

Miles and Miles

Venus	25.8MILLION
Mars	48.6MILLION
Mercury	57MILLION
The Sun	93MILLION
Jupiter	390.6MILLION
Saturn	777MILLION
Uranus	1.69BILLION
Neptune	2.7BILLION

In 2002, I started to keep track of the number of miles I ran, starting with my very first Mount Timpanogos hike in Utah. That kicked off my desire to stay fit and run on trails. At first when recording miles, I was somewhat of a trail snob, only keeping track of miles run on trails. Somehow I put in my mind the thought that unless the miles were on trails, they didn't count. But I soon came to my senses and kept track of all my miles. For that first year I ran 691 miles. As I strived to lose weight, I also kept track of swimming miles and over the first three years swam 333 miles.

People have attempted to find the person who has run the most lifetime miles. Because proof with running logs are not very good, the best documented record probably is held by Dr. Herbert Fred of Houston, with more than 250,000 miles by the age of 85 in 2014. He kept many logbooks. His biggest year was in 1966 when he ran 7,661.5 miles. In 2011 he ran 2,886 miles at the age of 82. In April 2014, he surpassed 250,000 miles. That is further than running all the way to the moon (238,900 miles).



Herbert Fred

How many miles is the most ever run in a year? Stefaan Engles of Belgium claimed to have run 9,569 miles during 365 days in 2010-11. In 2014-15, Rob Young of London claimed to have surpassed 10,000 miles in a year but he later was found to have cheated in Run Across America, so his claim is not generally recognized.

Ron Hill of England is credited for running at least one mile for the most days in a row: 52 years and 39 days, or 19,032 days. He stopped in 2017 at age 78 as he started to suffer from a heart problem.

What is the most miles run in a week? The standard for this time-span for a record is actually six days. The record is held by Yiannis Kouros of Greece, the greatest long-distance runner ever, who ran 645.5 miles in six days during 2005. I was privileged to have met Yiannis in 2013 at the Across the Years race.

What is the most miles run without stopping? There is no such record kept or officially recognized. That is an invented record. Dean Karnazes of California claimed such a record without stopping to be 350 miles in 80 hours and 44 minutes. However, there is no proof that he was in motion the entire time nor that he really covered a staggering 350 miles. The recognized record for 72 hours was set by world-class runner, Joe Fejes in 2013, 323.4 miles, during the certified race, Across the Years.

My miles

At the end of 2002, I was really proud of the 691 miles I ran that year and thought it was an incredible distance. Yes, I should have been proud of that distance given that I was still over-weight and still generally out-of-shape. But I was progressing. I had no idea what could be possible.

From that year, I increased the number of miles run each year. On November 13, 2004, while running for the first time with Jim Skaggs, I surpassed 1,000 miles for the first time during a calendar year. That was amazing to me. I had finished a 50K and a 50-miler that year, but still was looking for my first 100-mile finish. 2005 was my breakout year, when I ran 2,109 miles.

My Path to Ultrarunning – Davy Crockett

The most miles I have run in a day (24 hours) was 117.8 in 2011. The most miles I have run in a week was 210 in 2010. The most miles I have run in a month was 546 miles in December, 2015. The most miles I have run in a year was 4,742 in 2016.

Miles per week

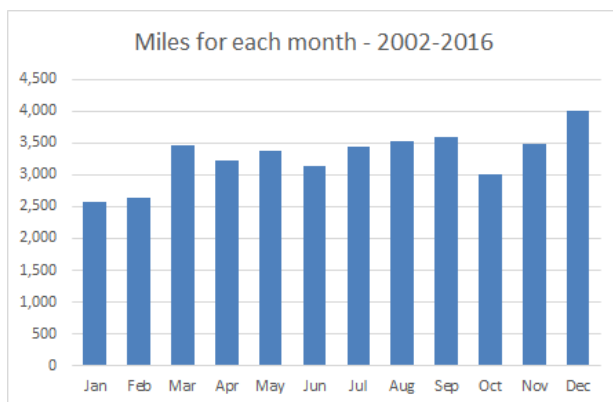
A common debate is: Should you track miles or minutes (hours) running? The “minutes camp” claims that by tracking time, it helps you resist to run faster and race against the clock since 60 minutes is 60 minutes. But for me this doesn’t make sense since I don’t run around a track. I plan a particular run of a set number of miles, usually a loop, and then go get it done. I might run faster or slower. Other times, I might just run random and do generally have a target finish time. If I run on the treadmill, I usually quit when I’m sick of it. I have a feel for how many miles I should generally run in a particular week depending on how far away my next race is, or if I’m recovering from a recent race, so I track miles.

How many miles should you run per week. One article on runnersconnect.net gave some good advice, “Rather than thinking in terms of how many mile you can or should run, focus on finding the optimal number of miles you can run.” You need to find that sweet spot to run enough miles to train for your goals without injury and days of fatigue.

It really depends on your goals. Initially my goal was to be able to just finish 100-milers. My goals then shifted to gaining speed and competing. Eventually my goal shifted to being able to finish many 100s milers in a year. That same article stated, “There is no definitive mileage to performance correlation.” Yes, there is no magic number, for sure increased miles helps to perform better during 100-milers. As I increased my miles per week, my success in finishing 100-miles greatly increased. With high-mileage years in 2015-16, I was able to finish many 100 milers and recover quickly between them because of my mileage base. That would not have been possible if I was only running 30-40 miles per week. So it all depends on what your goals are.

I have never, ever attempted to follow some sort of ridged plan to dictate how many miles I should ran on specific days of the week including crazy approaches for long back-to-back runs. Such plans might work to run a marathon but I feel are the wrong approach for 100-miler training. I know if I followed them I would risk injury and burnout. You must listen to your body. Push the miles but rest when needed.

During 2015-16, in my late 50s I progressed to the point where it became no big deal to run more than 100 miles in a week. Most of these miles would be rather slow miles, certainly a few notches slower than race miles. Some weeks I would go four days with only power walking and then go for a long run on Saturday. All would contribute toward a strong mileage base which would pile up by the end of the year.



From 2002-2017, I have never taken off the winter and have continued to train. However, there are some patterns for the number of miles I run at certain times of year. As October arrives, I shift my training from the mountains to the flatlands and start increasing the number of miles. December has always been my highest month for miles before the deep cold arrives to train for Across the Years. Through the coldest months, January and February my miles do fall off as it becomes more difficult to run outside. But the miles then increase as the spring arrives to start preparing for the mountain races in the summer.

My Path to Ultrarunning – Davy Crockett

How many miles does it take to train for your first 100-miler? There is a lot of “depends” in that answer. Are you starting from the couch? Are you overweight? Have you learned how to run with good form? Are you doing some long runs? Just given my experience, I believe it is possible to train to finish a first 100-miler in 6-8 months if you can ease up your mileage carefully and get to a point where you can average about 35-40 miles per week which is on pace to run about 2,000 miles in a year. Throwing in some 50-mile runs along the way will help your body adapt to being out there for a long time. Less is possible, but probably more painful and subject to overuse injury during the race. More is better but subject to injury during training.

By the end of 2016, I ran 41,450 miles since 2002. 2017 started strong with three more 100-mile finishes during the first three months.

