

5 Running Workouts to Do With a Partner

- *By Patrick McCrann | For Active.com*

As solo an endeavor as running can be, there's no doubt that having a companion to share your miles can help breathe the life back into your training. From sharing a few laughs to pushing your limits, the right running partner will help you grow as a runner.

In honor of Valentine's Day, here are five great running workouts that you can do with your running partner of choice. Run them as fast or as slowly as you want; you've already won simply by having someone to share the experience with

But before we begin...

Quick Running Partner Advice

Running with someone else is just that; a run. Don't feel pressure to do anything but run. It's helpful to set some expectations around average pace and distance for that specific workout. Otherwise don't place too many constraints around the session as it can really take the fun out of the workout. And don't forget that you can have as many different running friends as you like; you could have speedy partner, one for recovery days, and even one for your longer runs. The sky is the limit.

Top Partner Run Workouts

#1 -- Triple Fast Slow

A variation on a fartlek (aka speed play) run, in this session runners take turns implementing three speed surges at the pace and duration of their choice, recovering as much as needed. After these three repeats, the other runner has the chance to take the lead.

Tip: Start with one set each and build up to three as your fitness improves.

#2 -- Adventure Run

A personal favorite, this run involves one runner plotting out a brand new route and then acting as the tour guide leading the other(s). Use an online mapping tool and a GPS device to avoid getting utterly lost; but note that even diverting just a few blocks off your normal route can be sufficiently different.

Tip: This is a perfect substitute for a regularly scheduled long run, especially when your training is becoming monotonous.

#3 -- Snap-The-Whip

Similar to the Triple Fast Slow run in #1 above, only in this version you are attempting to "drop" the other runner. You can do this with a quick burst of speed, by picking a really big hill, or perhaps using sustained tempo. The latter one is usually more effective at the end.

As stated before, it's good to set some ground rules such as a good warm up and a set time for each person to lead and enough time for your both to recover. Enjoy!

Tip: The leader should stop their work interval when the other person has "snapped" instead of building up a 1/4 of 1/2 gap.

#4 -- Track Relay Runs

This is a great replacement for speedwork session that has intervals shorter than a mile. Best done on a

track or a set loop, you and a partner can take turns running around the track; running is your work interval; the non-running is your recovery.

Instead of doing 8 x 800 (1/2 mile) with 400 recovery on your own, you can now run 800, tag your partner, and then jog 400 while they run 800 so you are ready for them to tag you back. You can do this with all types of distances, simply do the math on where you need to stagger your recovery to be in the right place if you are running 600s or 1200s, etc.

Tip: *Feel free to add in more partners as you go; no reason why you can't do a workout like this with two or three other runners!*

#5 -- Circuit Running

You might have noticed that all of the above is related to speed or pushing your body. Speed is fun, but even that can be too much sometimes, which is why a Circuit Run is a great alternative. Think of it as a boot camp on the move.

If you live near a fitness path that has stations for you to do cruches, push ups, pull ups / flexed arm hang, rows, etc., then all you need to do is get a buddy and start running. If you don't have such a resource, you can make it up! It's easy to add push ups, sit ups, leg raises, planks (front or side), dips, etc, on basic stationary objects. Simply jog/run for three to five minutes, then do an exercise, and repeat.

Save this for a shorter, easier paced run. Challenge yourself (and your partner) to beat the number of repetitions from last time, and watch each other get fitter and stronger by the week!

Tip: *Consider writing down some ideas for exercises on a card so you aren't stuck brainstorming as soon as you find a nice space to do your exercise.*

Do you have any other tips on how to make running with someone else more fun? If so, please share them with us below in the comments section. Happy Running!