

Everyone Can Run!

How To Prepare for Your First Season of Cross-Country Running

If you are thinking about joining the Monta Vista cross country for the first time—whether you are an incoming Freshman or an upperclassman who wants to give XC a try—this plan will help you prepare over the summer so that you show up for the first practice in August, ready to go! Here are some questions and answers that will help explain this program:

Q: Do I have to follow this plan to join the team?

A: NO! Anyone can join Monta Vista cross-country, no matter what your athletic background or preparation. However...preparation and conditioning give you several advantages:

- The first few workouts may be hard, but you won't feel wrecked if you have been running this plan!
- You will achieve faster times.
- You will be less likely to be injured.
- You will have a lot more fun! The workouts won't hurt as much you can run with anyone and talk while you are running!

Q: Nine weeks seems like a long time! Do I have to do all of this?

A: Well, no you don't. However...the honest truth is, running is a year-round lifestyle as much as a sport. The best runners run 12 months of the year! (Although I do recommend a two-week break now and then.) Running takes time and running rewards persistence—just as academics and many other things in life rewards those of us that are persistent. So you don't have to do this...but I'd hope that you would want to be running if you are joining the MV cross country team!

Q: Do I have to follow this plan exactly?

A: NO! Everyone is different and will react to workouts in unique ways. No one training plan can be perfect for everyone. This plan is a good, basic plan that has been developed and reviewed with professional runners and coaches, and should be useful to everyone, but is not carved in stone. If you can only run 6 weeks because you have a vacation with your family, that's OK, do what you can. If you find a workout you particularly enjoy, run it again! If you have to skip a day, move things around. If you want to run the workout suggested for Saturday on Sunday, that is cool. If you think you are injured, stop! Which reminds me: Get your annual physical now and tell your doctor you are going to start XC training so he can make sure you are healthy and ready to exercise. This plan is well thought out and it is specific, but you can work things around to make it convenient and enjoyable.

Q: What if the workouts seem really easy?

A: Be patient—workouts will get hard soon enough! 😊 If you find this progression is very easy, there are a couple things you can do:

- Cut down or skip the walking breaks.
- Skip ahead a week or two, do those workouts, and continue from there.

Q: What if the workouts seem really hard?

A: Add more breaks, or repeat a week. No problem, stick with it!

Q: What can make this more fun?

A: Run with friends! Monday through Friday at 9:30am all summer, cross country runners will meet in front of the Monta Vista wrestling room for an informal group run. Call your friends and organize a run in Fremont Older or Rancho San Antonio, or get your parents to drive you to explore a new running spot like Cowell Redwoods or Baylands Park—and bring a Frisbee and a picnic lunch for afterwards!

Q: Any other suggestions?

A: Yes!

1. Buy new shoes at a running specialty store **before** starting the program. Worn out or poorly fitted shoes contribute to many injuries. **Running Revolution** in Campbell (408.374.9307) will give you and your family a 20% discount if you tell them you are on or joining the Monta Vista cross country team. Other specialty stores may be good too, but please don't go to any stores that are selling baseball gear or tennis raquets and things like that. Stick to a local running specialty store!
2. Read the articles in mvrunning.com on hydration and nutrition.
3. Be patient! Running is a long-term commitment. You will get better over time!

Monta Vista Cross Country—How To Get Started Summer 2012
First 3 Weeks
(For Full 9-week program: Weeks beginning June 11, 18, and 25, 2012)

	Running	Other
Monday		General Strength and 'Four Easy Stretches'; this will take you less than 30 minutes—and will help you a LOT!
Tuesday	Walk for 5 minutes, then 10x[run easy for 2 minutes + walk for 1 minute] OR run easy for 20 minutes; then walk for 5 minutes. Each week you can increase the time you run before you walk. Work up to running for a mile, walking a minute, 3 to 4 times.	General Strength and 'Four Easy Stretches' afterwards
Wednesday		General Strength and 'Four Easy Stretches'
Thursday	Walk for 5 minutes, then 6x[run easy for 3 minutes + walk for 2 minutes] OR run easy for 20 minutes; then walk for 5 minutes	General Strength and 'Four Easy Stretches' afterwards
Friday		General Strength and 'Four Easy Stretches'
Saturday	Walk for 5 minutes, then 20x[run easy for 2 minutes + walk for 30 seconds] OR run easy for 25-30 minutes; then walk for 5 minutes	'Four Easy Stretches' afterwards
Sunday	Rest	Rest

Four Easy Stretches: See <http://www.mvrunning.com/coachs/four-easy-stretches/>

General Strength First 3 Weeks:

- Plank: 3 times, hold plank for 30 seconds each time; goal is to be able to hold a good, solid plank position for 2 minutes straight.
- Crunches: Start with 2 sets of 25 crunches (2x25). Keep your stomach in & tight! Try different types of crunch: Straight forward, 'bicycles', 'cake mixers'.

What does a good plank look like?

1. Lie face down, resting on your forearms, palms flat on the ground or floor.
2. Push off the ground, rising on the toes and resting on the elbows, looking down.
3. Keep your back flat in a straight line from head to heels.
4. Tilt your pelvis and contract your abdominals ('abs') to prevent your rear end from sticking up in the air or sagging in the middle (it's better to stick up a little rather than sag, but try to be as plank-like as possible. Get a friend to look at you and correct you).
5. Hold for 20 seconds to start, and repeat 2-4 times. Goal is to hold a solid plank for 2 minutes straight—2 minutes is enough for good running fitness.

Monta Vista Cross Country—How To Get Started Summer 2012
Second 3 Weeks (weeks 4-6)
(For Full 9-week program: Weeks beginning July 2, 9, and 16, 2012)

	Running	Other
Monday	First week: Run 20 minutes easy Second week: Run 25 minutes easy Third week: Run 30 minutes easy	General Strength and 'Four Easy Stretches'; this will take you less than 30 minutes—and will help you a LOT!
Tuesday	Walk for 5 minutes, then 4x[run easy for 8 minutes + walk for 1 minutes], (or just run for 30 minutes easy)	General Strength and 'Four Easy Stretches' afterwards
Wednesday		General Strength and 'Four Easy Stretches'
Thursday	Run for 10 minutes, walk for 3 minutes, run for 10 minutes, walk for 3 minutes, run for 10 minutes (or just run for 30 minutes)	General Strength and 'Four Easy Stretches' afterwards
Friday		General Strength and 'Four Easy Stretches'
Saturday	First week: Run for 15 minutes, walk 5 minutes, run for 15 minutes Second week: Run 20 minutes, walk 5 minutes, run 15 minutes. Third week: Run 20 minutes, walk 5 minutes, run 10 minutes, walk 5, run 10.	'Four Easy Stretches' afterwards
Sunday	Rest	Rest

Four Easy Stretches: See <http://www.mvrunning.com/coachs/four-easy-stretches/>

General Strength These 3 Weeks:

- Plank: 3 times, hold plank for 30 seconds each time; goal is to be able to hold a good, solid plank position for 2 minutes straight.
- Crunches: Start with 2 sets of 25 crunches (2x25). Keep your stomach in & tight! Try different types of crunch: Straight forward, 'bicycles', 'cake mixers'.
- ADD: Bodyweight Squats. Start with 2x10 repetitions.

How do I do a bodyweight squat?

1. Stand upright with your feet shoulder width apart, toes pointing straight forward.
2. Look straight ahead and lower your hips as if you are sitting in an imaginary chair. Start the movement with your hips, **then** bend your knees. At no point should your knees be in front of your toes! For balance you can raise your arms in front of you. Keep your heels on the ground. If your heels start to lift, don't go lower.
3. **Slowly** drop to a deep squat position. Ideally your hamstring muscles contact your calf muscles and give you a stretch at the bottom. This may take a few weeks to be loose.
4. **Quickly** thrust your hips forward from this low position and straighten your knees to return to the top position, as if you are going to explode. Keep your chest up and eyes forward.

Monta Vista Cross Country—How To Get Started Summer 2012
Third 3 Weeks (weeks 7-9)
(For Full 9-week program: Weeks beginning July 23, 30, and August 6, 2012)

	Running	Other
Monday	First week: Run 25 minutes easy Second week: Run 30 minutes easy Third week: Run 35 minutes easy After each run, run 6 'strides'	General Strength and 'Four Easy Stretches'; this will take you less than 30 minutes—and will help you a LOT!
Tuesday	Walk for 5 minutes, then 3x[run easy for 10 minutes + walk for 3 minutes], (or just run for 30 minutes easy)	General Strength and 'Four Easy Stretches' afterwards
Wednesday		General Strength and 'Four Easy Stretches'
Thursday	Run for 10 minutes, run 5 'strides', walk for 3 minutes, run for 10 minutes, run 5 'strides', walk for 3 minutes, run for 10 minutes	General Strength and 'Four Easy Stretches' afterwards
Friday		General Strength and 'Four Easy Stretches'
Saturday	First week: Run for 20 minutes, walk 5 minutes, run for 15 minutes, walk for 5 minutes, run for 10 minutes Second week: Run 30 minutes, walk 5 minutes, run 15 minutes (or run 45 minutes). Third week: Run 25 minutes, walk 5 minutes, run 20 minutes (or run 45 minutes).	'Four Easy Stretches' afterwards
Sunday	Rest	Rest

Four Easy Stretches: See <http://www.mvrunning.com/coachs/four-easy-stretches/>

General Strength These 3 Weeks:

- Plank: 3 times, hold plank for 30 seconds each time; goal is to be able to hold a good, solid plank position for 2 minutes straight.
- Crunches: Start with 2 sets of 25 crunches (2x25). Keep your stomach in & tight! Try different types of crunch: Straight forward, 'bicycles', 'cake mixers'.
- Bodyweight Squats. Start with 2x10 repetitions.
- ADD: Push ups. You can do these from your knees if you are not ready to do full push ups. Start with 2x15 (two sets of 15 push ups).

Congratulations!

If you worked your way through this 9-week program, you should be feeling pretty good and you are ready for a very rewarding first cross-country season! See you at the first day of practice!

**Monta Vista Cross Country
Training Log**

Week Beginning: _____ (Monday date)

	Running	Other
Sample	<i>Ran 3x10 minutes with 3 minute walks, about 4 miles total. Felt pretty easy, nothing hurt</i>	<i>4 stretches for 10 minutes total, plank 2 minutes, 40 crunches, 30 squats</i>
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		
Saturday		
Sunday		
Weekly Mileage or Time total		