

The Summer Heat Running Guide

Why hot, humid air slows you down, how to read the two numbers that matter, and how to keep training and racing well all summer instead of guessing.

THE PHYSIOLOGY

Why the Heat Actually Slows You Down

Your body cools itself by evaporating sweat off your skin. When the air is already saturated with moisture, that sweat can't evaporate — it just drips. Your core temperature climbs, and your body responds by shunting more blood to the skin to shed heat.

That's blood diverted away from your working muscles. Less oxygen reaches them, your heart rate drifts up to compensate, and the same effort now produces a slower pace. You are not losing fitness on a hot run; you are paying a cooling tax. The pace looks worse while the effort is honest.

THE KEY NUMBER

Dew Point, Not Humidity

Relative humidity is a percentage that swings with air temperature, so it's misleading: 90% humidity at 55°F is pleasant, while 60% at 85°F is brutal. Dew point measures the actual amount of moisture in the air — the thing that decides whether your sweat can evaporate.

That's why the Heat Pace Calculator and this guide both key off **air temperature + dew point**. The higher that combined number climbs, the more your sweat stops working and the more you should adjust.

Rule of thumb: once air temp + dew point clears about 100–110°F combined, hard efforts start to cost you real seconds. Above roughly 150 combined, back off hard sessions and run by effort.

Reading Dew Point & Adjusting Your Runs

30-SECOND SETUP

Where to Find the Dew Point

1

Open your weather app

Apple Weather, Google, or Weather.com all work. Search where you'll run if it differs from home.

2

Scroll to "Details"

Dew point sits near humidity, wind and UV. Use the hour you'll actually be out, not the daily high.

3

Add temp + dew point

Those two numbers are everything the chart and calculator need to give you a pace.

THE FRAMEWORK

How Much to Adjust by Dew Point

A quick reference for how elevated dew point raises the cost of your normal paces, and how it feels for easy vs. hard running.

DEW POINT (°F)	PERFORMANCE COST	EASY RUNNING	HARD RUNNING
Below 55°F	0%	Unaffected	Unaffected
55-60°F	1%	Unaffected	Slightly harder
60-65°F	2-3%	Slightly harder	Hard
65-70°F	3-5%	Hard	Very hard
70-75°F	5-8%	Hard	Very hard
75-80°F	12-15%	Very hard	Not recommended
Above 80°F	Effort only	Not recommended	Not recommended

Framework from RunnersConnect, "How to Adjust Your Pace in Hot and Humid Weather."

THE ONE DECISION

Adjust Pace, or Run by Effort?

- **Easy runs — run by effort.** Keep it conversational and let pace land wherever it lands. Don't do heat math on recovery days.
- **Workouts — adjust the target.** Use the chart to set your rep pace so you finish the session instead of blowing up halfway.
- **Races — adjust from the gun.** This is where it matters most. Bank nothing early; set your goal with the adjusted pace and speed up late if conditions cool.

Acclimate & Race-Day Pacing

SHRINK THE PENALTY

The 2-Week Heat Acclimation Plan

Your body adapts to heat faster than almost anything else in training. In 10–14 days of consistent exposure you sweat sooner, sweat more, and lose fewer electrolytes — cutting your heat penalty substantially before a goal race.

Days 1–5

- Do easy runs in the heat of the day, 30–45 min.
- Run fully by effort; ignore pace entirely.
- Hydrate before, during, and after.

Days 6–14

- Extend heat exposure toward 60–75 min.
- Add short efforts at adjusted paces.
- Keep one or two key sessions in cooler hours.

Consistency beats intensity. The adaptation fades within about a week of stopping, so keep some heat exposure in the final 10 days before a hot goal race.

RACE MORNING

Pace a Hot Race From Mile One

- **Check temp + dew point at start time** and set your goal pace off the adjusted number, not your cool-weather PR pace.
- **Run the first third conservatively.** The classic hot-race blow-up is banking a small cushion early and losing several times that late.
- **Take in fluid early and often**, and use cooling — ice, water over the head, shade — before you feel like you need it.
- **If it cools off late, then push.** Negative-splitting a hot race is how you finish strong.

GO DEEPER

Keep Learning

Run the numbers any time with the **Heat Pace Calculator**, and read the full guides: [How to Adjust Your Pace in Hot and Humid Weather](#), [Heat Training: The Complete Protocol](#), and [The Science of Hot Weather Running](#) at runnersconnect.net.