

Vertical Rush

14.03.19

Training tips



Tower-running (or stair climbing) is one of the best, and quickest ways, to improve your cardio endurance. In fact, the benefits of a ten-minute session of tower-running are equivalent to about an hour of flat level, steady-state running. So, though it may be challenging, it is ultimately rewarding. Plus you get to take in the stunning views from the top of Tower 42, which are well worth climbing for.

Whether you're new to tower-running, or are a seasoned Rush-er, follow our training tips and plans and we'll ensure that come 9 March 2017, you're ready and raring to go!

Keep it light

You don't need to buy any special equipment for tower-running. It will get hot on the stairs on race day so we advise wearing shorts and your technical Vertical Rush race tee, which you will collect on the day. Normal running trainers should suffice and though some top runners wear weight lifting or cycling gloves to give them purchase on the handrail, it's not required.

Warm up

A proper warm up should increase your heart rate, speed up your breathing and warm the muscles. Dynamic stretching before a workout involves controlled movement of major muscle groups - aim for five minutes of leg lifts, hip swings, leg lunges and kicks.

Powerful springs

To launch you up those stairs you need strong powerful springs. Focus some time in your training to strengthening thighs (quads) and glutes. Squats, lunges and step ups are great and if you've access to a gym the leg press will be an essential piece of equipment. Multiple repetitions (three sets of 20) with a light weight will best mirror the challenge you will face. Hops, jumps, and drills will also help develop the concentric strength or spring needed to bounce up the tower.

The only way is up

You need a good aerobic engine for tower-running, so maintain a routine of running as well as your additional stair workouts. However, if you want to fly up the tower you need to replicate the demands of the event. So seek out stairs you can safely train on, or alternatively a steep hill or good quality treadmill will suffice.

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Embrace the lactic burn

Let's face it, at some stage of the 932 steps to the top your legs are going to be burning, so you need to be accustomed to running with lactic acid building in your legs. Running some hill sprints or high intensity intervals on the flat will be vital in preparing your body to deal with this. The greater your tolerance of lactic through training the better. Spinning classes, particularly those using high resistance, can be great for this while also building essential thigh strength. Or use your own bike on an uphill gradient, alternate sitting in and out of the saddle, and aim for 10 repetitions of 60-second bursts.

Sweat the technique

Top tower-runners regularly hone their technique. The fastest method is to take two steps at a time, although it's tough work. Think about your 'racing line' too, taking the shortest route to the top by taking corners sharply and hugging the handrail. Top tower-runners also use their arms effectively, taking some of the load of the legs. Use the 'rope climbing' technique using both arms alternately to pull along the handrail. Practicing this beforehand or doing some high intensity workouts on the rowing machine will be beneficial.

Race day

Ideally you should feel light, fresh and raring to go. A light meal a few hours before should suffice. Have a good warm up, including a little bit of moderate high intensity work. Your body should be a little bit prepared for the shock to come! Try and start off conservatively; the best stair runners' time their runs to perfection, saving their push till the final third.

Training plans

All of the plans are based around an eight-week training programme, with each week containing three to four training sessions (a mix of flat-level and stair or hill running), one strength building session, and three or four rest days.

You need to decide which plan is best for you. If you have a recent 5km time, you can use this, or you can select the plan based on your target finish time for Vertical Rush. Previous finish times range from five to 40 minutes, but the average time is around 9-10 minutes.

Take a look below to decide which programme would suit you best. Then simply download and print it off to stick on the fridge as a reminder! Good luck!

Recent run time or Target finish time

| Level | 5k | Vertical Rush |
|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| <u>Beginner</u> | 30 minutes plus | 10 minutes plus |
| <u>Intermediate</u> | 25-30 minutes | 7-10 minutes |
| <u>Advanced</u> | 20-25 minutes | Under 7 minutes |

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