PHYSIO@CENTRAL PARK

physio . running . strength

6km is not always 6km!

When reviewing individual running loads, it is essential to not get caught out simply looking at mileage to determine one's current workload and the upcoming/next training session.

An easy 6km jog along the bay as compared to a hard 6km time trial or a 6km hill circuit, require different training demands, different levels of conditioning to tolerate the loads, and quite different recovery time frames and strategies.

An easy run can be followed by a long run, a hilly run, or a hard work out. The hard session demands appropriate recovery, with either a rest day or a slow easy run to follow and adequate time before the next taxing run (long, hilly, or faster run).

The following situation highlights the importance of the above-mentioned considerations. An easy 10km run on a flat course, on a cool day when well recovered by a well-conditioned runner is vastly different to a run of a similar distance with hills, on a hot day, inadequately recovered from a previous workout or another hard work out (e.g., F45 or an intense spinning session), experiencing high levels of work/personal stress and a night of disturbed sleep (all those parents with young kids know what I am talking about).

Consequently, athletes need to discuss their training loads and clinicians should make detailed enquiries regarding not only total running volumes, but intensities of workouts and long or easy runs (most runners train at paces that are too fast for their running ability and conditioning), athlete capabilities, running background, terrain, sleep, tolerance to running in the heat, recovery patterns, structure of training program and other sporting/training loads (e.g., gym, cycling, other sports (soccer, tennis, etc.)). These are only some of the important factors to consider, but they importantly highlight focusing on mileage run per week or per session is not enough to determine appropriate management of loads.