

How prepared are your Quads and Calves for the UTA?



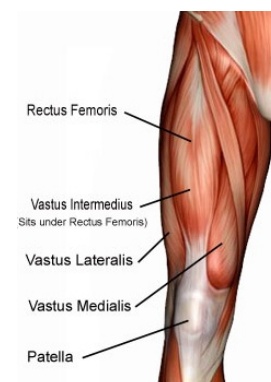
The UTA course is hilly, very hilly. If you don't prepare your quadricep muscles and calf muscles properly in the lead up, it could turn to tears by half way.

In an ideal world you should train in The Blue Mountains regularly in the 12 weeks leading up to the event, this will help to strengthen your legs so that they are less likely to cause problems on race day.

Unfortunately we don't all live up in The Blue Mountains. A lot of people training for the event will live in flat areas, and not have access to any hills, let alone the 800m high ones you will be competing on.

Running on big hills puts our bodies under significantly more stress than running on lots of smaller hills. Have you ever noticed how much worse your quads feel the day after running down Kedumba than they do if you are doing hill repeats on a small hill, even if you go up and down enough times to register the same amount of vertical elevation? The reason for this is the lack of recovery time if it is a single long hill.

When you run down hills you use your quadriceps (front of thighs) as brakes. Good technique can help to reduce the trauma, but even then, you are still going to pull up sore after a session on a big hill if you are not used to it.





The same thing happens to your calf muscles on long and steep climbs. They often end up “burning” during a climb and can result in you struggling to climb efficiently for the rest of the event.

The damage to your muscles that causes this DOMs effect (Delayed Onset Muscle Soreness) can adversely affect your performance during a race due to the almost immediate weakness it causes in the muscles. It pays therefore, to get your preparation right, and minimise the risk of “dead legs” ruining your race.

The best preparation is to train on hilly terrain, ideally hills which have 300m or more of vertical elevation. A combination of hills and stairs would be absolutely ideal as that is what you are going to face on race day.

If big hills are not possible, then smaller, repetitive hill and stair repeats will still help.

If you can't find any hills to train on, then you are going to need to do some specific strengthening exercises to help prepare your muscles. Sustained squats, leg-press machines, weighted calf raises and other similar exercises will help a small amount to strengthen the muscles, but you really need to try and perform exercises which replicate the type of stress you will be exposed to on race day.

Watch this video for an example of three running-specific exercises that will help to get you in shape.



Strength Training for Trail Runners