

East High School XC Summer Running Guide

The most important time of the year for cross country is upon us. Summer is the time of year when we build the foundation which gives us the strength to workout and race hard throughout the fall. Cross Country Champions are built in the summer.

Our first meet is on the 5th day of school. Our league championship is only 6.5 weeks later. If you have not trained over the summer you will not be ready for our first race, are more likely to get injured when we begin high intensity training; and will not reach your potential by the end of the season.

We have two summer running groups, each with its own plan. For first year runners, we encourage you to aim for the “24 Hour Club” – 24 to 28 hours of running over the 10 weeks of summer conditioning. Returning runners should aim for 48 - 56 hours of running this summer. If you are uncertain as to which running goal you should aim, please talk to your coaches. First year runners achieving 24 hours, and returning runners achieving 48 hours of running will be rewarded with running apparel at the end of summer to recognize their achievement. We ask that every runner keeps a running log so that each runner and the coaches can keep track of your progress. This will not only help you know if you are going to achieve your running goal for the summer but will help your coaches plan appropriate workouts for the rest of the season. We use the website: logarun.com. We strongly encourage you to create an account and to join the team named EastXC.

The Running Schedule

The scheduled runs for each group are primarily built around our summer practice days – Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays we meet at the “E” in front of East High School. On Fridays we leave from the teacher’s parking lot at 8am to go to the foothills for a long run. You may do your runs on your own, but we strongly encourage you to make as many of these practices as possible. We know not everyone can make every practice, but we are confident you can find time each week to complete each of your runs on your own if needed.

The schedule incrementally increases the amount of running you do each week to both achieve a high level of fitness and prevent injury. As your summer running increases, you will need to do some runs on days in addition to our scheduled practice days. We encourage you to meet up with your teammates or run with friends or family members. Stick to the schedule as much as possible, whether you make it to our organized practices or not. Making small changes, such as which days of the week you run or how far you run is fine, but please log your runs and speak to your coaches before deviating from the schedule significantly.

Check the East High School Cross Country website frequently for updates on practice times and plans for Friday trail runs and get updates by subscribing on the website: easthighxc.com.

The Running Log

Your Running Diary: One of the most useful tools for a runner at any level is an accurate running log. A running log is any tool you use to keep track of your daily training activity. The more detailed the log, the more useful it will be for you to track your training and to help you and your coach plan your next training cycle and set goals. There are many types of running logs; you may keep these with simple paper and pencil or online; we use **LogARun.com** – please join the EastXC team there to share your running achievements over the summer with your coaches. At a minimum, you should record every run you do (either minutes or miles run) or how many minutes of cross training you did that day. Commenting on where you ran, how hard or fast you ran, and how you felt during the run will make the log more meaningful. You should also record your race results and best times over different courses and distances in your running log.

Time and Mileage: Our running schedules and goals for the summer are based on suggested time run rather than miles run. We believe measuring the amount of *time* run is simpler than trying to measure *miles* run on a daily basis. **You need a digital watch** with a stopwatch function to measure the amount of time spent running; a totally acceptable digital sports watch can be found for \$25 or less at Target and similar stores. It is sometimes useful to have an idea of what your pace per mile is, and logging miles run is an acceptable alternative to logging minutes run if you are using online software or GPS to measure your runs – MapMyRun.com is a good place to measure the routes you run.

Summer Training Incentives

Running faster and helping the team achieve its goals should be incentive enough to motivate you for the summer training program, but we are going to motivate you with a bit more.

1. All athletes meeting their group running challenge for the summer (24 Hour Club for new runners; 48 Hour Club for returning runners) will be awarded with Denver East XC swag recognizing their achievement.
2. All runners who maintain a running log (running at least 3 days per week) will be entered into a drawing to win Denver East XC apparel or running store gift certificates. Coaches will check logs on periodically through the summer.
3. The New Runners and Returning Runners who attend the most summer conditioning practices will be recognized with awards at the beginning of the season banquet.

Important Dates

Monday, June 3 – First Day of Voluntary Summer Practices (Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays at 8am at the “E” and Fridays leaving from the faculty parking lot at 8am for the hills).

Tuesday, June 18 to Thursday, June 20 – East High Altitude Training Camp. Sign-up on line: easthighxc.com.

Monday, July 29 – Summer Voluntary Practices change to 3:15pm daily at the E.

Monday, August 12 – First Day of Official Cross Country Practice: 3:15pm daily, Monday – Friday (eligibility paperwork and fees are due)

Thursday, August 15 – Denver East Angel 2 Mile Time Trial and Alumni Challenge. This will determine Varsity for our first meet. Alumni are welcome to compete for fun. Celebration dinner and fund raiser following

Friday, August 23 – First meet of season; all eligibility paperwork and fees must be paid and attendance at 5 official practices required by CHSAA.

Running Terms/Definitions

Maintenance runs: Most of our runs will be done at this pace (sometimes called LSD – Long, Slow, Distance). These runs should be at a pace at which your breathing is easy enough that you can continue to speak in complete sentences – but not so easy that you could sing. The effort should be hard enough that you are sweating moderately and have some small amount of muscle fatigue. A good way to estimate whether you are running in the right zone is to check your heart rate; count your heart rate by feeling your carotid (neck) or radial (wrist) pulse over a six second period and multiply by 10 – this gives you your beats per minute. On a “maintenance run,” your heart rate should be about 150 – 160 beats per minute. Building up the length and frequency of these runs in is the most important step in building your **running efficiency**. **Running efficiency** refers to the amount of oxygen and energy you use running at less than maximal speed. As your running efficiency improves, the amount of effort to run the same distance at the same pace decreases – this is the primary goal of our summer training.

Tempo Runs: We will occasionally do part of some runs at a faster pace to push our oxygen carrying capacity and start to use our anaerobic (without oxygen) metabolism. There are a variety of ways to run at these “thresholds,” but generally speaking these are **medium-hard efforts** (slower than 5K race pace) at which your heart rate will go up to 170 – 180 beats per minute; your work of breathing will be such that you can speak in short phrases but not complete sentences; and you will feel moderate, but not severe, muscle fatigue. Classically, a runner will do 20 minutes (or about 1/3 to 1/2 of their total run) at their tempo effort as part of a longer run. Most of our scheduled tempo runs are on practice days, so your coaches will tell you how to approach these runs. Another type of tempo run is a progression run, where the runner will start the run at an easy pace and gradually increase the pace over the course of the run.

Fartlek Runs: “Fartlek” is the Swedish word for “speed play.” We don’t do interval running during the summer, but an occasional fartlek run serves as an opportunity to run for shorter segments of time near 5K race pace or even a little faster. The pace at which these are run will depend upon the length of the “speed” segment but are often at or near your maximal oxygen consumption capacity (also called VO2 pace). Most of the scheduled fartlek runs are on our practice days, so your coaches will direct you on how to approach these runs.

Speed work: We will not do much in the way of pure sprint type speed work during the summer. However, we will do “strides” or other light speed work at the end of most organized practices or play some games at practice that simulate speed work.

Injuries

Please talk to your coaches right away if you are nursing an injury. In most cases, Rest, Ice, Compression, and Elevation are sufficient for an acute injury. For an injury that persists for more than a week consider seeing your medical provider.

Cross training that has been approved by your medical provider can be an essential way to maintain fitness while you are unable to run. Swimming, biking, an elliptical trainer, pool running and other aerobic activities may be substituted for time spent running to achieve your training goal for the summer.

Drills and Strides

We will do strengthening and range of motion drills prior to all workouts. We will do strides (short sprints at 90% effort) following many workouts as well as core and upper body exercises.

All the information you need to know, including schedules and links to eligibility forms, is on the East Cross Country Website: www.easthighxc.com. Be certain to Follow for updates.