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A training program to run the Otter Trail should consist of three aspects all of which will help to make the Trail easier, more enjoyable and (should you be that way inclined) faster:

1. Base level Endurance – this is your distance running. The Otter trail is a little more than marathon distance so at the very least you should be able to run a marathon. Specific to this event a lot of your base training should be done on the trails and not on the road.
2. Stairs – there is a great number of stairs and step-ups on the Otter so being strong in this discipline will help you a LOT!
3. Interval training – This, for some, is the most difficult part of training but, if done correctly, can offer the most benefits.

This training program is aimed to both the Otter trail Runners and Ramblers for one main reason.... It is ALWAYS better to be well prepared for an event such this.

It is 6 months to the race/ramble so you have no time to lose. Now is a good time to get the shoes that you intend to run the trail in so that you can wear them in and make sure that they are going to work for you. Running kit should never be new on the day of the event so buy it now and run it in.

I am going to assume that, for the sake of this program, you can run 5 km now and that that 5 km is not too stressful. Be sure to warm up before each workout – a brisk walk for 5 min! I have built in an opt out option....so those not wanting or needing to run sub 5 can **leave the days in grey out!** At any stage if you want to substitute a run for a trail race I highly recommend it as it will better prepare you for the event mentally.

Month 1 (April):

Week's	M	T	W	TH	F	S	SU
1	Rest	5 km slow and easy	2 km MP, 3 x sharp but short inclines, 2 km HMP	5 km QMP followed by 10 min steps.	Rest	6 km HMP	2-hour run
2	Rest	7 km slow and easy	4 x (1km MP then 1km QMP)	5 km slow and easy	Rest	7 km HMP	2-Trail run
3	Rest	8 km slow and easy	2 km MP including 5 sharp inclines, 4 km HMP	6 km, middle 4 at MP	Rest	8 km HMP	2-hour run
4	Rest	5 km slow and easy	6 km QMP	7 km QMP	Rest	8 km HMP	2-Trail run

**Key: (MP) Marathon Pace:** the pace/effort you can hold in a marathon  
**(HMP) Half-Marathon Pace:** the per-Kilometre average of your best half-marathon  
**(QMP) Quarter-Marathon Pace:** the per-Kilometre pace of your fastest 10.5 km

Month 2 (May):

Week's	M	T	W	TH	F	S	SU
1	Rest	6 km slow and easy	2 km MP, 4 x sharp but short inclines, 2 km HMP	5 km QMP followed by 15 min steps.	Rest	6 km HMP	2.5-hour run
2	Rest	8 km slow and easy	4 x (1km MP then 1km QMP)	5 km slow and easy	Rest	7 km Trail run	2.5-hour run
3	Rest	9 km slow and easy	2 km MP including 5 sharp inclines, 4 km HMP	8 km, middle 4 at MP	Rest	8 km HMP	2.5-hour run
4	Rest	6 km slow and easy	7 km QMP	8 km QMP	Rest	10 km HMP	2.5-hour Trail run

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Month 3 (June):

Week's	M	T	W	TH	F	S	SU
1	Rest	10 km slow and easy	5 km MP, 5 x sharp but short inclines, 2 km HMP	8 km QMP followed by 15 min steps.	Rest	10 km HMP	3-hour run
2	Rest	8 km slow and easy	4 x (2 km MP then 1 km QMP)	5 km slow and easy	Rest	10 km HMP	3-hour Trail run
3	Rest	9 km slow and easy	4 km MP including 7 sharp inclines, 4 km HMP	8 km, middle 4 at MP	Rest	11 km HMP	3-hour run
4	Rest	6 km slow and easy	7 km QMP	Rest	Rest	21 km HMP	1-hour easy run

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Month 4 (July):

Week's	M	T	W	TH	F	S	SU
1	Rest	10 km slow and easy	8 km MP, 5 x sharp but short inclines, 2 km HMP	8 km QMP followed by 15 min steps.	Rest	15 km Trail run	3-hour run
2	Rest	10 km slow and easy	5 x (2 km MP then 1 km QMP)	5 km slow and easy	Rest	15 km Trail run	4-hour run
3	Rest	10 km QMP	8 km MP including 7 sharp inclines, 4 km HMP	12 km, middle 4 at MP	Rest	21 km HMP	4-hour run
4	Rest	10 km easy	10 km. Inc 5 x 1 km MP+	15 km QMP	Rest	28 km MP	1-hour easy run

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Month 5 (August):

Week's	M	T	W	TH	F	S	SU
1	Rest	10 km slow and easy	8 km MP, 5 x sharp but short inclines, 2 km HMP	8 km QMP followed by 20 min steps.	Rest	15 km Trail run	3-hour run
2	Rest	10 km slow and easy	5 x (2 km MP then 1 km QMP)	8 km slow and easy	Rest	15 km easy	5-hour run
3	Rest	10 km QMP	8 km MP including 7 sharp inclines, 4 km HMP	12 km, middle 4 at MP	Rest	21 km Trail run	4-hour run
4	Rest	10 km easy	15 km easy	6-hour run (mock event)	Rest	15 km QMP	1-hour easy run

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Month 6 (September):

Week's before race	M	T	W	TH	F	S	SU
4	Rest	15 km, including 10x1 sharp inclines.	Easy 7 km jog	15 km, middle 5 at MP	Rest	4-hour run	5-hour run
3	Rest	15 km, including 10x1 sharp inclines	Easy 7 km jog	15 km, middle 5 at MP	Rest	2-hour Trail run	2-hour run
2	Rest	15 km, including 3x1 LONG inclines	Easy 7 km jog	10 km, middle 4 at MP	Rest	1.5-hour run	Easy 1-hour jog
1	Rest	Easy 10 km jog	Rest: Stay off your feet	Prologue	Otter Trail	Rest (Of Course!)	Rest (Of Course!)

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One of the most important things to remember throughout this training program and in the event is Nutrition and Hydration. You MUST eat and drink enough to cope with the work load, recover and keep you immune system high! Here is a little help for the event and a guideline to use while training:

There are many nutritional strategies for ultra-distance running. The following are general recommendations for the athlete:

**Hydration.** This is of utmost importance considering the environmental challenges and the possibility of a great amount of weight that can be lost per hour. I would recommend drinking between 1 – 1.2l of fluid (with carbohydrates and electrolytes) per hour, taken at 15 to 20 minute intervals. Because athletes must pack and carry all of their nutritional requirements, this will be a challenge. Therefore, it is very important for the athlete to be very well hydrated prior to the event and follow well planned re-hydration guidelines at the end.

**Electrolytes.** Because there will be a great amount of sweat lost, it is important to replenish electrolytes on an hourly basis. Of utmost importance is sodium. Sodium tablets are used by many ultra-runners with great success. While there are no set requirements for sodium use per hour (as there are for hydration), I usually recommend beginning with at least 700 milligrams per hour under these conditions. It is quite possible for individuals who sweat heavily to need upwards of 2000 to 3000 milligrams per hour. Rehydrate is another good solution but try it well before the event.

**Fuel.** While this will be very dependent upon an athlete's individual preferences and digestive tract, I recommend athletes consume carbohydrates, protein and fats during the race with the emphasis on carbohydrates. Because the athlete needs to carry all of his supplies, I would recommend higher calorie, more nutrient dense foods such as energy gels, peanut butter and honey tortillas/sandwiches, higher salt candy bars, mashed potatoes with salt, energy bars and trail mix, to name a few. Aim for 300 to 500 calories per hour.

It will be very important for the athlete to eat and drink immediately upon finishing. I recommend eating 1.5 grams/kg body weight of carbohydrates, up to 20 grams of protein and at least 30 to 40 ounces of a sports drink immediately after finishing. Follow this with higher carbohydrate, moderate protein and lower fat meals at two hour intervals for the next six hours if possible.

Stretching is also very important and should be done after every workout. Here are a few stretches for you to try:

#### 1. Lying hamstring stretch with cord

Keep your upper body relaxed and both legs straight as you pull one leg towards you. A variation: Laying as before, bend the upper knee in towards your chest. Holding the cord around the foot of the bent leg, push away with the foot, trying to straighten the leg against the tension of the cord. You should feel the stretch higher up the hamstring.



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#### 2. Lying gluteal stretch against wall

Keep the ankle of your front leg just below your knee and ensure that you're close enough to the wall for your lower back to be off the floor. As gravity gently brings your lower back towards the floor, you'll feel a stretch in the muscles around the side of your buttocks. Adjust the angle of your hips and front knee to intensify the stretch.



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#### 3. Groin stretch

Hold your feet and gently use your leg muscles to move your knees towards the ground. Keeping a straight back and bringing your feet closer to your body intensifies the stretch.



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#### 4. Gastrocnemius (upper calf) stretch

Keep the back leg straight and push the back heel into the ground. Keeping a straight upper body and gently lifting up your hips helps. There shouldn't be much pressure on the front foot.



### 5. Soleus (lower calf) stretch

Stand closer to the wall and bend one leg, keeping the foot flat on the floor. You should feel a stretch in your lower calf. Leaning towards the wall intensifies the stretch; there should be little pressure on the other foot.



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### 6. Iliotibial band stretch

Place one foot around the other, with both feet flat on the ground. Keeping both legs straight, lean your hips towards the side of your rearmost foot (so, if your right foot is rearmost, lean your hips to the right). You should feel the stretch down the outside of your leg and around your hip – if you are very stiff, it may take a few times before you feel anything.



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### 7. Hip flexor stretch

Keep your hips squared forwards and your upper body vertical; slumping forwards reduces the stretch.



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### 8. Standing quadriceps stretch

Flex your foot and keep your body straight to maximise the stretch through the front of your leg. You can put one hand on a wall if you need balance.

