be targeted through pace, total volume, rep length, recovery type, recovery length, and terrain.

Block vs. Cycle

Block

A 2 to 5 week stretch of training designed to target a specific stimulus like weekly volume, threshold work, or race-specific work.

Cycle

The bigger picture. It's the full buildup toward a goal race, racing season, or both. Cycles are made up of multiple blocks stacked together.



Section Three

WORKOUT FORMATS

Workout Formats

Continuous

A workout that is rhythmically connected. There are either no recoveries, or rhythm-maintaining floats between efforts.

Continuous Threshold

A sustained run at threshold effort. Teaches you to find and sit in a controlled effort pocket without overreaching. Great for both pace and effort discipline.

Fartlek

A continuous workout that focuses on alternating paces in time-based segments, usually done on roads, trails, grass, or any type of XC Surface. A great tool for introducing the body to harder efforts in a more variable environment.

Continuous Progression

An uninterrupted run that gets faster in pace from start to finish. Often closes near threshold or slightly faster.

Tracklek

A more structured variation of fartlek performed on the track. Each segment is a set distance covered in a set time, followed by a float recovery that is also covered in a set distance and time. Used for reinforcing rhythm and building muscular endurance in the absence of full recovery.

Alternating Continuous

A continuous workout that focuses on alternating paces in distance and time-based segments. Typically used for flat road or bike path sessions that require more structured pace assignments.

Intervals

A workout comprised of broken-up, structured reps and defined recoveries. Recoveries can be jogging, walking, or standing.

Broken Threshold

Threshold Intervals with short recovery. These sessions allow for higher volume with smoother mechanics and muscle damage which helps from a recovery and sustainability perspective.

Cutdown Intervals

Intervals where the reps get progressively faster as the session goes on. Can be used for a variety of purposes from general fitness building to sharpening.

Race-Pace Intervals

Shorter reps run at race pace, typically not grouped into sets. Helps build closer to true race-specificity and develop rhythm at race pace. You'll have slightly more fatigue at the end of the session.

Set-Based Intervals

Intervals grouped into intentional sets. Allows for targeting of different gears, fatigue management, or emphasis of specific reps within a larger structure.

Cutdown Sets

Structured sets where the reps within each set get progressively faster. These sessions are typically focused on general speed development, rather than race-specific pacing. Recovery between sets helps avoid excessive fatigue and maintain quality across sets.

Race-Pace Sets

Race-Pace reps grouped into structured sets. The recovery between sets allow for slightly longer rep lengths while avoiding excessive fatigue.

Pre-Fatigue Sets

Sets where the final rep is the focus. The early reps create fatigue so that the most important rep is more race-specific.

Race Callousing

A challenging session centered around one or two long reps at target race pace. Recovery is flexible and depends on the demands of the rep. These workouts provide a very race-specific stimulus, but should be scheduled strategically and used sparingly.

Sandwich

A session that starts and ends with the same element, with a contrasting element in the middle, and all parts are separated by recovery. Useful for introducing a new stimulus to build on in future sessions.

Ex: Threshold – Race Pace 400s – Threshold

Squeeze Reps

Individual reps that start under control, but wind up in pace as it goes on. Best used to practice negative splitting at the end of a race.

Go-Drills

Individual reps that include a sudden gear change mid-rep. Best used to practice your kick on the bell lap.