

Training Suggestions for the IBECC 4-mile Run/Walk Time Trial

By

Coach Roy Benson, Time Trial Coordinator

The 2016 version of the IBECC competition is returning to its original concept of honoring the Greek ideal of “strong mind and strong body.” The walk/run component is back to its important place in the overall scoring of the competition. In light of this, we are providing participants with some advice to help prepare you for the Time Trial competition.

In recognition of the uniqueness of the IBECC competition, I have modified my Effort Based Training (EBT) philosophy to create a special version just for IBECC. I developed EBT in the mid-1980’s and have used it to train literally thousands of runners. It ties together 3 methods commonly used by endurance athletes to measure their current levels of fitness and their responses to their running by:

1. **Pace.** How fast you’re going in minutes per mile (MPM).
2. **Effort.** How hard you’re working by measuring your heart rate in beats per minute (BPM).
3. **Perceived Effort.** How easy or hard a workout *feels* on a scale of 60-100% effort (RPE).

In short: $EBT = MPM + BPM + RPE$

Unfortunately, this approach to training presents some challenges. Therefore, for your use in the short time left, I have simplified EBT to create a special system of training to help your team get in the best possible shape for this year’s event.

The IBECC Felt-lek Training System

I coined this term with a bow to the Swedish coaching geniuses who developed “Fartlek” training, roughly translated as “speed play.” I hope you’ll grant me a little poetic license here as you measure the “feel” of your effort in the different training zones. Then, as you work out, you will adjust your pace and effort accordingly. After the workout, you can compare if it “felt” the way the description said it should feel.

I kept this system as flexible as possible so you can use it almost any way and any place. The different plans feature workouts of varying lengths of time instead of distances. You can train on tracks, on trails, on roads or sidewalks, on indoor equipment such as treadmills, elliptical or stair stepper machines and even in pools doing deep water running. Just keep in mind that the Law of Specificity guarantees that the closer you mimic the range of motion and degree of effort required by your event, the greater the effectiveness of your training.

To make this system attractive to everyone—no matter the level of experience, the level of fitness, level of ability and/or the goals—there are separate plans featuring appropriate workouts for three different categories of participants: walkers, rookie joggers and experienced runners.

Felt-lek Training for Walkers

The primary objective of this plan is to develop the local strength and endurance of the leg muscles in order to avoid a case of the Dreaded Shin Splints. The rather modest effort involved in walking usually does not come close to straining the cardiac and respiratory systems abilities to supply oxygen and energy to the working muscles.

However, going too far or too fast too soon will definitely challenge the adaptive capacity of the bones, ligaments, tendons and muscles of the feet and lower legs. At no time should any of your workouts be rated higher than #2 on the Workout and Perceived Effort Chart. Just substitute the word “walk” when you read “jog” then start your watch to time your workout.

The training plan makes one basic assumption: by the day of the Time Trial, everyone attempting the 4 mile walk should be able to cover the distance in **at least 80:00** minutes. (That is barely a window-shopping pace.) To reach that goal, the workouts are divided into 4 blocks of 2 week phases. If you are currently doing more minutes than in any one of the phases, start at the next higher one.

Felt-lek Training for Joggers

This plan is offered to participants who are already doing at least a couple days per week of jogging. The structure it provides will get you in shape to “competitively” jog the Time Trial.

Your plan features 2 phases of training lasting 4 weeks each. The alphabet labels (JJ: Just Jogging; SS: Steady State; DD and LL) in the daily boxes refer to alliterative titles on the Perceived Effort chart. The numbers next to them (12JJ) are time you should be in that zone. Phase I focuses on just endurance development from Just Jogging.

Phase II adds some stamina development by Striding Steadily. The minutes of each SS workout are just the time you should be in that effort zone. You will need to spend 5-10 minutes jogging to warm up and cool down after these workouts. The SS steady state workouts which, at up to 10% harder effort than JJ days, introduce the need for a hard/easy pattern of stress day followed by a recovery day for adaptation.

Felt-lek Training for Runners

If you are choosing this training plan, first, be aware that NO ONE EVER GOT INJURED BY **UNDER-TRAINING**. Accept my guarantee that the combined effects of these workouts will develop all your parts and pieces needed for a peak performance. The combination of various hard efforts separated by off or easy days will require some self-discipline. Do not try winning the workouts!!

All the workouts, other than the JJ's, will require from 5:00-15:00 of warmup jogging, stretching and some strides.

If you're using the "experienced runner" plan, keep in mind that the DD workouts in that upper level of the 90-95% effort zone should produce times for the 400's about 15 -20 sec faster than your current 5k race pace.