

Running for the Summer Escape Artist

By Stride Longley

Starting with the mass exodus for Independence Day weekend, July marks the peak of the summer travel season for the vast majority of New Englanders. Major thoroughfares are clogged Northbound, Southbound, Eastbound and Westbound—anywhere but homeward bound in most cases. For weekend warriors and long haul vacationers alike, finding both the time and manner to maintain fitness for the upcoming fall running season can be a serious task. Compounded by the prevalence of indulgences (beer, beaches, and barbecue), it becomes imperative that we squeeze every bit of fitness we can into what little free time we have. For most of us, a 17-mile long run in the morning before a long day of what I like to call “beach productivity” (includes the aforementioned 3 B’s of summer) is simply not a possibility. As such, this month I will be giving you some simple ways in which you can maintain your fitness, possibly even improving in the process, and still enjoy your summer vacation. [Click here for the full article.](#)

1) *Use your hotel concierge service or local running shop*

The most integral part of maintaining your fitness is actually finding somewhere to work out. In unfamiliar areas, it doesn’t always behoove us to go wander aimlessly in hopes of finding a running route that suits our needs. Instead, we suggest checking with your hotel concierge or front desk for area maps (and hopefully area running maps). Most good running specialty retailers will provide a map of favorite running routes to local hotels in preparation for exactly this situation. Failing that, as there are a great number of running shops out there with similar accommodations, don’t hesitate to pop your head in the door and ask the salespeople for advice on good local runs. A quick Google search (provided you have some sort of internet access) can yield decent results from time to time as well, and the research is well worth it.

2) *Make short workouts count*

Once you’ve found some routes to run near your vacation spot, it’s time to start using them. Given that family time and other recreational activities will likely eat up large chunks of your days, your remaining moments of free time will be few and far between. Despite the difficulty in finding time to accommodate long runs and complicated workouts, you can still maintain fitness and even gain some speed with a couple simple (and short) runs. As always, to maximize the benefits build in a 5-10 minute warm up and cool down period with any workout.

Fartlek (Swedish for “speed play”) workouts— in which one varies his or her speed at regular intervals—yield some of the highest gains in short workouts. A personal favorite is the 19-minute pyramid, a ladder-like rowing workout adapted to running. The pyramid looks like this:

(5 minutes warm up)

4 minutes@ 60% max effort

3 minutes@ 70%

2 minutes@ 80%

1 minute @ 90% to unsustainable

2 minutes@80%

3 minutes@ 70%

4 minutes @ 60%

(5 minutes cool down)

Note, pace and intensity can be adapted to the needs of the event being trained for.

Another quick, high-yield fartlek workout is what I like to call “Minute Blasters,” in which the runner alternates 1-minute at a recovery run pace, 1-minute unsustainable (much faster than your 1-mile pace) for 20 minutes. This helps your body to become more effective at “changing gears,” and is a great way to get in a hard workout in under a half-hour (5 minutes warm up and cool down on either end).

3) *Don't be afraid to “play” at the beach*

Plyometric workouts have long been extolled by running coaches and athletic trainers as some of the greatest “bang for your buck” workouts out there. That being said, don't be afraid to dash off down the hard sand in the morning for some impactful, if goofy-looking plyos to break up the monotony. I like to do 10 minutes out, 10 minutes back, incorporating 2-minute intervals of quick lunges, sidesteps (1:00 each side), high-knee jumps, skipping, and running backwards (keeping an eye out for shells and wayward seagulls). Anything but actual forward running is sure to wake up the muscles you rarely use. Try this workout barefoot, or in the soft sand for an even greater challenge you'll be sure to remember the next day.

4) *Beat the morning sun*

Lastly, I find the greatest opportunity to squeeze in a quick 30-minute workout is to get it done upon first rising. If you can beat the morning sun, you'll have a much more refreshing run and an even brighter start to your day. As an added benefit, getting your work done in the morning leaves you with more time to actually *vacation* for the rest of the day. And everyone knows how hard it can be to convince themselves to work out at night after a long day of “beach productivity.”

If you take a little creative license with these tips and truly cater them to suit your needs, you may find yourself a step faster, and one beer belly fewer by the end of your vacation than when you started. And there's no better way to stick it to your competition than to beat them wearing a fresh tan.

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