

**JULY 2020**

**Previous Papers**

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**1. The loneliness of the distance runner.**



In this paper we looked at the mental attitude required to become a good distance runner. This can be a major deterrent to achieving your goals as it takes commitment and determination to reach the levels required to get to the top.

**2. The running shoe.**



The shoe is designed to protect your legs and body from injury and complements your running posture. Before Asics came out with a specialised running shoe the common shoe used to train was the white Dunlop Volley. Not a good shoe to run many kilometres in. These shoes were designed for a court with the wide flat sole and almost no cushioning. I had a pair of Shoes innersoles in each shoe which helped a little but like all of the distance runners we tried to stay on grass. The development in this area has been enormous.

**3. Posture. When you run, are you running correctly?**

We then looked at the posture and what is needed to build up the many kilometres needed without injuring your body.

We checked on what makes for efficient smooth running and why it is important to develop the correct running posture.



**4. Are you doing it correctly?**

**Is the upper body and stomach up to the challenge?**

When you run you build the muscles in your legs and arms as they are the only parts of the body that should be doing the hard work, but it is necessary to work on the rest of the body to achieve a balanced level of fitness.

There have been distance runners that have reached very high levels by only running and not doing anything with the rest of the body. There are also many who have hit the gym and worked out with the weights and all the machines only to discover they are running slower or are injury prone. Like everything in life you can overdo things, in this case you can become muscle bound. By that I mean that the muscles are strong but not supple. This will cause you to struggle to get a good rhythm and forcing it will cause issues with muscle tear or strain. The distance runner does not do the heavy weights of the body builder and even works with lighter weights than the sprinter. Your goal is to run long so you want to be smooth and supple. Remember the sprinter is about power and you are about endurance. So the formula for the distance runner is light load and more repetitions. As I said

earlier the legs get almost all they need so a small amount of leg work is sufficient. Likewise the arms will cope with light work but do need more than the legs.

Distance runners need a strong stomach as the stress of the distance events can upset the stomach and cause vomiting. This is caused by the stomach being bounced around for a prolonged period and strong stomach muscles help to hold the stomach and prevent the churning that causes distance runners to become bilious.

So the focus is on arms, shoulders, back, chest and very importantly the stomach. This can be achieved by doing some circuit training with a focus on sit-ups, push-ups and chin-ups. With some other exercises to break these up or to enable you to recover from each exercise by focusing on a different muscle group.

Many top athletes have a daily routine where they have built up to 100 push-ups and 100 sit-ups per day with large numbers of reps in the other exercises to balance the body. These exercises can be achieved at home without anything but your own body weight and a few items you can find around the home. These include a chair, a weight like a sand bag to place on your feet for sit-ups or just get a brother, sister mum or dad to hold your feet. Look around home and you will find what you need.

You will ask. How do I get to that level of exercises?

I struggle to do 1 chin up and 100 push-ups or sit-ups would kill me.

So we will have a look at how you can do this. It will take time and patience but you can do it. I have been there and did 100 push-ups, 100 sit-ups and 50 chin-ups every night after my evening run. But it wasn't possible at the start. I did 10 push-ups 10 sit-ups and three chin-ups (or almost chin-ups), the main point is to attempt them even if you don't manage to complete them.

#### **How to work out how many of each exercise to do.**

With exercises like push-ups, sit-ups, burpees, chin-ups. You do a test for each to exhaustion IE. Until you can't do another one noting down how many you achieve in the test. You then take two thirds of the max (rounded up) and that is how many you do in the circuit. If in any exercise you find you can't do even 1 in say the chin ups for instance, then the number is 1 which you then do the best you can in the circuit. It won't be long before you can do 1 so you will be on your way. (I used to hang from the door frame for pull ups) but a swing frame or tree branch can be used. I got into trouble for using the clothes line so I wouldn't suggest you use it.

You should have two circuits that you do regularly the 10 exercise circuit a few times a week and the mini circuit of push-ups, sit-ups and chin-ups every day as part of your daily training.

You do both circuits as a mini circuit starting by going through it once. When you are able to complete the circuit comfortably do the circuit twice and then three times. When the three circuits are comfortable, you are ready to do the max test again and set new repetition numbers. You keep doing this until you reach your goal number of reps and you can do them in one set.

With the exercises that aren't so demanding just set a number that is comfortable to start with and at each test cycle increase the number by about 10 % rounded up.

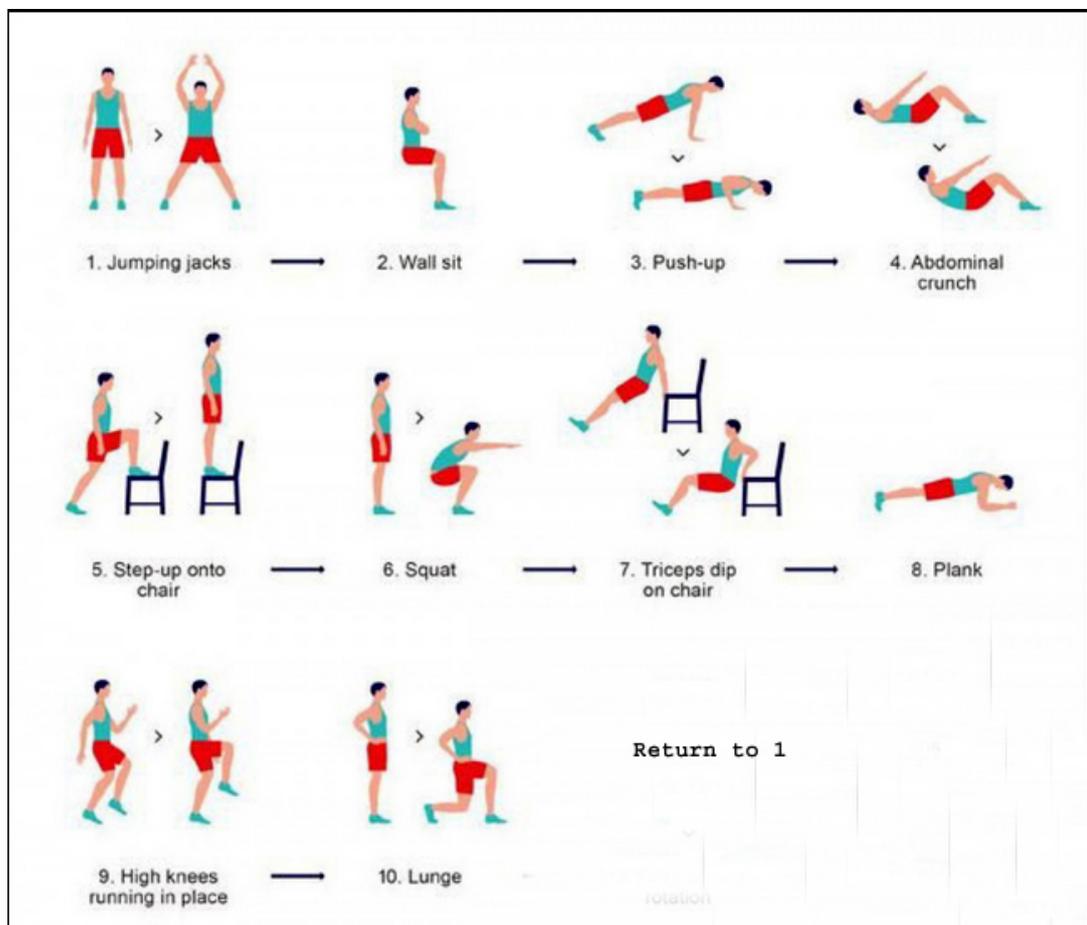
The test cycle is determined by when you can achieve the three circuits without too much strain. So the timing for the test is determined by your body and when it is ready to move on, but 3 to 4 weeks is usually a good rule of thumb.

To increase the difficulty with an all-round exercise replace number 6 in the chart below with burpees. This is one of the most effective full-body exercises around, this one starts in a standing position drop to a squat position with your hands on the floor. Next, kick your feet back to a push-up position. Complete one push-up then immediately return your feet to the squat position. Leap up as high as possible returning to the standing position. This is one cycle of the exercise. You can also make the jump a star jump.

I would suggest you start by doing three of these at stage 6 each time through the circuit. You can increase the number of burpees after each test cycle.

Once your fitness level has improved you should replace number 4 abdominal crunch with sit-ups.

In number 3 below, if you have trouble with the push-ups you can start with half push-ups by having your knees on the floor instead of being on your toes, but you should move to full push-ups when you are able to do them.



**Questions coming up in future papers.**

1. Are you running at the right tempo?
2. Are you covering the right distances for your stage of development?
3. What is the correct way to train?
4. How do you work out when to increase and by how much?