

ALTUS DIGITAL

RUNNER'S STRENGTH GUIDE

A practical guide to integrating strength training into your running without unnecessarily compromising your mileage, key sessions or recovery.



WHY STRENGTH TRAIN?

RUNNING MAKES YOU A BETTER RUNNER.

Strength training can make you a stronger one.

Running should remain the foundation of running performance. But running alone doesn't develop every physical quality that may benefit a runner.

Well-planned resistance training provides a different stimulus: exposing your muscles and connective tissues to forces that aren't achieved simply by accumulating more miles.

The objective isn't to turn a runner into a powerlifter.

It's to develop useful strength that supports the demands of running.

WHAT ARE WE TRYING TO DEVELOP?

FORCE PRODUCTION

Running is a repeated series of forceful contacts with the ground. Developing the ability to produce force gives the athlete a greater physical capacity to work with.

TISSUE CAPACITY

Muscles, tendons and other structures are repeatedly loaded during running. Progressive resistance training provides another controlled way of exposing those tissues to load.

RUNNING ECONOMY

Appropriately programmed strength and power training may contribute to improvements in running economy, the energy cost of maintaining a given running speed.

ROBUSTNESS

Your training programme shouldn't only prepare you for your best week. It should progressively develop your ability to tolerate the demands of training.

ATHLETICISM

Squatting, hinging, jumping, landing, carrying and producing force are fundamental athletic qualities.

Running doesn't mean you need to stop being an athlete.

THE ALTUS PRINCIPLE

Strength training should support your running, not constantly compete with it.

THE ALTUS APPROACH

DON'T JUST ADD GYM SESSIONS.

One of the easiest mistakes runners make is looking at strength training in isolation. You currently tolerate a certain amount of training.

If you suddenly add two hard gym sessions without changing anything else, you haven't simply become a more complete athlete. You've increased your total training demand.

That's why we look at the whole week.

THE ALTUS TRAINING HIERARCHY

RUN

Complete the running required for your goal.



STRENGTHEN

Develop the physical qualities that complement it.



RECOVER

Allow adaptation to occur.



PROGRESS

Gradually increase the training stimulus.



REPEAT

Consistency beats occasional heroic sessions.

THINK IN TERMS OF STRESS

A hard interval session is stress.

A long run is stress.

Heavy squats are stress.

Poor sleep is stress.

Work can be stress.

Life can be stress.

Your body doesn't organise these neatly into separate boxes.

Your programme therefore needs to consider total training demand, not simply the number of sessions on your calendar.

THE GOAL

You should usually leave the gym feeling like you've trained, not like you've survived.

Some fatigue is normal.

Permanent soreness isn't the objective.

Minimum effective dose beats maximum recoverable chaos.

THE SIX MOVEMENTS

BUILD THE FOUNDATIONS.

There isn't a magical list of exercises every runner must perform. Instead, build your programme around fundamental movement qualities and select exercises appropriate to your experience and available equipment.

01: SQUAT

Examples: Goblet squat, back squat, front squat, leg press.
Develops lower-body strength through coordinated hip and knee extension.
Think: controlled descent, stable position, forceful drive.

02: HINGE

Examples: Romanian deadlift, deadlift, trap-bar deadlift.
Develops the posterior chain — particularly the glutes and hamstrings.
Think: hips back, maintain position, drive the floor away.

03: SINGLE LEG

Examples: Split squat, reverse lunge, step-up.
Running is predominantly unilateral. Single-leg exercises allow us to develop strength and control independently on each side.
Think: stability first, load second.

04: CALF + ANKLE

Examples: Standing calf raise, bent-knee calf raise.
The calf complex plays a major role in running and repeatedly deals with substantial forces.
Train both straight-knee and bent-knee variations.
Think: full controlled range rather than bouncing through repetitions.

05: TRUNK

Examples: Farmer carry, Pallof press, dead bug, plank variations.
The trunk helps transfer force and maintain position while the limbs are moving.
Training it doesn't require hundreds of sit-ups.
Think: resist unwanted movement.

06: POWER

Examples: Pogo jumps, broad jumps, box jumps, bounds.
Strength is the foundation.
Power introduces the ability to express force quickly.
Plyometric work should be progressed, not simply thrown into a programme because you're a runner.
Think: quality contacts, controlled landings, low unnecessary fatigue.

STRENGTH SESSION A

BUILD YOUR BASE.

This session focuses on fundamental lower-body strength. Complete it once per week initially if strength training is new to you. More experienced athletes may use it as one of two weekly strength sessions.

WARM-UP

5–10 minutes
Easy bike, row or jog.
Then:

- 10 bodyweight squats
- 8 reverse lunges each side
- 10 calf raises
- 8 hip hinges
- 2–3 progressive warm-up sets for your first loaded exercise

Your warm-up should prepare you to train.
It doesn't need to become another workout.

THE SESSION

Goblet Squat	3 Sets	6-8 Reps	RPE - 7
Romanian Deadlift	3 Sets	6-8 Reps	RPE - 7
Reverse Lunge	3 Sets	8/Side	RPE - 7
Standing Calf Raise	3 Sets	10-15 Reps	Controlled
Bent-Knee Calf Raise	3 Sets	10-15 Reps	Controlled
Farmers Carry	3 Sets	30-45 Seconds	Challenging

WHAT DOES RPE 7 MEAN?

We use Rate of Perceived Exertion to describe how difficult a set feels.

RPE 10 — Maximal effort. No additional repetitions available.

RPE 9 — Approximately one repetition remaining.

RPE 8 — Approximately two repetitions remaining.

RPE 7 — Approximately three repetitions remaining.

Most of your strength training doesn't need to reach failure.

REST

For your main strength movements:
2–3 minutes between working sets.
For smaller accessory exercises:
60–120 seconds is generally sufficient.

Don't turn strength training into cardio by rushing every rest period.

STRENGTH SESSION B

STRENGTH AND ATHLETICISM.

Session B complements Session A by introducing another unilateral pattern, a heavier hinge option and a small amount of power work.

If you're inexperienced with jumping or currently managing pain, remove the plyometric exercise until appropriate.

POWER PREPARATION

Perform this before heavy strength work while you're fresh.

- Pogo Jumps 3 × 10–15 contacts

Keep the contacts light, quick and controlled.

Rest approximately 45–60 seconds.

THE SESSION

Trap Bar Deadlift	3 Sets	4-6 Reps	RPE - 7-8
Bulgarian Split Squat	3 Sets	6-8/Side	RPE - 7
Step-Up	2-3 Sets	8/Side	Controlled
Bent-Knee Calf Raise	3 Sets	10-15 Reps	Controlled
Pallof Press	3 Sets	8-12/Side	Controlled
Farmers Carry	3 Sets	30-45 Seconds	Challenging

**If you don't have access to a trap bar, use an appropriate deadlift or hinge variation.*

QUALITY > QUANTITY

Notice what isn't here:
Twenty exercises.
A 15-minute ab circuit.
Five different glute activation drills.
Burpees between sets.
A strength session doesn't need to contain everything you've ever seen on Instagram.
Select movements with a purpose.
Perform them well.
Recover.
Progress them.

WHERE DOES STRENGTH FIT?

YOUR WEEK IS A PROGRAMME.

Where you put strength training matters.
The objective is to avoid repeatedly compromising the running sessions most important to your goal.

There isn't one perfect weekly schedule.
Your running frequency, experience, work, sleep and recovery all influence the answer.

EXAMPLE — 3 RUNS PER WEEK

MON — Strength A
TUE — Easy Run
WED — Rest / Recovery
THU — Quality Run
FRI — Strength B
SAT — Rest / Easy Activity
SUN — Long Run

EXAMPLE — 4 RUNS PER WEEK

MON — Easy Run + Strength A
TUE — Quality Run
WED — Recovery
THU — Easy Run + Strength B
FRI — Rest
SAT — Easy / Steady Run
SUN — Long Run

EXAMPLE — 5 RUNS PER WEEK

MON — Easy Run + Strength A
TUE — Quality Run
WED — Easy Run
THU — Strength B
FRI — Easy Run
SAT — Rest / Recovery
SUN — Long Run

WHY COMBINE SOME DAYS?

Sometimes placing strength work on an existing training day allows your easier days to remain genuinely easy.
This is sometimes described as:
Keep hard days hard and easy days easy.

That doesn't mean every combined day needs to be brutal.
It means thinking about the distribution of stress across the week rather than treating every session independently.
Your best schedule isn't the one that looks most impressive. It's the one you can recover from and repeat.

HOW TO PROGRESS

TRAINING NEEDS A REASON TO CHANGE YOU.

Repeating exactly the same workout indefinitely eventually provides diminishing returns.

Progressive overload means gradually manipulating the training stimulus as your capacity improves.

But progression doesn't mean:

Add weight every session forever.

WAYS TO PROGRESS

You can increase:

LOAD

60 kg → 62.5 kg.

REPETITIONS

3 × 6 → 3 × 7 → 3 × 8.

SETS

2 working sets → 3 working sets.

RANGE OF MOTION

Progressively performing the movement through a greater appropriate range.

EXERCISE DIFFICULTY

Moving from a simpler variation to a more demanding one when appropriate.

QUALITY

Better control, stability and execution at the same load is also progress.

SIMPLE DOUBLE PROGRESSION

Suppose your programme says:

Squat — 3 × 6–8 @ RPE 7

Week 1

60 kg — 8 / 7 / 6

Week 2

60 kg — 8 / 8 / 7

Week 3

60 kg — 8 / 8 / 8

Week 4

62.5 kg — return towards 6 reps.

Then build again.

DON'T FORCE PROGRESSION

Your training doesn't exist in a vacuum.

After a particularly demanding running week, poor sleep, illness or unusually high life stress, maintaining or reducing the load may be more appropriate.

Progression should be earned through adaptation, not forced because a spreadsheet told you today's number needed to be bigger.

FIVE MISTAKES RUNNERS MAKE

01: CHASING SORENESS

Muscle soreness isn't a score.

A session doesn't become more effective simply because walking downstairs is difficult the following morning.

Train for adaptation, not punishment.

02: LIFTING TOO LIGHT FOREVER

Strength requires sufficient resistance.

High-repetition circuits can have a place, but doing everything with extremely light loads because you're a runner misses much of the reason we're in the weight room.

Learn the movements.

Then progressively load them.

03: ADDING WITHOUT SUBTRACTING

Five runs.

Two strength sessions.

A circuit class.

Football.

Then wondering why every session feels terrible.

Your ability to recover is finite.

When training demand increases, something else may need to change.

04: MAKING EVERYTHING "RUNNING SPECIFIC"

Standing on an unstable surface while performing a complicated single-leg movement doesn't automatically make an exercise specific to running.

The gym develops physical qualities.

Running develops running.

You don't need to recreate your sport with dumbbells.

05: CONSTANTLY CHANGING EXERCISES

Novelty feels productive.

Progress usually requires enough consistency to actually improve at something.

Keep your main movements relatively stable.

Track them.

Progress them.

Change exercises when there's a reason, not because you're bored after two weeks.

REMEMBER

**THE BEST STRENGTH PROGRAMME ISN'T THE HARDEST ONE.
IT'S THE ONE THAT SUPPORTS YOUR RUNNING, PROGRESSES OVER TIME AND
YOU CAN CONSISTENTLY RECOVER FROM.**

BUILD YOUR WEEK

TURN THE INFORMATION INTO ACTION

Before adding strength sessions, map out the running that matters most.

STEP 01: IDENTIFY YOUR PRIORITIES

My current running goal:
My key running session:
My long run:

STEP 02: BUILD YOUR WEEK

Day	Run	Strength	Recovery
Monday	☐	☐	☐
Tuesday	☐	☐	☐
Wednesday	☐	☐	☐
Thursday	☐	☐	☐
Friday	☐	☐	☐
Saturday	☐	☐	☐
Sunday	☐	☐	☐

STEP 03: TRACK THE BASICS

This week:
Strength sessions completed: ____ / ____
Running sessions completed: ____ / ____
Average energy: ____ / 10
Average sleep: ____ hours
General soreness: ____ / 10

Important information

This guide provides general fitness and educational information and is not individual medical, physiotherapy or rehabilitation advice. Exercise selection and training load should be appropriate to your current ability and circumstances. Stop an exercise if you experience significant or unusual pain, and seek assessment from an appropriately qualified healthcare professional where required.

MOVE FORWARD WITH ALTUS

YOUR NEXT STEP

This guide gives you the foundations.
ALTUS DIGITAL programmes take those principles and turn them into structured training.

Progressive sessions. Clear programming. No random workouts.

TRAIN WITH ALTUS

Digital Training Programmes
Follow structured programmes independently.

Online Coaching

Individualised programming, accountability and coaching support.

Performance Coaching

Higher-touch coaching for athletes looking to maximise their performance.

ALTUS HEALTH & PERFORMANCE

TRAIN WITH PURPOSE.

www.altusperformance.co.uk/consultation