

Hill Repeats

**consult with a physician before beginning an exercise program*

If you are not a trained runner you may have never heard of “Hill Repeats”. I do not run; I was just bored with walking farther and trying to get my heart rate up when another Personal Trainer told me about the benefits of Hill Repeats. I replied, “you mean just walk up hills?”. Not exactly, like any interval training there is a method to the madness. First WHY would you want to run or walk up hills?

Variety, variety and um, variety. I had been running a set of stairs, but my knees were not enjoying the down part of the steps. I had hit a plateau in the number of rounds I would do on the stairs and my muscles and joints needed a change. Any program needs a change for progress.

Science based data always gets me excited to try new workouts. In one study, Farley randomly assigned some runners to do hill workouts twice a week while others did faster repetitions on level ground (and a control group kept up their typical training). The result: six weeks of hills boosted runners’ top speed and allowed them to sustain it 32% longer.

Which type of interval should you do? Depends on what you are trying to accomplish. Since I just wanted variety, I organically walked in my neighbourhood uphill, downhill, over to the next street, uphill and down, repeated that street, over to another street - you get the idea. I counted steps going up, and figured my time was about 2-3 minutes up each hill walking fast. My heart rate was in the middle of my target heart rate range. I was surprised – I thought my heart rate would be higher. WAIT....could I RUN up a hill? Yes, but not for 2 mins but for 15-60 seconds. For the full article and other suggested hill repeat workouts:

<https://www.runnersworld.com/training/a20630818/hill-running-workouts-for-speed/>

The workout: 60-second hill repetitions at a 4% to 5% grade, followed by race-pace miles

Do it: Warm up for 20 minutes, then do 6 to 8 hill repeats at an effort of 7 out of 10. Jog or walk downhill for the recovery. Take 1 mile easy (more advanced runners can skip this step) then run 1 to 3 miles at goal race pace before a 1- mile cooldown. *(I replaced running with walking).*

- Descend with Care - Going downhill can burn out your quads quickly—unless you practice. Incorporate descents into your training too, especially if you are targeting a hilly race. On your way down, relax and lean forward from the ankles (leaning backward, while instinctive, is akin to tapping the brakes, increasing the impact on your legs). Looking down toward your feet can help.
- Hill training is for once or twice a week, less if you are prone to injury.
- Try different length intervals, to mix up your training for better results.
- Balance with core work and stretching!
- If you use a treadmill to walk or run uphill, check your posture in a mirror and do not lean over the console or grip the handles.
- Consult an expert! We have Personal Trainers that can assist you with a plan based on your goals and your injuries or limitations.

