

Hart Road Runners Coached Training Sessions

Why should I attend? What is the benefit? Where and when do they take place?

In short, the club's coach led evening training sessions are all about running improvement. This means training you as an individual to go faster, no matter what your current level of fitness and ability. If you combine your regular weekly longer runs, no matter how far or how slow they are, with the club's coached training you will go faster. This is because the coaching team build these sessions around speed and strength. All sessions are suitable for runners of all abilities.

Most of these sessions are operated with one large group that may be sub-divided based on the location and type of session. Typically, once per month the club operates Peer Group sessions. These allow runners of similar ability to train together. Runners split into 3 ability groups according to their 10k time (Group 1 sub 42 mins; Group 2 42 mins-50 mins; Group 3 over 50 mins). The lead coach for each group will decide the session and location after liaising with the other coaches. The sessions and venues will be advertised a week before they take place.

Coached sessions take place on a Monday evening at the Aldershot Military Stadium year round. On a Tuesday evening we use local parks in summer and the 'roads' in Fleet during winter months. All of the session locations, timings and meeting points can be found on the calendar on the club's web site. They are also advertised in the club's emailed newsletter every week. Any session changes will be made via these forms of communication so please check. This will also help you to choose your sessions and work them in to your training plans.

The sessions are made up of three parts:

- 1) A dynamic warm-up to prepare your body and mind for the training load ahead
- 2) A structured set of running efforts with rest intervals targeting specific physiological developments
- 3) A warm-down stretching routine

Typically the three elements will be completed within one hour, with the main 'interval' session taking 30 to 35 minutes. The Tuesday sessions always have either two or three England Athletics qualified coaches in attendance.

Kit - You only need your regular training clothing and training shoes. Plus a water bottle if it is hot or you feel the need. In the winter and at times of poor visibility you must wear a Hi-Viz bib. This is a strict club rule. A fluorescent running top alone is not acceptable.

Technical Explanation

All of the sessions are developed by the coaching team to improve your running. This is done by working a number of the body's differing energy systems through varying training stimulus. We won't go into the detail of how these systems work but there are four sources of energy that the body recruits when put under load. As endurance runners we want to improve the body's ability to use one of these in particular, the aerobic system.

The aerobic system uses the oxygen we breath in to convert our stored glycogen (sugars) into energy to work muscles. Obviously we do this by exercising, in our case mainly running. The product of all this running is improved physiology. This happens at a cellular level in every part of our bodies, which means we become stronger, faster, fitter and cleverer. Yes improved muscular function, bone density, organ function and neural pathways!

As we do this we breakdown the muscle fibre creating tiny micro tears, but because our bodies are very adaptive the muscles repair stronger. This process happens during rest and sleep. This is why rest is so important to athletic improvement, 'rest' should be seen as a 'session' in your training programme.

Any running will have this effect but after a while, if we just run at the same speed for the same length of time, we will hit a plateau. This results in no discernible improvement and likely loss of interest in running.

This is where coaching comes in to get clever and help. By varying the stimulus on the body, through varying the design of the training sessions, we are able to ensure continued development of the energy systems. Combined with correct rest/recovery and nutrition this leads to continuous incremental running improvement.

As an athlete at club sessions you will hear coaches asking you to run at certain intensities. They may ask you to run at your 5k, 10k, half marathon or marathon pace. Or they may say run at a 'RPE' of say 6. RPE stands for Rate of Perceived Effort. This is your perception of how hard you're working. (Please see chart and description at the bottoms of this document for more detail on this).

The reason they ask you to focus on a particular pace is that this 'specific' effort is targeting a specific function that happens in your body when you are running. As an example, a lot of 'speed' sessions are based on your Lactate Threshold. This is the point at which your body is unable to flush out the acid that is a by-product of lactate production. At this point your muscles can not function fully, you get that burning sensation in them that leads to you slowing down.

Of course there are many other types of session that improve muscular strength (hill repeats), aerobic capacity (long intervals), maximal oxygen uptake (VO₂max) (short efforts off short rest intervals), speed endurance (Threshold intervals) and even anaerobic function (sprinting). These are all part of the training mix that the club offers.

RPE Chart

RPE Scale	Rate of Perceived Exertion
10	Max Effort Activity Feels almost impossible to keep going. Completely out of breath, unable to talk. Cannot maintain for more than a very short time.
9	Very Hard Activity Very difficult to maintain exercise intensity. Can barely breath and speak only a few words
7-8	Vigorous Activity Borderline uncomfortable. Short of breath, can speak a sentence.
4-6	Moderate Activity Breathing heavily, can hold short conversation. Still somewhat comfortable, but becoming noticeably more challenging.
2-3	Light Activity Feels like you can maintain for hours. Easy to breathe and carry a conversation
1	Very Light Activity Hardly any exertion, but more than sleeping, watching TV, etc

Typical Sessions

Track

(Always Monday evenings year round except Bank Holidays)

Location: Aldershot Military Stadium

Meeting Point: The Stands inside the stadium - Car Parking at the rear of the stadium via Queens Avenue

Sessions: Various intervals sessions all based on speed and speed endurance based on distances from 100m to 1k or efforts based on timed duration

Tuesday Evening Sessions

Winter

(Known as 'Road' based sessions but mainly held on pavement)

Sandwich Session

Location: Ibworth Lane/Elvetham Heath

Description: A sandwich session is designed to improve an athletes strength and speed working at different intensities usually between Threshold and a much higher intensity.

This session can be held on either a flat or hilly terrain at the discretion the lead coach.

Hilly version: a typical session can include 6 x very high intensity short uphill sprints returning downhill as recovery. After a recovery as decided by the lead coach, there is a timed threshold run for "n" minutes uphill and downhill. This is followed by a recovery and the threshold run is repeated. Following a recovery, the first high intensity sprints are repeated.

Flat version: this will start with a timed Threshold run as defined by the lead coach, Following this the lead coach will define a series of intervals either timed or distance which should be carried out at a higher intensity.

After suitable recovery another timed threshold run will be completed.

Sandwich sessions are very flexible where the lead coach can tailor the session to suit all abilities of athlete.

Hill Seesaw

Location: The Key Centre, Elvetham Heath

Description: This session is designed to build strength and endurance. This session can be run as a continuous or interval session at the discretion of the lead coach.

A hilly course is required that combines both up and down hill. Mounts Way between Elvetham Crescent and Fullerton Close provides this.

Continuous session

This involves working at high intensity running up hill and recovery downhill, to get maximum benefit from this session it is good to increase the running intensity on the downhill section about 20 metres before the bottom such that the uphill section is started when already running fast.

Interval session

At the discretion of the lead coach they will define the intensity and number of repetitions of uphill and downhill with a static recovery period.

Figure of 8

Location: The Key Centre, Elvetham Heath

Description: This session is designed for speed endurance learning to increase intensity when fatigued. As the name suggests the course is a double loop in the shape of a figure of 8. With one loop around Elvetham Crescent and Mounts Way and the second loop around the Key Centre.

The lead coach will define the intensity of each loop, this session can be implemented as either a continuous or interval session.

Kenyan Hills

Location: The Key Centre, Elvetham Heath

This session was so named after the type of training carried out by elite athletes in Kenya, who run a hilly course and aim to keep the same high intensity running up and down each hill. Normally based around Hawkley Way and Kingsworthy Road.

Fartlek, Avenue Road

Location: Avenue Road off Elvetham Road.

Description: The lap route is basically up the hill of Avenue Road, downhill Church Road, and back to the start along Elvetham Road, with spurs off into Rosedene Gardens and Gough Road. Groups will be set off in waves. Typically the session will involve effort along Avenue Road, recovery down Rosedene Gardens, Effort up Rosedene Gardens all the way to Church Road. Recovery taken to Gough Road then effort to marked point on Gough Road, recovery back to Church Road then final effort along Church Road to Elvetham Road. The lead coach will define the number of reps and target intensity. Runners are advised to take extreme caution of traffic on this route, particularly along Church Road.

Fitzroy Road – timed efforts/800m efforts

Location: Fitzroy Road, off Hitches Lane

The session can involve 8 x 3 minute or 800m efforts along Fitzroy Road (4 out and 4 back) with recovery in between each effort. A coach will be located at each end of Fitzroy to support the runners. Fitzroy Road is relatively traffic-free, but again runners should be aware of and give precedence to cars.

Elvetham Heath can also be used for this session typically along Turners Avenue, Turners Way and Elvetham Heath Way

Pyramid session, Elvetham Heath

Location: The Key Centre, Elvetham Heath, Jog warm up to the Nature Reserve (Pond)

Description: A high intensity session to improve speed and cardio vascular fitness. The runners are divided into two groups, with one group running one way and the other group the other way. It is an out and back session, with runners starting and finishing on the coaches whistle. We usually have 3 coaches supervising this session – with one coach running with each group and the other remaining at 'base'. Whilst the times may vary, the efforts usually are : 1min,2mins,3mins,4mins,3mins,2mins,1min, with recovery time half the effort time.

Paarlaufs, Elvetham Heath/Edenbrook Estate

Location: Elvetham Heath/Edenbrook estate

Description: Paired running around a defined loop (approx. 400m). If possible lead coach will try and get runners to get in groups of 3 of equal ability. Runner 1 and 2 set off together whilst runner 3 waits at start/finish point. After 1 lap runner 1 recovers and runner 3 leads runner 2 around the loop. Basically each runner will run 2 loops leading one and being lead on the other by the fresh runner who has just been recovering. Session typically will run for 30 minutes as defined by the lead coach.

Clover Leaf, Elvetham Heath

Location: Community Centre, Elvetham Heath

Description: Runners split into 3 groups, enabling each group to run a different leg of the 'clover leaf'. These consist of 3 circular or out and back routes (short, medium and long). starting and finishing at the same point.

We have 2 main routes for the Clover Leaf

1. Mounts Way, Ramsdell Road, Turners Way (out and back hilly route)
2. Mounts Way + Elvetham Crescent, Elvetham Crescent + The Key + Wintney Street + Turners Way, Elvetham Crescent + footpath to The Key

The route, number of sets and recoveries will be advised by coaches on the night.

Summer

(Mainly trail or grass based surfaces)

'Sue's steps'

Location: by the pylon at the entrance roundabout to Elvetham Heath

Meeting Point: The Key Centre, Elvetham Heath

Description: So called because it was devised by a past coach Sue Graves. It is a two-part session consisting of 600m efforts along a gravel linear footpath with one minute recovery between efforts. The second part is a 700m loop, effort uphill for about 80m and then downhill to the start. Again, with one-minute recovery. This session provides a timed, high intensity work out which aims to improve cardiovascular fitness and agility.

Hill slalom, Farnham Park

Location: Farnham Park (meet at the golf club car park on left hand side of Folly Hill at bend before it becomes Castle Hill)

Description: An off road session on grass in the delightful setting of Farnham Park. Typically consists of 3 consecutive short uphill efforts, followed by a long loop of the park (part effort/part recovery). Sometimes interspersed with 50m sprints. This is an excellent opportunity to improve hill running technique and leg strength.

Paarlaufs, Calthorpe Park

Location: Merivale side of Calthorpe Park

Description: Paarlauff is a Swedish word meaning "pair run" (running with a partner), preferably of similar ability. The idea being that each runner helps and encourages the other. Paarlauffs are a fun way to train, with significant benefits as you work on your leg speed and anaerobic threshold. Session can vary being set by the lead coach, but principally it will involve a certain number of laps around the field, with each runner taking their turn with the effort whilst the other recovers, then both runners take a long recovery jog around the park together.

Pyramid Session, Calthorpe Park

Location: (as above)

Description: As the name suggests it is an incremental effort based on time rather than distance (so again suitable for all abilities). All runners set off together around a marked-out course and are timed by the coach. Typical efforts can include:

1min, mins,3mins,4mins,5mins,4mins,3mins,2mins,1min with the recovery time being half the effort time. The recovery is an easy jog. Variations of this may include an inverse pyramid.

Southwood Woods

Location: The car park off Kennels Lane, Southwood

Description: There are three coloured defined loops of 900m, 600m and 400m on hard packed track that are used for a variety of mixed interval sessions

Bramshot Farm Country Park

Location: The car park off Bramshot Lane

A large single loop hard pack track that is used for longer intervals. This can also be combined with a very quiet road that loops back to the park to makes for longer endurance intervals

Edenbrook Country Park

Location: The country park car park off Emerald Way just beyond Hart Leisure Centre
A number of loops on hard packed trail that vary from 250m up to one mile that are used for all types of speed interval session

Elvetham Heath Nature Reserve

Location: Elvetham Heath Nature Reserve by the pond.
A 900m loop on hard packed trail. Is often used for a 'progression' session. This is where athletes run 4 or 5 times the loop improving their time by 5 seconds each loop to build speed endurance.