



Tips for distance running training on a Precor EFX®

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For years, athletes, trainers and coaches have looked to low-impact alternatives to distance running, hoping to reduce the stress of high-mileage training -- water training is a great example.

A new option being discovered is the Precor EFX® Fitness CrossTrainer™, which in addition to reducing impact and offering great aerobic conditioning, also creates what runners might consider surprising opportunities to build upper-body running mechanics.

So, how does one crosstrain for distance running on the EFX? Here are a few tips:

- **Pick up the stride rate, not the resistance level** - Clinical research has shown that the EFX has a lower "perceived level of exertion" than running on track or a treadmill. Essentially, the EFX delivers a smoother, low impact form of exercise -- your muscles and heart are working just as hard - it's just not as jarring on your body so it feels easier.

One result of lower perceived exertion is the tendency for people to increase EFX stride resistance to a level that makes the motion feel more strenuous. Avoid the inclination to pump up the resistance! Instead, find a flow that's comfortable for you, at a resistance setting that enables you to maintain a stride rate comparable to your running pace.

Also, unless you're doing hill work or pushing it, distance-running training largely is an aerobic activity. Similarly, when cross training on the EFX, don't build a workout at a resistance level so high that you spend the bulk of the session in an anaerobic state because you are pushing so much resistance -- find a balance of medium resistance and high stride rate that works for you.

Distance runners who are fit and in a conditioning regimen probably will shoot for an EFX stride rate in a range above 150 strides per minute. Keep in mind that the optimum overland running stride rate is 85-90 strides per minute.

- **The same goes for ramp height** -- Similarly, you don't need to set the CrossRamp incline at a steep angle -- just as you don't exclusively train by running steep hills. There's a place in a workout for steep ramp angle settings, but it isn't a constant. Find a comfortable middle ground in ramp height that, again, lets you focus on stride speed and technique.
- **Pay attention to your body mechanics, not just the cardio workout** -- Look around at people using an EFX at your gym, and you commonly see people either holding on to the EFX frame, or moving their arms in a loose, flapping motion. In either case, while it's likely they're getting a good aerobic workout, they're not maximizing the full potential of calorie burning through shoulder-arm-hip stride mechanics associated with running training.

To maximize the effectiveness of your EFX running training, concentrate on your mechanics:

- Keep your arms tucked in to your sides and your elbows bent at a 90-plus degree angle -- just as you would when running.

- Make a point of reproducing the hip-to-shoulder rotation that's natural to good running mechanics, and extending that rotation with your hand motion that moves in an arc from hip to opposite shoulder.

- **Get clinical!** - While running on the EFX is similar to running, it isn't the same in many ways, and offers opportunities to establish a more technical perspective on your workouts.

For example, most of us know our mile or lap times. But do you know your strides per minute pace to train to attain a specific lap or mile target?

How about your heart rate? Are you aware of your training zone, and the implications heart rate has both in terms of the fuel you are using, and how that relates to your physiology and diet?

Also, runners can effectively work on biomechanical training on an EFX, which requires intent concentration and solid technique to maintain high stride rates. Use your EFX training as an opportunity to build technical awareness and control of your posture, core abdominal strength and, as noted above, upper body rotation.