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## 8 Signs Your Training Is Working (Other Than Your Pace)

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As a runner, you know it can sometimes feel like you've been training for months without seeing any improvement. We tend to focus on one key metric: minutes per mile. Our pace is what most outsiders/non-runners understand, and it's easy to quantify, so it becomes our default marker for improvement. However, how fast you run is only one piece of the puzzle, and there are other metrics to consider when assessing your progress.

Here are some key markers of running improvement:

1

### YOU CAN RUN AT THE SAME PACE WITH LESS EFFORT

If you're running the same pace, but it feels easier, you've gotten more efficient. You might not be moving from a 9-minute mile to an 8-minute mile, but if your heart rate dropped from 160 BPM to 150 BPM, that's worth celebrating. Similarly, if a 9-minute pace used to feel grueling and now you're finding it easier to stay at that speed and can chat with friends while holding it, that's an improvement.

2

### YOU CAN RUN LONGER AT THE SAME PACE

Running faster takes focused training, and if you're not working to run faster (as you might if you were training for a race, you're probably focusing on going longer without even realizing it. Rather than watching pace, consider looking at how long you can hold that pace for. If you started at a 10-minute mile pace over two miles, but now you're running six miles at that 10-minute mile pace, you're getting stronger.

3

### YOU'RE LESS SORE AND FATIGUED

If it used to be hard to get out of bed in the morning on a physical or mental level, but now you're bouncing out of bed (or at least not feeling [too sore to move](#)), you're getting stronger. The right level of training should make you feel slightly tired after long or hard workouts, but not like you're running on empty every single morning.

4

### YOU AREN'T GETTING INJURED

Not getting injured might be the most important sign training is going well. The number of runners injured annually is higher than it should be, and often, [injuries happen due to overtraining](#), which varies by runner — even 2 hours a week can be overtraining if you're a new runner. [Staying healthy and injury-free](#) — whether it's an ACL tear or fractured bone in your foot or just an ache in your knee that won't let up — is a great sign training is working the way it should.

5

### YOU'RE ADDING CHALLENGING TERRAIN

Nothing zaps your pace-per-mile like [adding trails and hills](#) to your running route. If you recently switched to singletrack or added hilly segments to your usual running route, don't be surprised if



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your pace plateaus or even slows down slightly. Too often, we ignore elevation gain and get depressed with our run splits, even though we gained 500 meters of elevation in the process.

6

### YOU'RE NOT GRUMPY POST-RUN

New runners know this feeling very well, and anyone who's trained for a long endurance event can relate, too. When you're getting fatigued or hungry or thirsty, your mood is one of the first things affected. You start getting snippy with your running buddy, you growl back at the dog when you get home, you cry in the shower ... These moods happen to all of us at some point. But if your running is going well and you're fueling adequately and adapting to the speed/volume, you should be finishing your runs feeling happy or at, least, not unhappy.

7

### YOU'RE NOT SEEING DRASTIC CHANGES

Everyone loves a makeover montage, but when it comes to running and thriving, big changes aren't necessarily a positive sign. A huge drop in weight, for instance, might signal a problem with your nutrition and could indicate a problem or negatively impact your training. A massive increase in your training volume might make your training log look super-impressive for the week, but may lead to fatigue and a fast return to your normal volume. Tiny changes and improvements over time are a runner's key to success.

8

### YOU'RE FEELING THE FLOW

The absolute best marker that you're getting better? Simple: It's that you're enjoying running. In the end, that's all that really matters.