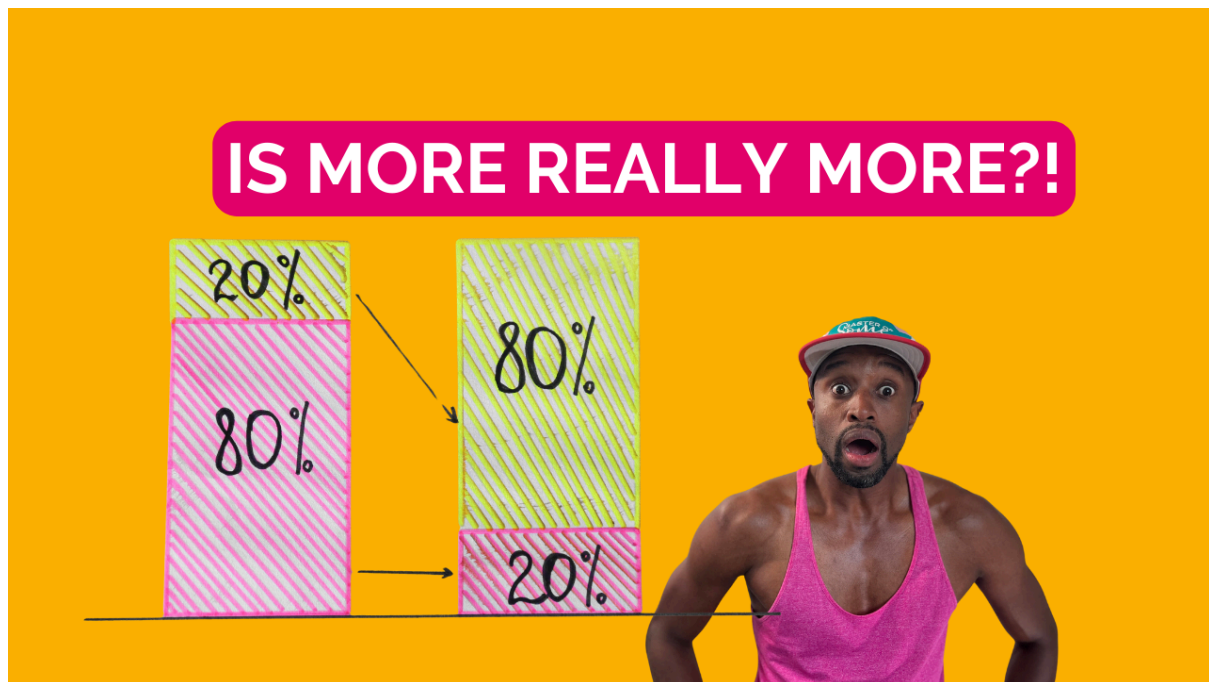


How to stop overtraining and instead find the sweet spot - DLake Runs

The more is more hedonic treadmill paradox that no runner should be on



Daren DLake: 00:00

If I told you that less is more, you would probably believe me, right? Unfortunately, most people's brains think that more is more. It just makes sense. The more you work, the more returns you get out. The hedonic treadmill in its purest form. As a runner or even in your career slash school life, You work hard, you get the results. From understanding the law of diminishing returns to exploring historical perceptions of effort and reward, we're going on a journey that's part facts, part theories, and 100% something that you need as a runner and just a human in general. We'll debunk myths with a fun real-world example, balance the scales of risk versus reward, and argue why sometimes less is really the best.

Daren DLake: 00:46

Expect to learn about focusing on higher output, not just more input, and why this approach might just transform your training and life for the better. Stick around until the end, and I promise you that you'll leave with a fresh perspective on training and life that could change the way you run, work, and live. Let's go. Quick note, this will fall between my self-named categories of facts, theories, and opinions, probably skewing more towards the side of theories and opinions, as it's hard to objectively know how every person trains and how their body adapts to stresses in their life, etc. Alright, so the sweet spot for daily running for maximum health is somewhere in the middle. So you want a lot of fitness and a lot of health and kind of make the balance.

All around us, seemingly unrelated things follow the same pattern from career work to physical exertion to parenting strategies. When a non-runner starts running, they will immediately see the benefits. your entire body will transform for the better. Muscles and bones get stronger, heart and lungs expand, brain functioning and hormones normalize.

Daren DLake: 01:49

Training your way up from running around the block to becoming a two-miler runner still brings great benefits, just slightly smaller. The fifth through the 20th mile turns you into a hyper-efficient machine. All about that zone too, baby. If you're lucky, sarcasm inserted, some people start seeing joint injuries as they rise through the ranks. And by the time you reach the fringe world of a hundred mile ultra runners, serious injuries and surgeries are completely normal, as well as unexpected organ failures in otherwise young, healthy people. That's an excerpt from the sweet spot of physical training adapted by the frugal finance hacking Mr. Money Mustache and his blog post. And I'm just taking that way out of context, but inserting it here because it's so, so relevant. Everything is linear in our heads, history, and the stories that we tell ourselves and others. So naturally our experiences and outcomes should be linear too, correct? Not really. Here's a graph of the United States non-farm labor productivity from trading economics.

Daren DLake: 02:47

As you can see, a lot of cool stuff is happening here, but I won't go into details of that. Moving forward, I'll use the example of training for a half marathon slash full marathon because that's what I enjoy. Well, the half marathon, not the full, and I know it pretty well. You can insert whatever activity or thing that you do. Also, I would insert the 5k. This whole thing takes into account that you are a motivated individual who knows that they cannot run for five minutes three times a week and expect to complete a marathon in under three hours or their best time ever. We all live in a universe that abides by the laws of physics, unfortunately or fortunately. I'll assume in this whole thing that like a lot of type A personalities that you probably are, you do the actual work. So you show up so much so that you usually do more work than necessary because we get addicted to this whole fitness cardio thing and sometimes to the point of feeling tired and run down from all of your training. That's all the assumptions that I need to put into play because if you just read this as it is, you'll be like, what?

Daren DLake: 03:45

So I'm going to only say that once. The risk versus the reward. With running, the most elite and pro runners tend to run six to seven days a week and sometimes even twice a day. They are professional and for every 0.01% gain they can get, they try to get it. They risk injury and burnout to get that 0.01% gain because winning pays the bills sometimes. So the risk is worth the reward to them for a short period of time. Now for an amateur or novice, they most likely won't be winning anything outside of the local yokel 5k park run which I finally did, check the link, back in 2018, putting in more

effort most likely will give them diminishing returns while increasing the dreaded, I call this the IIGB scenario, injury, illness, and or general burnout, which is an acronym that I made up and I'll keep running with it because I think it's dope, IIGB.

Daren DLake: 04:35

For the sake of knowing this whole scope and understanding the scope of what I'm talking about, Here are a few quick numbers to break it down and make it a bit more tangible. I, and most novice advanced runners, run anywhere from 30 to 45 minutes, so about five to eight kilometers, three to five miles, a few days a week, sometimes a little bit more, and then look to do a once a week long run, anywhere from one to two hours, 10 to 20 kilometers, six to 12 miles, depending on what I'm training for. So that's kind of like the sweet spot for me. Less is more? No, less is best. Okay, stay with me on this as I'll get a bit into the quantifiable theory territory, but it's a fun thought experiment.

Daren DLake: 05:12

Theory with not too much scientific evidence. So let's go. What happens when I double my input and turn those 30-minute weekly runs into one-hour runs? What if I double my long run to three hours, to four hours? Insert sarcasm. Surely I would get double the output of overall fitness, economy, and speed, right? No. Well, first of all, I will most likely experience the IIGB scenario, illness, injury, and or general burnout, if I did see gains. And I'd estimate that they would be in the range of anything from 1.05 to 1.2 times which would be 5-20% in reality, is almost too generous. This is ironically similar gains to what I was getting when I was running 30-45 minutes a few times a week with the weekly 1-2 hour long run. So again, this is all theoretical. I'm sure you can agree that these are very marginal gains while I increased the risk of all the injury, burnout, illness, etc scenario to 5 or even 10x more.

Daren DLake: 06:12

So The output reward is only 1.2, where the risk is like two, five, 10x, you get it. Again, these are crude estimated numbers based on my own training and because of so many factors like my or your genetics, running history, intensity, duration, and lifestyle, your results may vary greatly from mine. A bit more research around where the point of diminishing returns in aerobic fitness slash VO2 max can be found at the link in the show notes or the YouTube description or wherever you are. Contrary to what most people think, double input doesn't mean double output linear gains. Unfortunately, those feelings and emotions that X input equals Y output trump logic. So why do most people think more is more is the question. Helping you focus your higher quality output. From my discovery process, which is scientific research, speaking with experts, and my own experience, We tend to go more is more because we are just programmed like that. Linear is just easier. Our society from the start of the agricultural farming revolution had the double input and double your output mentality. It also worked in the industrial factory evolution, revolution, and it worked up until the technology revolution, the knowledge-based office work. If you wanted to make double your money in the 1950s, you worked 80 hours a week instead of 40

hours. by working the day and night shift. Hell, some companies like the U.S. Post Office would pay extra for working nights in overtime.

Daren DLake: 07:41

So why not? Seemed to be much simpler days back in that time. Unfortunately, in the present day and moving forward, I'm going to assume that's not the case right now and will not be the case. The same could be said about computers and technology. So for you nerds, processors are not getting bigger. They are getting more efficient and economical. Multicore processors and many threads. So AI is another instance. They're not doubling because it's not making it that much better. They do this by being built smaller and more effective and engineered to use less power and do more things. This is a very crude example, and a mechanical computer engineer will most likely write me a stern email. Apologies in advance, but feel free. Talk at DLakeCreates.com. I love it all. Send comments below.

Daren DLake: 08:23

Like computers, this is how I think you should treat your training, life, relationships, et cetera. Try to be more effective by focusing on the right things, which usually means you become more efficient. Less is usually best. Be a Prius and get crazy output for very low input. They're hybrid cars, I think, fully electric. Hell, be a Tesla. As far as actual energy goes, it's solar dammit. The sun is literally infinite and provides all the energy we need for this world. Not literally infinite, but we have a whole lot of energy from the sun if we can harness it.

Daren DLake: 08:53

I feel once you start living and thinking more critically about things, you can then input a fraction more of your effort units to yield the results of an efficient, effective, and better life. I'm obsessed with this stuff. It's not even a productivity thing. It's just more like, how can we just work with the flow of life and get the most out of it? Bonus. The ex-co-host of the show, Phil Cross, and I ended up going back and forth about the meaning of this, and he really poked some holes in what the f*** point I was trying to make. It's a fun listen, so make sure to listen or watch the podcast version of this as your argument might be similar to his. Feel free to hit me up on Instagram or email me at talkatdlakecreates.com, spelled the normal way, if you want to push back on this or you agree. Big plug, I love working with people on creative things and also their life, trying to make themselves 1% better. I love setting ambitious goals and objectives and going after them like a journey, because it's all about the journey. Health and fitness processes and systems are creative journeys by nature. So I'm totally open to helping anyone collaborating in the health, fitness, wellness, running, endurance, sports space. Hit me up. Again, talk at dlakecreates.com, links below, DMs wherever you are. Thanks again for rocking with me.

Daren DLake: 12:25

So, I feel like you got something to say, Will.

Phil Cross: 12:32

No, I like it. You like it? I like it. No, I'm right there.

Daren DLake: 12:35

Riding in particular seems to have the most consequences at risk reward just because it does so much damn damage on your body, man. Like going into, you could not cycle for months and then decide to ride 100Ks. You're just going to hurt. You won't do too much damage. It's probably not the smartest thing to do, but you'll be all right. You decide to run a marathon after not running for a year, you will do some serious

Phil Cross: 12:57

something's likely to go wrong.

Daren DLake: 12:59

Yeah and you're gonna like suffer that for months. I did that so this is where it kind of came from.

Phil Cross: 13:04

And shout out to Paula with her advice on that for the episode where she was interviewed. No that's exactly it right? Like yeah.

Daren DLake: 13:11

If you're gonna blow up, blow up at the race. Don't blow up at training. You'd be like almost cooked for the race. Yeah. So you go back to Paula the what is it ultra ultra physio I think I called it? Ultrapolophysio, that's what I think I called that one. There's a lot of ultras in that season. S2, it's a good one. So risk versus reward. This is gonna get a bit granular, and I'm actually not gonna read verbatim the actual podcast. Oh, sorry, the actual blog post, because it's just gonna get too itty bitty. Basically, the gist of it is a lot of people, this is a pretty good analogy, a lot of people think that if they run for an hour, 100 points of fitness, right? So we're just gonna make it really easy. So if you run for one hour, you get 100 points of fitness, okay? And then people think if you run for two hours, you get 200 points of fitness. Like, income, outcome, linear, you know? Or sorry, input, output, linear. That's not what happens with running in particular, most fitness. There's a point of diminishing return. And I would say, and please, I haven't actually researched any of this, I would say it's between the like 40 minute, one hour mark, especially with running at certain intensities, right?

Phil Cross: 14:23

It depends what you're maximizing for. So if you're maximizing for things like muscular endurance, and if you're mitochondrial efficiency, I don't know where the drop-off points are for all of these things, but there is benefit to the long run.

Daren DLake: 14:44

Can you long run seven days a week, though? Can you long run every single session? No! And expect the same amount of linear output?

Phil Cross: 14:55

I think it's less about the linear output and more about the ability to sustain that activity and the cost in terms of recovery. So while the output of the actual session might be linear in terms of benefit, so given perfect recovery, say you could run two

hours a day and recover 100% by the next session, there's not necessarily diminishing returns for that other than adaptation. So it's like, you know, running 40 minutes when you don't run at all is a long way, whereas if you're an ultra marathon runner, running 40 minutes doesn't touch the sides. So the more you exercise, the more you have to do, just like to get the same effects. It's just like, you know, if you're a caffeine addict, like a cup of coffee isn't going to touch the sides, whereas somebody who doesn't drink caffeine at all will have a cup of coffee and it'll send them to the moon.

Daren DLake: 15:54

Um, well, let me, let me play devil's advocate to that. So let's stay away from ultras. Yeah. All right. Cause that's different. It's, it's just totally different. Okay.

Phil Cross: 16:02

And I feel like not too many people, what do you maximize?

Daren DLake: 16:04

Like you maximize it for the marathon. That seems to be, I can't stand the marathon personally, but that's what most people would have trained for is the marathon. Right? Yeah. So why don't pros that run 160, 180 Ks a week while they just do 300? 400, 700, 1,000 K's a week. Why don't they do more and more? Why don't they do more and more? What happens? They'll break. Usually they'll break. So why don't ultra people just run 16 hours a day?

Phil Cross: 16:30

Because they'll break.

Daren DLake: 16:33

So I'm saying, there's a point. So I'm just, all right, sorry. I should have identified, I'm just a standard runner and I usually run five hours a week. Yeah. why not do 10 hours a week? That's where I'm going with this. So it's subjective to every person. So you did flag that.

Phil Cross: 16:51

Yeah, there's a moving point where the negatives outweigh the benefits for everyone.

Daren DLake: 16:58

Yeah, for sure. So that's what I'm addressing. I did address the exact numbers. So whatever it is, whatever your number is, for me, it's 45 minutes to an hour is my, I do that two, three days a week. And then my long run,

Phil Cross: 17:11

But again, for that, sorry, the place I started with that in terms of just finessing the point, because I don't disagree, but it's what you're maximizing for. So in that 45 minutes to an hour, let's just assume that's an aerobic, like you're just running that aerobic pace, that's some zone two work, whatever, whatever. That's not necessarily, you're not necessarily tapping, topping out there in terms of session benefits, but in terms of ecologically with everything else that's going on, and in terms of what you need, like you might not need any more than that, you know what I mean, for your

goals. So could you be better off doing an hour and a half? Maybe? Like, it doesn't necessarily tap out if you can recover.

Daren DLake: 18:02

Fair, but Usually less is more, in particular with running, I've found. Because you can't recover, it's better to be under- under-trade than it is to be over-trade. True. So it's better to go undercooked and slightly underperforming

Phil Cross: 18:22

I don't think less is more or more is more. I think the right amount is the right amount.

Daren DLake: 18:25

But you never know that and that constantly keeps changing. You never know exactly, like no bullshit.

Phil Cross: 18:30

But there's always too little and too much. So there's always a metric which is, so if you're running, like you can't say less is more if you're running 1k a week and you've got to do a half marathon.

Daren DLake: 18:39

Fair, to the limit and everyone knows their limit whether you're going too low or too high. Sure. That's what I'm saying or sorry a lot of people don't know when it's too high. Too low is, you expect to get crazy gains by running three minutes a damn day, three times a week. Like, no, it's not gonna happen. But I'm talking about, you start getting into, what really is the difference? And no one knows this because, one, you're getting older.

Daren DLake: 19:01

Sorry, sorry everyone, you're getting older. Even if you're going from 21 to 22, you're getting older. And then, two, your fitness is constantly changing. I read this in, I forgot whose book it was, It was like, there is no perfect training protocol. Like, so many people are like, oh, I wish I would've done that training. The training my other friend did was so good. It's like, no, the best training is the training you're doing right now because one, you can't, and you can't, there's no constant with that. You can't go back to your 21-year-old self if you're 22 and go, and you're more fit. Like, so there's no way you could retest that.

Phil Cross: 19:36

Maybe, no, maybe we're just arguing semantics. There's no such thing as less is more, and there's no such thing as more is more, there's only the optimal amount. And there's finding that optimal amount. Because you can't- An optimal amount is a moving point. Yeah, absolutely is. All I'm saying is you can't, the blanket statement less is more is wrong.

Daren DLake: 19:59

You think.

Phil Cross: 20:00

No, no, it's definitely wrong. I think less is more.

Daren DLake: 20:05

more people need to lead into that because I think more people go into Boise War too much.

Phil Cross: 20:10

So the statement the statement too many people over train is it could be true. The statement less is more as an objective fact is not true. It sounds better. Sure, but it's not true. It subjectively sounds better. But the blanket statement of like, less is more, I just think is, just like more is more, I just think it's, yeah.

Daren DLake: 20:40

Well, you're like disproving everything I just wrote, so. The point wasn't to disprove it, it was supposed to be like a supplement to it.

Phil Cross: 20:47

No, it is supplementing it. There's a point there. There's a set point. I just don't think less is more is always the mantra. Because sometimes, if you're doing less isn't more, you need to run. More. Lots more.

Daren DLake: 21:06

I'm gonna assume everyone is logical here. So, I'm not gonna like, if you're doing 50 minutes and you one can't do it because it stresses you out, 50 minutes three times a week, you literally don't have the time because of whatever's happening in your life. You're always feeling tired at 22 50 minutes. You drop down to 35 minutes, you can fit it in better and you feel a tiny bit fresh. That's great. Don't drop down from 50 to four minutes.

Phil Cross: 21:33

no no no like that's like i'm just gonna assume everyone is critical it's what and in that situation absolutely agree but if you're trying to run a marathon and you're running and you're running 5k a week less is not more absolutely you need to run way more okay so i what i'm trying to say is

Daren DLake: 21:55

I don't need to tell everyone 2 plus 2 equals 4 and how to double click on a mouse. We all know this.

Phil Cross: 22:01

No, no, no, but what I'm saying is down is not always the direction.

Daren DLake: 22:04

I think down is a better direction than up.

Phil Cross: 22:07

I disagree because I know plenty of civilians who just don't train enough. Like, they just don't train enough. I know plenty of people who over train and I know plenty of people who just don't put in the hours. like oh and they don't they don't and as well as not putting in the hours it's not just the hours they just don't train smart

Daren DLake: 22:30

Well, that's a whole other fucking conversation.

Phil Cross: 22:34

It is, but we're talking about total training load now. We're not just talking volume. We're talking your volume plus intensity, like load. So if we think of there's too much load or too little load, you're either putting too much stress on the body or not enough stress on the body or the right amount of stress on the body. We're not just talking hours. We're talking time and intensity. I think there's plenty of people who just don't put enough stress on the body. They just don't train enough. As well as plenty of people who overtrain. So I think the blanket statement, like, you should do less, just doesn't always hold true. Did I just chill? I just disagree with the whole premise of the thing.

Daren DLake: 23:20

It's not you disagree, you're like shifting it. You're shifting it to things that I absolutely agree with. So it's not that I disagree, it's like I'm not actually trying to talk about that. I'm actually trying to talk about something that's always bothered me with the way people trade because people constantly It's a certain type of person that does this. This isn't everyone. This isn't people that never PB. It's not civilians that are lazy as fuck. I'm not talking about those people. OK. So it's a specific type of person that thinks that if they do double the trading, and I'm thinking about them right now in my head, and I'm not saying their name, but they think if they do double trading, they'll get better. But they actually need to trade smarter, and more efficiently, and more effectively, and more essential. That's what I'm trying to say.

Phil Cross: 24:01

There's totally those people, yeah.

Daren DLake: 24:02

So that's who I'm focusing on. And we're going to end this here. Go check out the blog post, because it's nothing that we talked about. There's a chance that I might not ever post this, because this is so bad. But it's cool, Phil. This is why we trial this stuff and experiment.

Phil Cross: 24:16

This was a good chat.

Daren DLake: 24:17

It's wit. This didn't go anywhere. This is not supplemental. This is a whole other conversation.

Phil Cross: 24:23

It's still a valid conversation.

Daren DLake: 24:26

Thank you, Phil, for being... I don't even want to say Achilles heel. I don't even know if that... Thank you for being the person that always... sets be different. Not even right. You just go no.

Phil Cross: 24:37

But I was right. I was right.