

## PH Racing Club - Tempo Sessions

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### About Tempo Sessions

You will see tempo sessions called various things by different people and different coaches such as cruise intervals, threshold runs, OBLA runs and various others and many people will discuss the correct name for these based on the science and purpose. They are all the same and I call them tempo runs but will exit any further debate about which is the correct name for these!

A tempo run is a sustained run at a comfortably hard pace (or split in to multiple runs or intervals as you will see in our schedules) for about 20 to 30 minutes or, if split in to intervals, for a similar total time of tempo running. The comfortably hard pace is roughly the maximum pace you could sustain for 1 hour, so typically somewhere between 10km and half marathon pace. Tempo sessions should definitely not be ran as fast as you can, the purpose of tempo runs is to run them at the correct pace, as only then will you get the desired benefits. They are tough and you will feel the effort upon completion but you won't be on your last legs, like after some interval sessions, and after a couple of minutes (or less depending on fitness) you should be able to run again. A properly executed tempo run can get the endorphins going and give you a real buzz.

The purpose of tempo sessions is to increase the running speed at which the lactic acid builds up – that burning sensation which forces you to slow. We are all able to run at a speed for so long until the lactic acid kicks in, but by doing regular tempo work you can increase that speed at which the lactic acid kicks in. This enables you to run at the same speed for longer or to run faster for the same period of time, the results of which are faster race times.

The biggest mistake you can do with these runs though is to go too fast as this will not have the desired effect of the session and neither will it have the benefits of an interval session. Doing these runs too fast is a wasted session. Use your watch, hear rate or run with others of similar ability to gauge pace and to ensure the right effort level.

#### Notes:

- Always do a good warm-up before a tempo session and a good warm-down afterwards.
- Don't do tempo sessions too fast!
- Try and run these with others to help each other out and control the pace. It doesn't matter if there are small differences between your race times, given the nature of these sessions it can be beneficial to all run together i.e. for 19 and 19:30 pace 5km runners they could run these sessions in a group.

## Tempo Pace Table

The table below gives the target pace range you should be performing tempo sessions at based on your 5km time.

5km Current Race Time	Target Tempo Pace Range	
	Minutes per km	Minutes per mile
15:00	3:12 – 3:18	5:10 – 5:18
16:00	3:24 – 3:30	5:26 – 5:36
17:00	3:36 – 3:42	5:50 – 6:00
18:00	3:48 – 3:55	6:10 – 6:20
19:00	4:00 – 4:08	6:28 – 6:38
20:00	4:10 – 4:18	6:45 – 6:55
21:00	4:24 – 4:32	7:05 – 7:15
22:00	4:34 – 4:42	7:25 – 7:35
23:00	4:46 – 4:55	7:42 – 7:52
24:00	4:58 – 5:06	8:00 – 8:12
25:00	5:10 – 5:20	8:18 – 8:30
26:00	5:25 – 5:35	8:44 – 8:55
27:00	5:40 – 5:48	9:05 – 9:15
28:00	5:50 – 6:00	9:22 – 9:32

\* Please ask if you require the table to be extended or modified to suit and we will update.

The above table has been adapted from the following resources:

[www.mcmillanrunning.com](http://www.mcmillanrunning.com) – McMillan Running Calculator

Daniels Running Formula – Jack Daniels, PhD

Tempo runs can also be based on heart rate which gives a direct measure of effort against prevailing conditions. Wind, weather, fatigue, undulations, twists and turns, road crossings etc. can all effect the pace of the tempo effort which is why a pace range is quoted. Sticking strictly to a predefined pace in tough conditions can actually make the tempo effort harder than it should be. By monitoring and utilising heart rate you are able to consistently measure the direct effort level without the interference of these other elements.

Tempo sessions should be performed at the following heart rates:

85 – 90% of maximum heart rate or;

80 – 85% of heart rate reserve (more accurate than maximum heart rate)

Your heart rate reserve is your maximum heart rate minus your resting heart rate.