

Week One

FOURTEEN
WEEKS TO BOSTON





MONDAY, JANUARY 11

Morning workout

- ▶ Easy 60-minute run

Total miles: 8

Legs felt pretty good.

Afternoon workout

- ▶ 20-minute warm-up with drills
- ▶ 50-meter hill sprints, walk down, 50-meter flat sprint, 3-minute rest—3 sets
- ▶ 10-minute cooldown

Total miles: 4

Legs felt okay.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 12

Morning workout

- ▶ 20-minute warm-up with drills
- ▶ Intervals: 4 by 1k with 2-minute rests. 4-minute rest, repeat
- ▶ 20-minute cooldown

Total miles: 11

Felt remarkably good. Despite the wind, I was still able to cut the interval times from 2:59 to 2:41. My speed on these Tuesday interval sessions

is really starting to feel more comfortable. I think these workouts will be a big help for both my half-marathon and marathon. It was good to work out with Scotty and Josh. Scotty likes to race the last one, but I'm still learning how to run with the right amount of exertion. I let him go on the last one but was still running pretty much at full throttle. In hindsight, I probably should have relaxed a little more on the last one and finished feeling as if I could have run another mile if I needed to. Still learning.

TRAINING TO RACE VS. TRAINING TO GET FIT

What motivates you to run? As a professional runner, I train for months for a single race. You too may have a vision or goal—to complete a certain race, to improve your previous performance, or simply to get fit. On the other hand, you may train simply because you love to run and to exert yourself.

What is the best way to improve your fitness? Most beginners run the same time, distance, and effort every day. I strongly encourage you not to do this. Varying your pace, distance, and effort is not only more fun but also more effective. If you are bored with running, you might not be challenging yourself enough. If you're always tired and not improving, you might be pushing too hard every day.

I'm excited about what God is doing in me right now, and I'm feeling free because running isn't the most important thing in my life. Intimacy with God is so much sweeter than running fast. But ironically, as I get closer to God, apply His principles to my life more consistently, and allow the Holy Spirit to guide me more, I run better and enjoy my running more. I'm always tempted to feel as if I can use God to run faster, but I know this is shortchanging God's best for me. All I want is God. All I need is to receive His love. I need to continually ask myself, what is giving me joy today, my accomplishments or God's presence? "In Your presence is fullness of joy."* The key to joy is continually being in God's presence—running, working, eating, or even sleeping.

* Psalm 16:11

After all, what is it about winning or running fast that is so great? It's the *joy* that such an experience releases in us that makes us hungry for more. We were created to experience joy. The key to unlocking this daily, lasting, and more fulfilling joy isn't winning or setting personal bests—it's being with God as we run or do whatever we are doing. Sometimes our performance brings us joy, and we shouldn't feel guilty about enjoying those moments. Still, we must realize that we can't perform like that every day, but we can experience joy every day if we remain in God's presence.

Afternoon workout

▶ 35-minute run

Total miles: 5

Felt terrible today. My stomach was jacked. Not sure if it was from the vitamins, coffee, or tuna and shrimp I had for lunch. Probably it was a combination of vitamins (as I was burping them up) and the lunch. I need to go back to sandwiches for lunch. It's hard to pass up the tasty dinner leftovers, but I am over having painful afternoon runs as a result. Most of my afternoon runs have been terrible since I've been back in Mammoth and training hard. On my easy runs, I've had to work to keep Sara from dropping me, which doesn't do wonders for my confidence. I don't know, maybe it's running on the snow and slush that is killing me. Regardless, it's another opportunity to grow. I know that God has given me the keys to overcome challenges so I can become more like Him.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 13

Morning workout

▶ Easy 17-minute run

Total miles: 2

Started in six inches of fresh powder, and it was still dumping when I made a premature end to the run. Reminded me of my last run in Big Bear before the Houston Half-Marathon. I felt really good starting out today

but had to stop the run because Sara wanted us to get to the airport early. I didn't have enough time to get in the full 85-minute run I'd planned, so I took the rest of the morning off before the flight to the Rock 'n' Roll Arizona Half-Marathon in Phoenix.

Afternoon workout

- ▶ 68-minute run

Total miles: 10

Legs felt like trash. Don't know what the deal is. So anticlimatic. Usually the first run down at sea level feels like a breeze, as if my feet weren't even touching the ground and I had a third lung. Not this time. Definitely my worst run ever at sea level considering I've just spent six weeks at altitude. My left knee flared up near the end of the run, which didn't help. I'm trying to keep a positive attitude, but it's tough. I want to see this as an opportunity for Christ to work in me and develop my character. Character training is harder than any workouts I do. Long day. Looking forward to some quiet time before the appearances start tomorrow.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 14

Morning workout

- ▶ 30-minute progression run (started slow and gradually accelerated to marathon pace)
- ▶ Drills
- ▶ Intervals: 8 by 200 meters at 32 seconds with 45-second rests
- ▶ 20-minute cooldown

Total miles: 9

Felt much better than yesterday. Have no idea what pace I was running because I forgot my Garmin. That may have been a blessing in disguise though. Better to go by feel at this point, being a couple days out from the race. Left knee was still tight. Felt good to have the sea-level effect I was

missing yesterday. Nice to have Josh here because Sara went to Flagstaff to visit our former teammate and good friend Alicia Shay.

I know God is teaching me to see myself through His eyes. There is so much power in this. If I can just grasp the way God sees me, as someone who is accepted because of Jesus, everything will change, including a lot of foundational issues that drag me down. I long to sense the security I have in God's love. With that security I'm able to see everything else the way He does—not just running, but other people as well. I want to treat people the way He does, not in the way of the world. I long to have God's heart for the world. And that starts with seeing myself as He sees me.

Afternoon workout

► Easy 25-minute run

Total miles: 3.5

Felt a lot better than this morning.

HEART RATE MONITORS AND AEROBIC THRESHOLD

My heart rate monitor keeps me from running my uphill runs and tempo runs too hard. Simply watching my mile split times and paying attention to the way I feel works fine when everything is going according to plan, but when I'm working through sickness or running a new course, the heart rate monitor is much more effective. It also often reassures me that I am running hard enough on my tempo runs and long runs. When I check my watch and see a discouraging mile split (on the difficult uphill miles, for example), I check my heart rate and am assured that I am exerting the right amount of energy to get the most out of the workout.

If you go out too fast and struggle to run the last few miles of your long runs or tempo runs, use a heart rate monitor to keep your effort level under control in those early, easy miles.

What is the proper heart rate for your workouts? Begin by determining your maximum heart rate. If you have a fetish for pain, you can run as hard as you can and check your heart rate when you are near exhaustion,

but I don't recommend that. As a starting point, subtract your age from 220. And remember, your maximum heart rate will go down not only as you get older but also as you get fitter:

When I am running easily, my target heart rate is 60 or 70 percent of my maximum heart rate. However, I rarely use a heart rate monitor on my easy days. Instead, I base my effort on how my legs are feeling simply because my heart rate doesn't always reflect my general energy level or leg fatigue. I want to run at a comfortable pace for my body for that day, and that varies from run to run.

On my tempo runs, I usually maintain about 170 beats per minute, or 88 percent of my maximum heart rate. On my longer tempo runs, my heart rate is closer to 165 in the first half and 170 in the second half. On my long runs, I try to keep my heart rate around 150 BPM, or 78 percent of my maximum heart rate.

If you are operating within 5 percent of these ranges and are able to maintain a consistent pace through the end of your workout, you have found your target heart rate for that particular run. Most beginners find that they are running much too hard on their easy runs and not hard enough on their hard days.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 15

Morning workout

▶ 40-minute run

Total miles: 6

Ran early before heading to the expo for a crazy day of media and appearances. Felt pretty sluggish. Yesterday I felt the positive effects of running at sea level, but I didn't today, which is weird. Missing the usual easiness that comes with the first week down. Not sure what is going on. Left knee is pretty sore.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 16

Morning workout

- ▶ Easy 35-minute run with drills and strides

Total miles: 5

Legs felt a little better than yesterday. Trying not to get worked up about tomorrow's race. I'm just not feeling super snappy, and my knee was really bothering me on my strides. I think it will all be fine. I just need God's perspective on things. The last couple of days before a race are always the toughest mentally.

Lots going on over the past couple of days with appearances. I really do enjoy connecting with people, although it is a little draining after a couple of hours just because it involves so much conversation. Being in race mode is difficult with so many appearances going on. My favorite appearance was running with the Kids Rock program at a school in the Phoenix area. We had a chance to speak and to run with third and fourth graders. I spoke about what it takes to be great in any endeavor and the need for resilience to get there. I said that failing is inevitable at some point in life, even for the most successful of people. Therefore, success doesn't mean never failing; it means getting back up. I urged the kids to always get up in life.

After the talk, we had a group run with the 200 high-energy youth. I was running with the kids when a young Hispanic boy passed me saying, "I win you!" Within a few strides he tripped over himself and tumbled onto the dry grass. I laughed out loud. Not long after, the boy ran his heart out to catch up to me and exclaimed, "I got back up." When I was talking to the kids, I thought most of them were in another world. I doubted they absorbed anything I said. Evidently I was wrong. It was great to feel like my time, words, and actions were touching lives.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 17

Morning workout

- ▶ 20-minute warm-up
- ▶ 13.1-mile race at Rock 'n' Roll Arizona Half-Marathon
- ▶ 20-minute cooldown

Total miles: 18

One of my roughest races of all time. Felt good on the warm-up. Incorporating a couple 30-second fast sprints in the warm-up made the early pace feel comfortable. Ran the first mile in 4:28, feeling like I was breathing pretty hard but feeling decent enough. It was exciting to go out hard because it has been a while since I have been on schedule to break my personal best for the half-marathon. I was thinking to myself that maybe I would have the race of my life and even run a world record. At the starting line, I always believe that anything is possible. However, a couple of miles later it was clear that this wouldn't be the day.

I kept a solid pace through two miles in 9 minutes flat before I began to slow. Passed through 10k in 29 minutes flat, which was the goal. I was going after an aggressive first 10k. I led the whole way through ten miles before lurking Simon Bairu made his move. I wasn't able to respond at all. My hip was hurting after four or five miles—the same sensation I had at NYC. Just didn't feel fluid at all. My left knee flared up about halfway, and my right foot was throbbing.

I contemplated stopping to loosen my shoelaces because of a shooting pain in my tendon on the top outside of my foot, but I decided I needed to push on. Felt like I was limping the whole last three miles. Glad to be done with this one. Definitely a long, painful race. Ended up running about 64 minutes but never cared to get my exact finishing time.

I made no physical breakthrough, but I was able to maintain a positive attitude throughout the race. I was thinking to myself the last mile that I needed to be gracious in both victory and defeat. I did my best to keep my head high afterward, but that was a challenge when talking to reporters, peers, family, friends, and spectators. I am learning to give myself more

grace to not be perfect. I tend to be hard on myself, accepting nothing less than the spectacular. I am starting to see this as a lack of gratefulness. Also, I am learning that there is only so much I can do in my preparations. I certainly cannot force anything special to happen on the racecourse; I can only let out whatever energy is in me. Running is more art than science, and a few strokes can mean the difference between a mess and a masterpiece.

It was a very slow and painful cooldown. My left knee was really flared up, and I wondered if I might have broken my foot by running through the pain. Emotionally, the disappointment really set in on the cooldown. I knew that I went out too fast and just wasn't far enough along in my training to expect something special. That, coupled with physical pain, made for a long day. My disappointment really came from the feeling that I haven't had a really great day in a race for some time. My hope for the long term is running low.

I still believe with my whole heart that God has done amazing things in my running and have often been encouraged that He will continue to do so. For example, about eight weeks before the U.S. trials for the Olympic Marathon, I was in Mammoth training, and things were not going well. I was at the end of three days of depression and not running because of two weeks of steadily declining fitness for no apparent reason. I was working out the same as always, but something was wrong, and my body was not responding to the training the way it usually does. At the end of the three days, God began to pull me out of my despair, and I managed to make it to church that night. The speaker picked me out of the crowd and encouraged me with Psalm 20:5: "We will sing for joy over your victory, and in the name of our God we will set up our banners. May the LORD fulfill all your petitions."

I was at one of the lowest points in my career. Sara was in Europe at the time, and I remember telling her on the phone, "There is no way I'm going to make the team." I wasn't able to run a single mile at marathon pace. Things were not looking good, but I started training again and began feeling better. In the end, the Olympic trials race was one of the easiest wins I have ever had, but best of all was the connection I felt with God during the run.

When I returned to Big Bear, people had hung gigantic *banners* all around town with pictures of me pointing up to God at the end of the race. Our pastor's encouraging word was fulfilled literally.

Probably the most empowering comment I've ever received came from another speaker at our church, Stacey Campbell, last fall before the NYC Marathon. She reminded me of the story of Elijah, who was filled with the Spirit of God and outran a chariot to Jezreel. She spoke of supernatural running, which I was and continue to be so hungry to taste.

But believing what God can do is sometimes difficult when I'm not seeing it happen in my life. Still, faith is the substance of things unseen. I believe in God and in the promises He has given to me. I am holding on to those despite the way I am feeling at the moment. Regardless of how races go, God is still a good Papa who is always looking out for my best.