



I have never heard a runner expressing that they do not want to be able to run faster. People at the running clubs are often overheard telling their friends about their latest “best performance” or that they perhaps had a ‘bad’ race; this being synonymous with a slower than expected finishing time. We all want to be the fastest runners we can be.

When we look at the running population in general, we see that there is a huge variation in the types of runners that exist with a huge variation in body type and experience, not to mention the obvious fact that we have male and female runners. Yet, for some strange reason, we see very different people using the exact same strategies.

## “Run slow to run fast” is a half truth

The philosophy that is most used, from my observations, is the “run slow to run fast” strategy. People naturally admire champions and look to them for training advice. In most cases these champions would fall in to the category of either being born fast, or have a history of running track from junior level; runners who have developed their speed through intensive training over the past 2 decades. These fast runners can often make further gains in their running careers by simply running more – and even at fairly easy efforts, by developing the aerobic systems more completely. Their performance gains come through further developing a greater resistance to fatigue rather than by gaining more speed per se. In essence they learn to slow down less.

In steps the amateur runner who strikes up a conversation with the club champion following the weekly club run. He is amazed to hear that the club champion has been running his lifetime best times on a mixture of steady weekly runs and easy weekend runs, but with a fair dose of distance per week; no track running at all and no speed training what so ever. The club champ even goes on to explain why the aerobic training is so effective, describing how important aerobic efficiency is.

Convinced, the amateur runner embarks on a journey of high mileage, mostly low intensity training. After a month he can already see the benefits. His half marathon time has come down and he is looking forward to his marathon that he has been preparing for all summer. He too is running ‘faster’, and he thanks the club champion for the stellar words of wisdom. The problem the amateur runner faces, 18 months down the line, is that he reaches a plateau and doesn’t improve any further. So, he decides that if he is to improve, he needs to increase his volume of running. He increases his volume of running and despite putting massive effort in, he still does not run any faster. Eventually he succumbs to an overuse injury and convinces himself that if he had not become injured, he would have improved further.

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This scenario is played out all the time amongst distance runners. The prevailing mantra seems to be “run slow to run fast”. This method is only really effective on people who are already fast. LSD will make you a bit faster, by allowing you to slow down less, but it won’t improve your base speed level. The converse is also true; running low volume, high intensity will make you faster, but it will not effectively improve your efficiency when compared to higher volume training regimens and too much fast running will greatly increase your risk of injury.

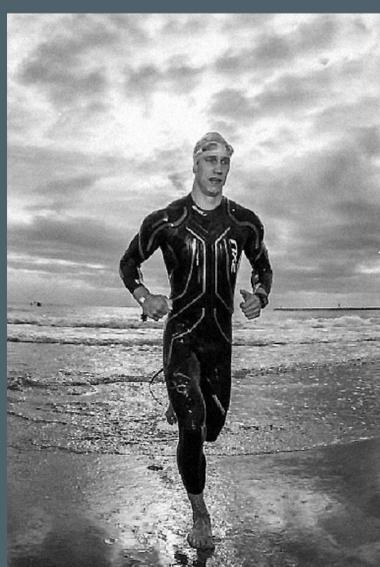
There are many training strategies to become a faster runner, but not all of those ways will work effectively on all athletes unless the strategy accounts for individual differences in people. The training you do needs to elicit adaptations within your muscles and cardiovascular system that make you both faster and more efficient. I find it interesting that people always seem to become adherents of one of two diametrically opposing viewpoints. Common sense, along with science, tells us that the population will follow a bell curve type distribution in terms of body type and athletic ability. The most optimal training methods would therefore need to take individual differences in build, running history, gender and genetic predisposition into account.

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## Freddy Lampret

## Pro Athlete/Coach



### Freddy Lampret holds 2 B.Sc. Degrees:

- 1) B.Sc (Biochemistry & Genetics), University of Witwatersrand 2000
- 2) B.Sc.Hons (Physiotherapy), University of Witwatersrand 2005

Freddy Lampret has been running competitively since the age of 8, where he won his first provincial Cross Country Title. While at school he competed in middle distance on the track; at 400m, 800m and 1500m distances.

After leaving school, Freddy became involved in Triathlon and has since competed in over 20 Ironman events and over 50 Ironman 70.3 events often finishing in top 10.

He has qualified for the Ironman 70.3 World Championships as a Professional.

He won the 2012 South African Long Course Triathlon Championship and is a 3time consecutive winner of the Afriman Ultra Duathlon.

### Freddy has won acclaim as a coach in the following areas:

In addition to his education and athletic achievements, Freddy has also coached numerous athletes to national championship titles including amateurs and professionals. He has coached swimming for the past 15 years and has run a successful masters/triathletes swim program for the past 12 years.

He has coached in excess of 150 people in completing their first Ironman, and hundreds more to their personal best performances over various distances and race formats.

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