

FREE PROGRAM · FOOTY

AFL Preseason Running Program

7 running sessions plus swim and bike options to build the fitness, speed and repeat-sprint ability you need for footy.

I'm Ash, an osteopath in Eltham who works with footy players. Preseason is where your season is won, and where a lot of soft-tissue injuries start. This program mixes aerobic base work with sprint sessions so you build fitness without overloading your body.

How to use this program

- Mix and match sessions. Don't run all 7 in one week.
- Leave **two sleeps** between running sessions.
- Pick **2–3 favourites** and stick with them for 4+ weeks.
- Each week: **1 sprint session** plus 2–3 aerobic sessions.
- Add one easy zone 2 run (talking pace, around 140 bpm) of 2–10 km.

Every running session

Warm up, 10–15 min: dynamic leg swings, back stretches, knee-to-chest skipping, heel flicks, high knees, side-to-side, and short 10 m accelerations.

Cool down, 5 min: walk with static stretches, or gentle skills.

Pace % = how hard it feels compared with your flat-out effort.

An example week

MON

Easy zone 2 run, 4 km

TUE

Gym or rest

WED

Sprint focus, session 5

THU

Gym or rest

FRI

Aerobic, session 6

SAT

Gym or rest

SUN

Active rest, walk

Why sprint work matters

Footy is repeated sprints. Regular top-speed running prepares your hamstrings and calves for game day, which can help reduce soft-tissue injuries during the season.

Stop and get checked if you have

A sudden sharp pain or "pop" in a muscle · pain that changes how you run · chest pain, dizziness or unusual breathlessness · pain in one spot on a bone · pain that gets worse week to week.

Running sessions

Sessions 1–4 · warm up and cool down every time (page 1)

1 Speed ladder

Sprint + aerobic

- **4 × 100 m @ 90%.** Start a new rep every 1 min (e.g. run 20 s, rest 40 s).
- **3 × 200 m @ 85%.** Start a new rep every 2 min (e.g. run 60 s, rest 60 s).
- **3 × 400 m @ 75%.** Start a new rep every 4 min (e.g. run 100 s, rest 140 s).

2 Steady intervals

Aerobic

- **4 × 3 min runs @ 60–70%** with 2 min rest between each.

3 Sprints + finisher

Sprint main, aerobic finish

- **3 sets of 3 × 20 s sprints @ 90–95%,** with 2 min rest between each rep.
- **Finish with 1 × 3 min run @ 60–70%.**

4 Surges + pyramid

Sprint focus + aerobic

- **5 × (45 s @ 85%, then 60 s jog).**
- **Then run 1, 2, 3, 2, 1 min @ 85%** with 30 s rest between each.

New to sprinting this preseason?

Start at the lower end of each pace range for your first 1–2 weeks, then build up. Your hamstrings will thank you.

Running sessions

Sessions 5–7 · warm up and cool down every time (page 1)

5 Shuttle pyramid

Sprint focused

Go as hard as you can on every rep. Rest 2–3 min between sets.

8 × 20 m

15 s rest

10 × 40 m

20 s rest

12 × 60 m

30 s rest

10 × 40 m

20 s rest

8 × 20 m

15 s rest

6 1:1 intervals

Aerobic focus

Run at 70–80% effort. Rest for as long as each run is meant to take (run time : rest time, in seconds).

2 × 800 m

180 s : 180 s

2 × 600 m

120 s : 120 s

2 × 400 m

80 s : 80 s

7 Run up, rest down

Aerobic focus

Run at 70–75% and keep a steady pace from start to finish.

Run 1

rest 5 min

Run 2

rest 4 min

Run 3

rest 3 min

Run 4

rest 2 min

Run 5

rest 1 min

All run times in minutes.

Track your times

Write down your rep times each week. Holding the same pace with less effort is a great sign your fitness is improving.

Pair it with strength

Use your gym days for legs and hamstrings. Running fitness plus strength is the best protection for your season.

Mix it up: swim and bike

Swap these in to keep training fresh and give your legs a break from running

SWIMMING • FREESTYLE UNLESS NOTED

Swim 1

Sprint + aerobic

- 200 m warm up
- 5 × 25 m sprints, 30 s rest
- 5 × 50 m sprints, 60 s rest
- 2 × 100 m sprints, 90 s rest
- 200 m cool down (breaststroke or freestyle)

Swim 2

Mostly aerobic

- 200 m warm up
- 2 × 100 m, 90 s rest
- 3 × 200 m, 120 s rest
- 2 × 100 m, 90 s rest
- 1 × 200 m breaststroke, 120 s rest
- 200 m cool down

STATIONARY BIKE • 30–35 MIN

Bike 1

- 5–10 min warm up @ 60%
- 10 × 30 s @ 75%, 30 s easy @ 50%
- 10 × 15 s @ 100%, 45 s easy @ 50%
- 5 min cool down @ 50–60%

Bike 2

- 5–10 min warm up @ 60%
- 20 × 7 s @ 100%, 23 s easy @ 50%
- 10 × (20 s @ 50%, 20 s @ 70%, 20 s @ 90%)
- 5 min cool down @ 50–60%

Keep pedalling through every easy recovery period.

Carrying a niggle into preseason?

I work with footy players through home visits around Eltham and 1-on-1 online programs built around your season.

Book at quinnosteopathyrecovery.com.au • Call 0447 861 898 • DM "FOOTY" to [@quinnosteopathyrecovery](https://www.instagram.com/quinnosteopathyrecovery)



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This program is general information only and isn't a substitute for an individual assessment. If you have pain, unusual fatigue or an injury while training, stop and see a health professional before continuing.