

MILITARY 2-MILE RUN TRAINING PROGRAM

PURPOSE

This program is designed to help military members improve performance on a 2-mile run fitness assessment.

Successful 2-mile performance requires more than simply running hard. The most effective preparation develops:

- Aerobic endurance
- Running economy
- Speed and leg turnover
- VO₂ max
- Lactate threshold
- Goal-race pacing
- The ability to finish strongly

This program progressively combines these elements to help runners successfully pass their assessment while improving their overall run score.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Recommended duration: 8 weeks

Training frequency: 3–4 running days per week

Quality workouts: 1–2 per week

Easy aerobic runs: 1–2 per week

The Basic Formula: Easy Running + Speed Work + Race-Specific Training + Recovery = Better 2-Mile Performance. Do not attempt to make every workout difficult. Improvement occurs through consistent training combined with adequate recovery.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Record your current 2-mile run time and establish a realistic goal:

MY CURRENT PERFORMANCE

Current 2-mile time: _____

Goal 2-mile time: _____

Fitness assessment date: _____

KNOW YOUR PACE:

Goal 2-Mile Time	Mile Pace	800 m Pace	400 m Pace
20:00	10:00	5:00	2:30
19:00	9:30	4:45	2:23
18:00	9:00	4:30	2:15
17:00	8:30	4:15	2:08
16:00	8:00	4:00	2:00
15:00	7:30	3:45	1:53
14:00	7:00	3:30	1:45
13:00	6:30	3:15	1:38
12:00	6:00	3:00	1:30

MY PERSONAL GOAL PACE

Goal mile pace: _____

Goal 800 m pace: _____

Goal 400 m pace: _____

TRAINING INTENSITIES

1. EASY RUN

Run at a comfortable, conversational pace.

You should be able to speak in short sentences without significant difficulty.

Purpose: Build aerobic endurance and promote recovery.

Typical duration: 2.5–5 miles.

2. TEMPO RUN

Run at a comfortably hard but controlled pace.

You should feel challenged, but the effort should not be an all-out sprint.

Purpose: Improve lactate threshold and the ability to maintain a strong pace.

Typical workout: 15–20 minutes of sustained running after a warm-up.

3. GOAL-PACE RUNNING

Run at the pace necessary to achieve your desired 2-mile assessment score.

Examples:

- 400-meter intervals at goal pace
- 800-meter intervals at goal pace
- 1-mile repeats at goal pace

Purpose: Develop pacing confidence and race-specific fitness.

4. SPEED INTERVALS

Run shorter intervals faster than goal 2-mile pace.

Examples:

- 400-meter repeats
- Short hill repeats
- Fast finishing intervals

Purpose: Improve leg turnover, running economy, and finishing speed.

WARM-UP

Before every interval, tempo, hill, or goal-pace workout:

1. Jog easily for 5–10 minutes.
2. Perform dynamic mobility exercises.
3. Complete several short relaxed strides if desired.
4. Begin the workout gradually.

Whenever possible, finish with a 5–10 minute easy cool-down.

THE 8-WEEK TRAINING PROGRAM

WEEKS 1–2: BUILD THE FOUNDATION

Goal: Establish consistent running habits and introduce quality training.

1. Workout 1: Speed

6 × 400 meters

Run each interval faster than comfortable race pace but under control.

Recovery: 60–90 seconds easy jogging or walking.

2. Workout 2: Easy Aerobic Run

2.5–3 miles

Maintain a comfortable conversational pace.

3. Workout 3: Threshold Workout

Choose one:

Option A:

15-minute tempo run

Option B:

2 × 1 mile at a controlled strong pace

Recovery: 2–3 minutes easy jogging between miles.

4. Optional Workout 4

Easy 2–3-mile recovery run or cross-training.

WEEKS 3–4: BUILD SPEED ENDURANCE

Goal: Increase aerobic capacity and improve the ability to sustain a faster pace.

1. Workout 1: 800-Meter Repeats

4–5 × 800 meters

Run at approximately goal 2-mile pace or slightly faster.

Recovery: 90 seconds to 2 minutes.

2. Workout 2: Easy Run

3–4 miles

Comfortable conversational pace.

3. Workout 3: Goal-Pace Workout

Choose one:

Option A:

4 × 800 meters at goal 2-mile pace.

Option B:

2 × 1 mile at approximately goal pace.

4. Optional Workout 4

Easy 2–3-mile recovery run or cross-training.

WEEKS 5–6: RACE-SPECIFIC DEVELOPMENT

Goal: Improve the ability to sustain goal pace while fatigued.

1. Workout 1: 400-Meter Speed Repeats

8 × 400 meters

Run faster than goal 2-mile pace.

Recovery: 60–90 seconds.

2. Workout 2: Easy Run

3–4 miles

Maintain a comfortable pace.

3. Workout 3: Choose One Race-Specific Workout

OPTION A: Pyramid

400 m → 800 m → 1200 m → 800 m → 400 m

Run the shorter intervals fast and controlled.

Run the 1200 meters near goal 2-mile pace.

Recover with easy jogging as needed.

OPTION B: Compound Sets

400 m fast

Immediately followed by:

800 m at goal pace

Immediately followed by:

400 m fast

Rest 4–5 minutes.

Repeat 2–3 times as tolerated.

Optional Workout 4

Easy 3–5 mile aerobic run.

WEEK 7: PEAK TRAINING

Goal: Practice sustaining your goal pace and build confidence before the assessment.

1. Workout 1

4–6 × 800 meters

Run at goal 2-mile pace or slightly faster.

Recovery: 90 seconds.

2. Workout 2

Easy 3-mile run.

3. Workout 3: Practice Assessment Workout

Choose one:

Option A:

Run 1 mile at goal pace, recover briefly, then run 4 × 400 meters at goal pace or faster.

Option B:

Perform one controlled 2-mile practice run.

Do not perform multiple maximal 2-mile tests during the week.

4. Optional Workout 4

Easy recovery run.

WEEK 8: TAPER AND TEST

Goal: Arrive rested, healthy, and prepared. Reduce total training volume.

1. Early Week

4 × 400 meters at goal pace

Full recovery between repetitions.

2. Midweek

Easy 2–3 mile run.

3. Later Week

Short, easy run with several relaxed strides.

TEST DAY

Perform your military 2-mile fitness assessment.

Avoid difficult training during the final days before the test.

OPTIONAL PERFORMANCE WORKOUTS

HILL REPEATS

- Warm up for 10 minutes.
- Run uphill hard for 45–90 seconds.
- Walk or jog back down.
- Repeat 5–8 times.

Purpose: Develop running strength and power.

FARTLEK RUN

- After a 10-minute warm-up:
- Alternate:
 - **3 minutes fast** with
 - **3 minutes-controlled recovery**
- Continue for approximately 20–30 minutes.

Purpose: Improve running economy and the ability to recover while continuing to run.

400-METER FARTLEK

- Run for approximately 3–4 miles while alternating:
 - **400 meters fast** with
 - **200 meters relaxed**

Purpose: Improve endurance and the ability to change pace.

HOW TO APPROACH THE 2-MILE TEST

MILE 1

Avoid starting too fast.

Establish your goal pace early and settle into a controlled rhythm.

The first mile should feel strong—but controlled.

Check your split/lap time every 400 meters and adjust your pace accordingly.

MILE 2

This is where the assessment becomes difficult.

Focus on:

- Maintaining form
- Relaxing the shoulders
- Maintaining cadence
- Taking controlled breaths
- Staying mentally focused on the next landmark or lap

Do not allow one difficult moment to determine the rest of your run.

Continue to check your split/lap time every 400 meters and adjust accordingly

THE FINAL 400 METERS

Begin increasing effort.

Focus on:

- Quick turnover
- Strong arm drive
- Relaxed upper body
- Maintaining forward momentum

Finish as strongly as possible.

KEYS TO SUCCESS

1. CONSISTENCY

- Three to four consistent training sessions each week are more effective than occasional extreme workouts.

2. EASY DAYS SHOULD BE EASY

- Do not turn every run into a fitness test.
- Recovery allows the body to adapt to training.

3. TRAIN AT YOUR GOAL PACE

- You must become familiar with the pace required to achieve your desired score.
- Practice:
 - Goal 400-meter pace
 - Goal 800-meter pace
 - Goal mile pace

4. PROGRESS GRADUALLY

- Do not dramatically increase:
 - Mileage
 - Interval volume
 - Running intensity

- Progressive training is more sustainable and helps reduce the risk of overuse injury.

5. DO NOT MAXIMALLY TEST TOO OFTEN

- A practice 2-mile run can help evaluate progress, but repeated maximal testing may interfere with training and recovery.

Summary:

Eight Weeks Before the Test

- ☐ Establish current 2-mile time
- ☐ Establish realistic goal
- ☐ Calculate goal pace
- ☐ Begin consistent running
- ☐ Include easy aerobic running
- ☐ Include interval training
- ☐ Include goal-pace workouts
- ☐ Prioritize recovery
- ☐ Taper before the assessment

THE MINDSET

Training in an evidenced-based systematic way with consistency will allow you to develop your aerobic fitness potential to dominate the run. The goal is to develop the endurance, speed, pacing ability, and confidence necessary to run the entire distance efficiently and finish strongly. You then get to “kill the run” based on your training and preparation.

TRAIN CONSISTENTLY.

KNOW YOUR PACE.

TRUST YOUR TRAINING.

FINISH STRONG.

R. Judd Robins, MD

Col (Ret.), USAF, MC, FS

Orthopaedic Sports Medicine