

Marathon Training: YASSO 800s

Most marathon training programs have several key workouts in common including the long run, tempo run, hill run, pace run and speed work. The blending of these workouts on the correct day, with the appropriate intensity, at the right distance with the necessary rest can be a complicated task. For the marathoner looking for a simple workout to predict a goal time, YASSO's 800s are the answer. Add this workout to your current marathon training plan or build a new schedule around it, and I'm confident you'll be pleased with the results.

The workout, which is inserted once each week into your regular routine, is simple:

If your goal time is a 3-hour and 30-minute marathon, then run your 800s in 3 minutes and 30 seconds. If your goal is a 4-hour marathon, then run your 800s in 4 minutes, and so on. I used this workout preparing for an ironman-distance race this past summer and I'm currently using it for an upcoming marathon in January. What I like best about this workout is that it develops a great sense of pace and does not leave you toasted for your next workout, as some "speed" sessions can. It also helps to build confidence-once you hit the ten 800s, you know that your target goal is within reach.

Workout Details

1. Make sure to get a good warm-up and stretch before each session
2. Start the workout about 8-10 weeks out from your target marathon
3. Start with 4x800s and progress to 10x800s, adding one 800 each week
4. The rest interval is a jog in the same interval time as the 800s
5. Make sure to cool down, stretch and refuel well following the session
6. The last YASSO workout should be completed at least 2 weeks prior to the marathon

I discovered this workout in Amby Burfoot's book, *The Complete Book of Running*. Burfoot, the executive editor of "Runner's World" coined the phrase, YASSO's 800s, following a workout with Bart Yasso, who was training for an upcoming marathon. Yasso is the race services manager at "Runner's World" who has run more than 50 marathons around the world. Yasso states: "I have been doing this particular workout for about fifteen years, and it always seems to work for me. If I can get my 800's down to 2 minutes 50 seconds, I'm in 2:50 marathon shape. If I can get my 800's down to 2 minutes 40 seconds, I'm in 2:40 marathon shape." Burfoot was a bit skeptical of this workout at first, so he decided to investigate the validity by interviewing a hundred runners, from a 2:09 marathoner to several those well over 4 hours. He found out that the YASSO 800s held true for all.



If you are planning on a late winter marathon, try adding YASSO's 800s to your routine. This workout, in addition to the long run, easy days, some hill, tempo work and rest days will have you on your way to your best marathon yet.

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