

# GRIM CHALLENGE

Saturday 4th Sunday 5th December 2010 . Aldershot, Hampshire



## Your eight-week speed plan

In this program, you'll run three or four days a week, usually resting a day after each run. You'll vary the distance and intensity of the workouts, with each designed to build on the previous one. Always try to run off-road wherever possible, varying the terrain and gradient as much as you can to really prepare you for the Grim Challenge.

**Volume training (V):** On volume days you have one goal: clock up the miles. It's designed to develop your cardiovascular system's ability to perform prolonged exercise, as well as prepare your muscles and joints for the repeated impact of running.

**Intensity:** Run at a pace that allows you to talk easily with little need to take extra breaths

**Maximal steady-state training (M):** Perform these runs as close to your lactate threshold as possible. This stimulates race pace and improves your body's ability to clear speed-limiting acid from your blood and muscles. **Intensity:** Run at a pace where you can mutter short sentences, in bursts of three or four words at a time.

**Interval training (I):** You'll intersperse short bursts of running that are above your lactate threshold with longer periods of running that fall below it – intervals train your body to tolerate high levels of acid. **Intensity:** Start by running your volume-training intensity for five minutes. Then increase your speed until you can't mutter single words.

### WEEK 1 BEGINNER

Monday: 3.25km (V)  
Tuesday: Rest  
Wednesday: 4km (V)  
Thursday: Rest  
Friday: 5km (V)  
Saturday: Rest  
Sunday: 5.5km (V)

**ADVANCED**  
Monday: 5km (V)  
Tuesday: Rest  
Wednesday: 5.5km (V)  
Thursday: Rest  
Friday: 6.5km (V)  
Saturday: Rest  
Sunday: 7.25km (V)

### WEEK 2 BEGINNER

Monday: Rest  
Tuesday: 6.5km (V)  
Wednesday: Rest  
Thursday: 6.5km (V)  
Friday: Rest  
Saturday: 6.5km (V)  
Sunday: Rest

**ADVANCED**  
Monday: Rest  
Tuesday: 8km (V)  
Wednesday: Rest  
Thursday: 8km (V)  
Friday: Rest  
Saturday: 8km (V)  
Sunday: Rest

**WEEK 3  
BEGINNER**  
Monday: 7.25km (V)  
Tuesday: Rest  
Wednesday: 7.25km (V)  
Thursday: Rest  
Friday: 7.25km (V)  
Saturday: Rest  
Sunday: 8km (V)

**ADVANCED**  
Monday: 5.4km (V)  
Tuesday: Rest  
Wednesday: 8.75km (V)  
Thursday: Rest  
Friday: 8km (V)  
Saturday: Rest  
Sunday: 9.75km (V)

**WEEK 4  
BEGINNER**  
Monday: Rest  
Tuesday: 8km (M)  
Wednesday: Rest  
Thursday: 8km (V)  
Friday: Rest  
Saturday: 8km (V)  
Sunday: Rest

**ADVANCED  
MONDAY: REST**  
Tuesday: 9.75km (V)  
Wednesday: Rest  
Thursday: 8km (M)  
Friday: Rest  
Saturday: 9.75km (V)  
Sunday: 8km (I)

**WEEK 5  
BEGINNER**  
Monday: 6.5km (V)  
Tuesday: Rest  
Wednesday: 7.25km (M)  
Thursday: Rest  
Friday: 7.25km (V)  
Saturday: Rest  
Sunday: 7.25km (V)

**ADVANCED**  
Monday: Rest  
Tuesday: 10.5km (V)  
Wednesday: Rest  
Thursday: 8km (M)  
Friday: Rest  
Saturday: 9.75km (V)  
Sunday: 8km (I)

**WEEK 6  
BEGINNER**  
Monday: Rest  
Tuesday: 8km (I)  
Wednesday: Rest  
Thursday: 9.75km (V)  
Friday: Rest  
Saturday: 8km (M)  
Sunday: 9.75km (V)

**ADVANCED**  
Monday: Rest  
Tuesday: 11.25km (V)  
Wednesday: Rest  
Thursday: 8km (M)  
Friday: Rest  
Saturday: 9.75km (V)  
Sunday: 8km (I)

**WEEK 7  
BEGINNER**  
Monday: Rest  
Tuesday: 8km (I)  
Wednesday: Rest  
Thursday: 9.75km (V)  
Friday: Rest  
Saturday: 8km (M)  
Sunday: 9.75km (V)

**ADVANCED**  
Monday: Rest  
Tuesday: 11.25km (M)  
Wednesday: Rest  
Thursday: 9.75km (V)  
Friday: Rest  
Saturday: 8km (I)  
Sunday: 9.75km (V)

**WEEK 8  
BEGINNER**  
Monday: Rest  
Tuesday: 8km (V)  
Wednesday: Rest  
Thursday: 6.5km (V)  
Friday: Rest  
Saturday: Rest  
Sunday: Rest

**ADVANCED**  
Monday: Rest  
Tuesday: 9.75km (V)  
Wednesday: Rest  
Thursday: 8km (V)  
Friday: Rest  
Saturday: Rest  
Sunday: Rest

## Tactics and techniques

If you've never run off-road, you'll notice some key differences. "Because the terrain is changing all the time, you'll find it hard to get a rhythm going, and as there'll be more lateral movement, you'll be using peripheral muscles around the ankles and hips and in the quads and glutes," explains Stan Swartz, author of *Trail Running: From Novice to Master* (Mountaineer Books, £9.68 from [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk)).

**STAY LIGHT:** "Run as if on eggshells," Swartz advises. "You need to adapt to the terrain much more quickly, and this will keep you more alert." Also try not use one leg as the "plant" leg to land heavily on, and the other as the "dive" or push-off" leg – each leg should do these actions interchangeably.

**SPOT THE BALL:** When running downhill, use the balls of your feet and not your heels for more speed, less pounding and greater control.

**GO SHORT:** "Keep your head up and chest forward, and shorten your stride when going uphill," Swartz says. "Relax and focus on whatever rhythm you can to get you up and over each hill with relative ease."

**CUT CORNERS:** "Corners are a great point to catch competitors," Swartz explains. Practice bursts of speed when rounding corners, using any banking to propel you out faster than you entered them.

**MAKE A SPLASH:** It's possible to cross a stream while barely wetting your feet. "High-step across as quickly as possible, allowing your feet to touch down only for a fraction of a second," he explains.

## Injury Hotspot

Because of the uneven ground and often slippery conditions, tripping up is an unavoidable hazard of off-road running. "It's your ankles that are most vulnerable, so make sure to protect them from injury before it's too late," advises Swartz.

**Strengthening:** Take a 50cm length of rope and tie a 500g weight on each end (or a can of food). With your feet hanging off the edge of a table, hang the rope over the end of your shoe and lift the weight as many times as you can, maintaining control at all points. Repeat with your foot pointing to the left and to the right. Aim for 30 reps in each position.

**Warm-up:** Sit on the floor, bending one leg up so you're grasping your lower leg with one hand and your foot with the other. Rotate your ankle clockwise and anti-clockwise. Do 10 to 20 swings then switch legs.