

How to Use a Training Diary



A training diary used properly can be a great asset for the runner just starting off, as well as for the top athlete.

What to put in your training diary

1. Mileage or length of time spent running

The first and most obvious thing is, of course, mileage and/or time spent running. It is very important when building up mileage not to increase too quickly. If your daily runs are all noted down, then this is easy to spot and so you can adjust accordingly.

2. Speed sessions

Again an obvious one, write down your session with all the split times, then you will have a record of how you are getting on, and also you will be able to check how you are improving and whether your build up is correct. Also later on, for example in a couple of months, you can compare how you are doing.

3. Heart rate details

If you use a heart rate monitor, make a note of what your heart rate was during the run. Other information you could write down would be average HR, max HR and recovery time. It can be really inspiring looking back after a few months of training and seeing how you have improved. Some people also make a note of

what the resting heart rate is first thing in the morning. This can be a great indication of how your general health is and so how hard you should exercise.

4. Location

It can be a big help to note down the type of surface/terrain where you ran; for example, whether it was hilly or flat, off road or on road. Your speed will, of course, vary depending on the surface you are running on. Variety can be really important, and if it is all written down you will see immediately if you are always doing the same route almost every day.

5. How you felt

This is possibly something that is not always put in a training diary, but it's really one of the most important things. It's so easy to forget or ignore that little niggle that you felt after or during a run, but if it is written down, you will see if there is a pattern. For example if you feel discomfort always after a certain run, or if the niggle persists, if you have written it down, the chances are you won't ignore it and you will take action sooner rather than later, before things get too bad.

6. Weather conditions

This can make a huge difference to your speed and your general feelings while running. Basically any extremes in temperature, heat or cold, will affect your running. If it is hot you will almost certainly run more slowly. If conditions are snowy or muddy, again you might be slower. It is a big help to write these things down, especially for when you look back in your diary and wonder why you were maybe a bit slow one day.

7. Races

If you do races, write down when you did a race and your time, then you will again have a great record of your progress, and you will also see at a glance if you are racing too much. It is also a good idea to put the race in your diary ahead of time so that you can see exactly when it is. This may help with planning your training for the race.

8. Shoes

It is a good idea to put in when you replace your running shoes, then you will be able to keep an exact check of how long you have had your shoes and when you need to change them. You will then be less likely to get injured by running in shoes that have worn out. As a general rule running shoes last between 500 - 700 miles.

Benefits of a Training Diary

- You know your mileage and how you felt on any given day
- You know what speed sessions you did and can see the improvements

- Injuries can be spotted early on, so precautions can be taken, e.g. a sports massage or visit to the physio.
- You have the programme you followed when you ran that great race.
- You can see your goals and are probably more organised, having all your data at your fingertips