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## ABRunning: Beginner's Guide to Running-Based Training Programs

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ABRunning:  
Beginner's Guide to Running-Based Training Programs

An Undergraduate Honors Thesis  
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of  
University Honors Program Requirements  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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### **Abstract**

This thesis is used to introduce any level of runner to training program creation and give resources to allow the individual to create their own. This was done through a website that has information on warm up, cool down, strength and conditioning, running programs, nutrition, hydration, and running aids. The website gives readers insight on each of the topics while giving them resources on how to implement the information within their programs. The written portion of this thesis is used to detail the creation of said website and the thought process that went into each of its components from structure of training programs to the reasoning for using a website format to deliver the information. Within the written portion is a link to the published website, created through Wix, to view the resources and information presented.

**Keywords:** Training Program, Runners, ABRunning, Conditioning

**ABRunning: A starter's guide to running by providing resources to create a structured,  
more complete training program**

**Introduction**

The purpose for creating this project is to provide any level of athlete, within the running field, a resource to create their own training programs. This document takes each step of the creation process into account and the reasons I had for designing the website the way I did.

Within my website, ABRunning, I provide basic training programs that aren't designed as a "one size fits all" approach. They provide a template for what a training program can look like, but is meant to be a starting point for new, or experienced, athletes to create their own program. The website also includes information on nutrition, hydration, and strength training. The purpose of including all of these resources is to show that there are a lot to consider when starting a program and that time should be taken to properly account for each part. That's why I highlighted the importance of speaking with a registered dietician and physician to explore the options available to better maximize the training programs they create. What this website isn't is an endpoint for creating programs, I provide basic resources, but not answers. Suggestions, not solutions. As I delve more and more into coaching I have recognized that a strong approach to teaching an athlete is to provide them information and resources, but allow them to come to

solutions that best fit them. That is the purpose of the website, to provide resources that allow athletes to come to their own endpoints.

When it comes to the website itself the resources are laid out in a way that the individual can go directly to what they need. I do this by laying out the website in multiple pages, each with their own respective information and resources. For example, if the individual wants to see a specific training program, they go to “Conditioning and Training Programs” and scroll to the Training Programs section. There they find download links to each of the nine programs. Each range from 5 kilometer races up to half marathons and ranges from Beginners to Experienced athletes. I also provide basic information on guidelines for nutrition and hydration, but provide links to more information so that the reader can fully understand the topics. This section is especially tense and difficult to give answers on because of liability reasons. I can’t give my opinion as an answer, but can provide resources that allow the reader to be more informed while suggesting the reader speaks to a registered dietician and physician to have all the information they need. It’s also important to note that the information I provide within the site is very brief and requires more reading to properly understand the topics I discuss. That’s why I chose to provide the reader with links to scientific journals and articles, to further their knowledge on what I present to them.

### **Formatting and Design**

A website was the primary choice for this thesis because it was the best medium available to properly deliver all the information needed effectively. Being able to construct a medium in which I can convey my work to a larger audience was a smarter decision than a pamphlet. As my

target audience is a vast array of individuals, the website is able to target nearly the entire range. The usage of a website was the smartest decision because it would give more opportunity to learn new skills and provide the most information at once in terms of linking other texts and PDFs. Since I've never created a website, it was something I felt was important to learn. To create the website I used the website create Wix. Wix was a great choice because of the tools having easy to understand tips and a strong help section. This made the website creation process fluid, even for someone with no experience creating a website.

When it comes to the website itself, the layout was intentional. Making 4 sections allows the reader to target the area of knowledge they need quicker than having to scroll through an entire website to find what they need. The sections themselves are also divided up into smaller subsections. This is done to divide up the information as much as possible to allow for easier reading. Each section of the website also comes with its own particular design. The format of these sections are similar when it comes to how the words are laid out and URLs provided, but the background choice is based on the information being provided. A prime example of this structuring is seen when looking at either the "Running Program" and "Strength and Conditioning" sections. Both layouts are similar in how information is presented, but the presentation of URLs and background imaging are specific to the information. The text designs are also intentionally done to be easy enough on the eyes to read, by providing translucent backings to the text boxes an individual can read the text easier than simply changing the color of the text.

### **Structure of Warm Up and Cool Down**

Within the section called “Warm Up / Cool Down Guide” it was important to provide as much information on general stretching and preparation prior to completing a workout of any kind. The idea of going into a workout “Cold” or without any preparation is a very dangerous concept as it can have a high opportunity to cause injury to the individual. By providing resources that give readers a strong start to creating their own stretching routine before and after a workout is helpful in preventing injury. Within the section I give both a URL that takes the individual to an article by MayoClinic on the importance of stretching and two spreadsheets that contain exercises and explanations. The article goes into detail on the benefits of stretching and some “essentials” towards stretching. The spreadsheets I’ve provided on the website tie in a routine of stretching that is completely up to the individual to try along with information on how to properly perform the stretches. They also provide details on the length of the routine and the importance of warming up the body prior to exercise. The Cool Down information is similar as it provides information on the exercises, duration, and process of cooling down properly.

The reason for using spreadsheets as the primary form of information delivery for this section was purposeful. A majority of my time creating templates for programs was by using the Numbers application through Apple. By using a different application, it makes me rethink the structure and process in which I create those templates. The rework helped in structuring the templates and how I present the information.

### **Training Program Structure (S&C and Running)**

The “Conditioning and Training Program” section of the website is where the most information is presented. While providing a multitude of training programs for specific

individuals, there was a purpose behind providing information on the benefits of cardiovascular endurance training. This section “Why Running?” was a crucial section to provide clear cut information to properly inform the reader. By providing three separate documents on the benefits of running, each being either scientific journals or articles from institutions. However, if I were to change anything, it would be this section as cardiovascular endurance training doesn’t have to be just running. Endurance training can be cycling, walking, rowing, etc. The structure and function of the section wouldn’t require much changing, but adding more information on other options can be helpful. There is a section on the benefits of cycling in terms of being an alternative, but it doesn’t go into nearly as much detail.

The section between “Why Running?” and the remainder of the training programs discusses the FITT-VP Principle for program creation and exercise selection. The FITT-VP Principle is an acronym for Frequency, Intensity, Time, Type, Volume, and Progression. On this page there are brief explanations for each of the components and how they are incorporated into training program design. Each component is crucial in dictating what exercises should be done throughout the week and at what intensity and duration to properly train areas of the body. It’s important to include this section as it contains components that most beginner athletes don’t consider. A majority of newer athletes select exercises at random or follow “popular” social media influencers to get their workouts when in reality the new athlete has to start at a much lower level. By informing new and experienced athletes on what needs they have before creating a new program they can better prepare a workout that’s more tailored to themselves.

The other sections on this page go into more detail on structured training programs that readers can use to their advantage in order to curate their own programs. The section is meant to



show that there is a need to balance an endurance program with a comfortable amount of strength training. This is because strength training can aid in the process of training specific muscle groups that simply running can't target. The conditioning and running programs utilize both Excel Spreadsheets and Numbers respectively. The purpose of using two different programs to create the training programs themselves is only done for the simplicity and ease of reading I wanted for each. The structure of the Conditioning Plan was done to show how an individual should properly pair exercise intensity and training of specific muscle groups. The purpose of that is to show that training specific muscle groups on particular days can help balance out fatigue and make training more structured.

The running programs are very similar in giving the reader a way to gauge exercise intensity and duration, as well as teach them to balance out recovery and training. This is seen in the differentiation between each level of program; Beginner, Intermediate, and Experienced. Each program level is meant for specific athletes. Those who are brand new, or within their first year of running would be more apt to use the beginner level while experienced athletes with nearly five or more years of experience in running should utilize the experienced level. The only difference between the programs is the intensity of training and how the runner is prepped for their specific race. Intensity of exercise is determined by the duration and speed the individual has to run. These factors can determine how comfortable the run is. The programs themselves are also useful to show how programs are long term, taking more than a couple weeks to complete. Running is a slow process to improve as the muscular and metabolic adaptations needed to compete at higher levels take more than a week or two. Each program is designed to take at least 10 weeks. However, an ideal training plan should take multiple years to complete.

## **Nutrition and Hydration**

The “Nutrition and Hydration” section of the website is where I had to be the most careful when creating. Every recommendation presented had to be backed up by a scientific journal or accredited institution because of my lack of certification in dietetics, or any other nutritional field for that matter. That is the reason for including a small prelude to the information within that gives the readers a notice that speaking with a registered dietician and taking the recommendations with a grain of salt was important. Everyone’s bodies have different needs that have to be addressed and there is no “one size fits all” approach to proper diets or hydration.

However, it was an easier section to design and format as the backgrounds could easily be pictures of foods and water. Even the section on “Running Aids” was an easy one to create a background for as all that was needed was a photo that illustrates the multitude of running aids and accessories out there for runners to choose from. When it comes to the smaller sections within this part; Hydration, MyPlate, Pre-Race Dieting, and Running Aids, I was able to provide as much information as deemed necessary to start a newer runner out in a fuller training program. That’s the reason for providing this information, to maximize the impact of the training programs already provided and teach individuals some basic information on living a healthier lifestyle. By providing articles and websites for individuals to dive into for more information it allowed the website’s text to be a little more concise.

## **Reflection/Conclusion**

The creation of ABRunning was a process I enjoyed greatly. It was a multitude of firsts in my career from creating my first website to creating my first training programs. The process was

by far the most enjoyable part when it comes to this thesis. I don't believe that this is the final product in terms of what ABRunning can be. There are many steps I can take to make the website a more feasible platform for providing more concise information, but I feel it is going in the right direction from the start. There are also many things that I can take away from this product when it comes to program creation and presentation. The programs themselves are very bland and require refinement to make them more appealing to the reader. Not necessarily making them more colorful or flashy, but portraying the information in a more satisfying way. I believe that can be done through the process of creating a mobile application. Which could be the future of ABRunning, while still maintaining a presence on the internet through Wix, creating an app for people to download and more easily access resources would be the next step. I do believe what I've learned from this thesis will benefit me when it comes to athletic coaching and for my training as an athlete. I have a better understanding of dietetics and overall nutritioning as a result of both my courses and the application of resources within this website. I also feel more fluent in program creation and implementation of conditioning programs that are specific to an individual in terms of sport, strength, and experience.

The website can be viewed at: <https://abne232.wixsite.com/abrunning>