

ING New York City Marathon 2006 Official Wheelchair Training Program

by Craig Hampel

The wheelchair training program and [training schedule](#) assume that the wheelchair racer has a base knowledge of wheelchair racing and has competed in a wheelchair race of at least 5K.

Mileage

The training volume posted here is of a level sufficient for the elite-level racer and is relatively high in nature. You will want to adjust the daily and weekly volumes to suit your current fitness level. Multiplying all daily volumes by a percentage of those listed will suffice. Total volume adjustment should not dip below 60 percent.

Speed Work

The wheelchair division of a marathon is rarely a consistent pace effort. Rather, the competitive athlete needs to possess the abilities to set a pace, follow a pace, chase or bridge to a pack of racers, and occasionally sprint. Therefore it is essential to include sufficient volume of each of these training methods. In general, at least half the days of a volume less than 16 miles should include at least some interval work of varying duration and rest.

Typically, an interval regimen would consist of 3-8 intervals of durations between 2 and 4 minutes. Rest periods between intervals should be at least a 1:2 work to rest ratio. In other words, an interval of 2 minutes should not be repeated less than 4 minutes after the previous effort. Interval intensities are of a pace higher than the steady pace necessary to complete the marathon distance. Typically, the shorter the interval the greater the intensity during that interval. A sprint is of the highest intensity and the shortest duration—typically not more than 20-30 seconds in duration.

Days that include interval and sprint work should never be scheduled back to back, nor should they occur on the day immediately preceding the highest-volume day of the week. Usually, the best day for interval work is the day following a rest day. No matter the day, always remember to sufficiently warm up before rigorous effort.

Training Diary

Make a serious effort to keep a daily training journal. A journal will allow you to monitor the training progress as well as be a permanent document of a significant life accomplishment. Daily entries should include a detailed account of the mileage and type of training for the current day. It also helps a great deal to briefly account for the way the day's training affects your body and emotions. In other words, how did the training for that day "feel"?

It also can be very helpful to list your eating habits every day, though this may seem tedious to account for on a daily basis. As race day approaches, this information can help to predict the best ways to prepare for the marathon. Looking back over the previous weeks, note the days when you had a high level of emotion and motivation. Make note of the foods taken on those and the preceding days.

Equipment Preparation

No matter your fitness level as a wheelchair racer, you will not be able to go any faster than the chair allows. Make sure to use fresh tires, ones that have not been used more than 100 miles in total. Make sure these tires are properly secured to their rims. Hand rings should be in good

condition but NOT brand new. Make sure they have some wear to them. A new set of rings are just as slippery as a pair that is too old. Gloves should be in good condition without being overly worn.

Make sure all nuts and bolts on your racing wheelchair are secure and that your wheels are round and true. It never hurts to have a bike shop take a quick look at the hardware on your racer to make sure all is in good working condition. The mechanic doesn't need to have ever seen a racing chair before, as all the important hardware is similar to a racing bike. Ultimately, the best competitor is the one who knows his or her equipment inside and out.

"Craig Hampel was the former wheelchair track coach of the [U.S. Paralympics](#) track and field team.