

# HOW JOHN WALKER TRAINS

Reprinted from "Track Technique"

**J**OHN WALKER, who began competing at the age of 12, first started serious training at age 18. Now aged 24 he trains year-round, "barring injury". He follows no regular warmup or warmdown before or after meets or workouts. He does, however, usually do 15 minutes of hard jogging and six hard strides until he breaks a sweat. Before competition, Walker tries to relax as much as possible; he goes for a jog in the morning, eats a good meal, then usually sleeps for about 2 hours. He does not follow any particular diet, commenting, "I never worry about weight. I eat any type of foods." He goes to bed late and sleeps in late. Walker also works an 8 hour day and feels that it is important to do something else besides run.

John Walker does no weight-training. John believes his greatest strength to be his ability to run long distances at a fast pace. In his training schedule, he runs from 10 to 23 miles, *never any slower than 6:05 pace*. "It is not technique but the ability to push yourself hard in training, working the body, but not straining, to run within yourself" which is the key, according to Walker. "But this cannot be achieved straight away: it usually takes 3 to 4 years solid mileage to get there." With his acquired strength, John is able to compete in more than 50 outdoor meets per year against top-flight competition.

On his training programme, Walker notes that his training weeks vary, but "everything is done

faster than most athletes train; I train to how I feel and not to what a schedule says to do."

The following training weeks are taken from half-way through Walker's training programme.

## NON-COMPETITIVE SEASON

**Mon**—One run only, 10 miles easy in about 56 minutes; on grass and flat, incorporating hills, working the last 5 miles, "but not straining. Only one run, especially after the weekend."

**Tues**—11 miles on hills, running the flats hard.

**Wed**—18 miles, one run, usually averaging under 6:00 pace; over hills and flat, all done on the road.

**Thurs**—11 miles in morning at "reasonable" pace. PM, 7 miles hard.

**Fri**—Easy day; 10 miles on grass; one run.

**Sat**—15 miles on flat road in about 1:21:00.

**Sun**—18 to 23 miles, really hard hills around Waitarua (Snell's course), usually maintaining 6:00 pace.

Walker comments that the above training mileage (105) was only recently reached. Before, he used to run twice per day, except Sunday, and average about 90-95 per week for 7 weeks.

## COMPETITIVE SEASON

**Mon**—AM, 10 miles fast. PM, 2M at reasonable pace, 8:40-8:47.

**Tues**—AM, 8 miles in hills. PM, 6 x 200 in 26.



**Wed**—AM, 8 miles fast. PM, 2M in 50 x 60y reps really hard; or, 6 x 400 in 55-57.

**Thurs**—AM, 8 miles. PM, 2 x mile in 4:03 average, 3M in 13:40; or 15 x 200 in 26 average; or 6 x 400 in 55-57.

**Fri**—AM, 8 miles. PM, 8 x 150 fast.

**Sat**—Race, or time trial over 600 or 800m; or 15 x 400 averaging 61.

**Sun**—18 mile run at good pace (1:44:0), usually a lot of hills included.

On going all-out in training, Walker says: "I find it impossible to run flat out. I need competition to achieve full results. I usually train at  $\frac{3}{4}$  pace so I'm not leaving all my training on the track."

Since 1971, Walker has been coached by Arch Jelley. Following is presented the training theory on which John's workouts are based, plus actual samples of workouts done by Walker in 1975.

Walker has trained all the year round since October 1971 except for when he has been indisposed or injured. He does not train for cross country but did run in three cross-country races in 1975. All his training is geared for outdoor track running with two distinct seasons of track racing each year.

Walker races in Europe and in New Zealand for a total of between 50-60 races per year. He also races indoors in the States for a limited number of races but he does not regard this in a serious light. His usual cycle of training goes something like this:

1. **Build Up** (a) Stamina (6-8 weeks); (b) Speed (4-6 weeks).

2. **Racing** (8-10 weeks).

3. **Easing off Period** (2-5 weeks).

After his easing-off period he starts in immediately on the stamina part of his build-up again.

When compared with some New Zealand greats of the past, Walker has not been a high mileage man. The following table illustrates this fact:

	1973	1974	1975
<b>Build Up</b>			
(a) Stamina	5 wks at 68	6 wks at 78	5 at 92
(b) Speed	7 wks at 57	6 wks at 84	5 at 80
<b>Racing</b>	9 wks at 36	10 wks at 49	10 at 44

His speed work, which is of the Lydiard type but tailored to suit him and the circumstances, is accompanied by a fair mileage done at a good speed. Up until 1975 the speed section of his Build-Up often contained higher mileage than the Stamina section of his Build-Up.

John started off in 1971 by doing the Lydiard-type hill schedule but recurring knee injuries have meant that this specialised type of hill work has been abandoned since the 1971-72 season. John used to do his steady type running at about 6:30 pace but now he would seldom train slower than 5:30 mile pace. His mileage has gradually been increased over a 4-year period so that now for the first time he is handling in Stamina Build-Up a mileage of approximately 100 per week. Some of this is done in two sessions per day of quality running but very recently John has been running only once daily. He has never worked with weights but is naturally a very strong, tough, well built, muscular athlete. He does stretching and suppling exercises briefly each day and especially before any speed sessions.

*Build-Up (Stamina) Period (April 1974):*

**Mon**—AM, 9.5 miles steady. PM, 6.5 miles steady

**Tues**—AM, 9 miles steady. PM, 7.2 miles steady.

**Wed**—AM, 8 miles steady. PM, 7 miles. **Thurs**—AM,

8 miles. **Fri**—AM, 9 miles. **Sat**—AM, 10 miles.

**Sun**—AM, 16 miles on hilly cross-country course.

*Second Example of Build-Up (Stamina) (Nov. 1975):*

**Mon**—15 miles, steady. **Tues**—10-mile fartlek.

**Wed**—18 miles on road (hilly), 1 hour, 39 minutes.

**Thurs**—12 miles steady. **Fri**—9 miles steady. **Sat**—22

miles on road (hilly), 2 hours, 12 minutes. **Sun**—15 mile jog.

*Build-Up (Speed) Period—Mileage 75-80 mpw (May 1975):*

**Mon**—AM, 7½ miles on road in 42 minutes. PM,

3200m in 8:46. **Tues**—AM, 7½ miles steady. PM,

8 x 200 in 27.1 average, 200 jog recovery. **Wed**—

PM, 8 x 150 stride-outs untimed; 400 in 53 seconds.

**Thurs**—AM, 8½ miles steady. PM, 1600m in 4:05.6 at

$\frac{3}{4}$ -effort; 15-minute jog; 1600 at  $\frac{1}{4}$ -effort in 4:14.

**Fri**—PM, 4 x 150 untimed stride-outs. **Sat**—AM,

2-mile jog. PM, 1500m relay leg in 3:36+ in attack on world record.

*Second Example of Speed Build-Up (June 1975):*

**Mon**—AM, 8-mile steady on road in 44 minutes.

PM, 8 x 300 in 40.5 with the fastest in 39.8, 300m

jog between. **Tues**—AM, 8 miles on roads. PM,

600m in 1:19.2 (goal 1:20.0). **Wed**—AM, 8½ miles

steady on roads. PM, 8 laps of 50/60 yard dashes

(4 in each lap; each lap 69-70 seconds); fast stride

for 50, followed by a 60-yard float. **Thurs**—AM,

6 miles steady. PM, 6 x 400m in 57.1. 400m jog

recovery. **Fri**—Rest. **Sat**—2-mile jog; 2 x 200m

stride-outs; 1000m trial in 2:21 (aiming at 2:24).

**Sun**—18½ miles on hilly roads.

*Example of Racing Period (June 30 to July 6th 1975):*

**June 30**—Mile race in 3:52.2; 4-mile jog. **July**

**1**—7½ mile jog. **July 2**—1000m race in 2:17.2. **July 3**—

6½ mile jog. **July 4**—2000m race in 5:00.6. **July 5**—

AM, 8½-mile jog. PM, 5½ mile jog. **July 6**—7-mile og.

*Example 2 of Racing Period (Leading up to 3:49.4 mile):*

**Aug 6**—6-mile jog in 36 minutes. **Aug 7**—800m

race in 1:46.5 (3rd). **Aug 8**—8-mile jog. **Aug 9**—5 x

200m strideouts, varying from 25.7 to 30.0. **Aug 10**—2

x 200 in 23.0 and 22.9; 300 in 38.4, 2 x 150 in 15.1.

Slept 10½ hours. **Aug 11**—Jogged 4-5 miles and did a

few easy untimed stride-outs. **Aug 12**—AM, 20

minutes easy jogging plus a few stride-outs. PM,

mile in 3:49.4 (WR).

During the racing season Walker usually does light speed work with jogging on alternate days and regards racing as one of the most important forms of speed work and almost always tries to win a race without worrying unduly about the time.

## SOUTHERN LEAGUE (British League 'B')

At Chiswick, June 26th

**Essex 121; Poly 120; Southampton & E 107; Hillingdon 91; Brighton & H 33.** SP: 1, S. Biddle (Poly) 14.18/46'6¼"; 2, Hallett (Ex) 13.33/43'8¾". DT: 1, Biddle 41.30/135'6"; 2, N. Tabor (S&E) 40.62/133'3". HT: D. Forsythe (Poly) 43.52/142'9". JT: F. Brown (Poly) 57.72/189'4".