

Chris Lee's 30-day workout program combines strength and mobility moves to supercharge your speed.



This Guy's Got the **SECRET TO SPEED**

He trains the top runners in the country—
and he can make you faster, too

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CHRIS LEE MAY train some of the biggest names in running, but his career started in the pool.

Before he was head strength trainer for Tinman Elite running club in Boulder, Colorado—counting as his athletes Olympic-hopeful triathlete Morgan Pearson; Reed Fischer, who ran this year's Houston Half Marathon in 1:01:37; and long-distance runner Laura Thweatt, who placed 5th at the 2016 Olympic trials—he was a collegiate swimmer at Montclair State University in New Jersey, specializing in the breaststroke.

"I was getting incredibly strong for a swimmer, yet none of my times were improving," he says. "I sat back one day at the end of my collegiate career and realized that we never worked on mobility." That's a problem, Lee says, "because if you increase your force output with strength training but your range of motion or stride length decreases or stays the same, then you're not moving forward," essentially wasting your strength.

But if he wasn't moving forward in the pool as fast as he would have liked, Lee was certainly making progress on his résumé. Shortly after college, he became the head swim coach at the University of Colorado–Boulder, where he put this realization into action and had his athletes work on their mobility before jumping in the pool, every single practice. The result: "In the three years I worked for the university, we won three national club titles and broke 19 school records."

So it makes sense that he would apply the same method to his own training programs when he started competing ►



Chris Lee is the head strength coach of Tinman Elite running club in Boulder, CO.

► in triathlons, after a friend encouraged him to sign up for one during senior year. He focused on strength and mobility work, not just putting in time in the pool, on the bike, and on the track. But if Lee was a natural cyclist and a seasoned swimmer, running was his clear weakness. “It felt awful when I first started,” he says.

Still, Lee knew how to train, if not run, and he dove into the biomechanics of running much like he had done years before with swimming. “If you’re an inefficient swimmer, you drown,” he says. But lots of people “get away” with inefficient running at first, only to learn they’re holding themselves back. “Running is much more technical than people think,” Lee says. “Learning how to go slow and be efficient, not just powerful, was a slow learning curve for me.”

But learn he did. “I talked to and studied many running experts and trained with great runners to better understand what makes them so good,” he says. “Then I mobilized my restricted areas, such as my hips, and strengthened my hip and posterior line stabilizers.”

Little did he know that this—plus his degree in exercise science—would set him up for a career training some of the best runners in the country. Lee first started working with middle-distance runner and Tinman athlete Drew Hunter, and his roster expanded from there: Sam Parsons, Reed Fischer... “Then, they signed

me on full-time working with the team.”

Now, each athlete goes through a thorough assessment when they start working with Lee: “I run them through a series of exercises—squats, lunges, things that show me a lot—then, we move into smaller movements that test alignment and hip flexion, like high knees.” Coupled with a running-gait analysis, via slo-mo video, and a five-year injury history, Lee puts together a four-week plan targeting weaknesses and preventing the most likely injuries, continually revamping it every month based on their progress.

“Some of the changes are pretty incredible,” he says, using the single-leg step-down as an example. “Some athletes will literally fall over at first, but four weeks later, they’re not wobbling at all.” The most common review from his athletes: I feel smoother when I run.

You can, too, with the three crucial principles Lee brings to his training plans:

► **Strength + mobility = better running** / And by “better,” we mean more powerful (thanks to strength), with a longer stride (thanks to mobility). Strength without proper mobility propels your body up in the air, not stretching forward, wasting your energy, Lee says. Mobility without strength isn’t so great, either: “This can lead to injury because the body can’t handle the impact, leading to overuse injuries that could completely derail your running career.” (Lee likes to incorporate some light plyometrics and muscular strengthening into his training plans for the same reason.) He sees Usain Bolt as the ideal example of strength and mobility combined: “He puts out a ton of power and he’s literally flying forward.”

► **An order of operations** / If you’re new to running or weight lifting, strength-train after your runs so you don’t tire your legs out before you hit the pavement. But more-experienced athletes can lift first to prime the muscles they need to move well. Either way, resistance training should be a major priority, which is why his cross-training plan includes a mix of plyometric strength workouts (featuring exercises like split jumps and single-leg hops) and classic stability work (with exercises like squats and single-leg deadlifts), three times a week, at about 20 minutes a session.

► **A focus on rest** / “Proper recovery is the difference between an Olympic competitor and someone who’s not quite at that level,” Lee says, noting that you should take an impromptu day off if you’re experiencing any symptoms of overtraining—extreme soreness or fatigue, an injury, or poor sleep—even if the program suggests otherwise. “Missing a few workouts is not a big deal,” he says. Just hop into the next one and don’t overthink it. If your symptoms are more mild, feel free to skip the cross-training and just log an easy run (less than 40 minutes, at a conversational pace).

To avoid the rest day’s lazy reputation, Lee prefers to think of them as “gain days,” because, well, that’s when the gains happen. “Anything you can do to stimulate your circulation and give your brain a rest, like yoga, is amazing.”

THAT’S THE OVERALL approach Lee took when developing the 30-day cross-training challenge on the next page. Each week, you’ll do one mobility workout and three strength-training sessions, plus three to five runs, depending on how you’re feeling (read: recovering). If it seems like a lot of work to cross-train and run on the same day, remember: The cross-training workout is less than 20 minutes, you can take an easy or rest day whenever you’re feeling low on energy, and there’s a larger purpose. “Cross-training allows you to address your weaknesses, increase your power, and reduce your risk of injury,” Lee says. And of course, each week will become progressively harder to build on all those gains. “Consistent practice pays off,” Lee promises. 🧘

30-DAY CROSS-TRAINING CHALLENGE

Chris Lee’s unique program consists of mobility and strength workouts in addition to your regular running. The workouts feature strategically sequenced exercises where the first move functions as prep for the next, to increase effectiveness. This means you’ll get better results in less time and decrease your risk of injury over-all. The strength-based workouts should be done with one day of rest between, and the mobility sessions can be done after a long run or on rest days. You’ll complete all four workouts at least twice over the first two weeks, take two rest days, and then move on to an advanced version of each workout for the final 14 days.

DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4	DAY 5	DAY 6
Long Run and Mobility 1	Rest	Hill Run and Plyometric Strength	Optional Run and/or Mobility 1	Moderate/Easy Fartlek Run and Stability Strength	Optional Run and/or Mobility 1
DAY 7	DAY 8	DAY 9	DAY 10	DAY 11	DAY 12
Tempo Run and Hybrid Strength	Long Run and Mobility 1	Rest	Hill Run and Plyometric Strength	Optional Run and/or Mobility 1	Moderate/Easy Fartlek Run and Stability Strength
DAY 13	DAY 14	DAY 15	DAY 16	DAY 17	DAY 18
Optional Run and/or Mobility 1	Tempo Run and Hybrid Strength	Rest	Rest	Long Run and Mobility 2	Rest
DAY 19	DAY 20	DAY 21	DAY 22	DAY 23	DAY 24
Hill Run and Progressed Plyometric Strength	Optional Run and/or Mobility 2	Moderate/Easy Fartlek Run and Progressed Stability Strength	Optional Run and/or Mobility 2	Tempo Run and Progressed Hybrid Strength	Long Run and Mobility 2
DAY 25	DAY 26	DAY 27	DAY 28	DAY 29	DAY 30
Rest	Hill Run and Progressed Plyometric Strength	Optional Run and/or Mobility 2	Moderate/Easy Fartlek Run and Progressed Stability Strength	Optional Run and/or Mobility 2	Tempo Run and Progressed Hybrid Strength

➔ FIND LEE’S TRAINING PROGRAM, *RUN FASTER*, ON THE ALL OUT STUDIO APP AT **RUNNERSWORLD.COM/RUNALLOUT**. USE CODE **RUNFREE** TO GET YOUR FIRST MONTH FREE!

TRY IT NOW: **MOBILITY**

Add this routine based on Lee's Mobility 1 to your weekly workouts.

▼ WINDMILL



Stand with feet in a wide stance and arms extended straight out from sides. Send hips back to hinge torso forward as you bend left knee and rotate to touch right fingers to left toes as left hand reaches up. That's one rep. Return to starting position, and repeat on the opposite side. Continue to alternate. Complete 10 reps on each side.

▼ HIP MOBILITY



Start in a kneeling position with your left knee on the mat, right foot forward, and arms at sides (rest knee on a folded towel for added support). Shift weight forward as you press hips forward and raise both arms overhead, keeping a straight back. You should feel a stretch in your left hip flexor. Slowly lower your arms as you return to starting position. Complete 5 reps, then repeat on the other side.

▼ ADDUCTOR MOBILITY



Start on all fours, knees under hips and shoulders over wrists. Place a towel under your right knee for support if needed. Extend left leg out to the side, planting your foot flat on the ground. With a flat back and neutral neck, rock back by sending butt toward right heel, then rock forward to return to starting position. Complete 5 reps. Repeat on other leg.

▼ ANKLE MOBILITY



Start in a kneeling position with left knee on the mat and right foot forward. Place left hand on mat and right hand on right knee. Hinging forward at hips with a flat back, drive your knee forward over big toe. Return to starting position, then drive knee over second toe and back, working your way toward your pinky toe. Reverse from pinky toe to big toe for a total of 10 reps. Keep your back flat, your hips centered, and your heel on the ground throughout. Repeat on left leg.

▼ QUADRUPED TO DOWNWARD DOG



Start on all fours, knees under hips and shoulders over wrists. Tuck your toes and lift your knees off the ground as you push back through your hands to lift hips up and back into downward-facing dog. Lengthen your spine and relax your neck. Straighten your legs as much as you can without feeling uncomfortable tightness in your hamstrings. Keeping your back flat, lower back down to return to starting position. Repeat. Complete 10 reps.

▼ HAMSTRING STRETCH



Lie faceup with legs at 45-degree angle. Place hands behind left thigh. Extend leg straight up, gently pulling the leg and toes toward you at the top. Complete 5 reps. Repeat on right side.

▼ LUNGE TO ROTATION



Start standing with feet hip-width apart. Step your left foot forward and drop into a lunge. As your left knee bends, hinge forward at your hips and plant your right hand on the ground. Rotate torso to the left as you extend left arm up toward the sky. Bring left arm back down to frame left leg, stand back up, and return to starting position. Repeat on right side. Continue to alternate, completing 10 reps total (5 on each side).

▼ ALTERNATING REVERSE FOUR-POINT BRIDGE



Start seated with your feet planted and knees bent at a 45-degree angle and hands planted behind hips, fingers pointing out. Bridge up from your hips, engaging your glutes as you open to your right side by extending your right arm to the sky as you press hips up. That's one rep. Return to starting position and repeat on left side. Complete 10 reps on each side.

➔ **TO ACCESS CHRIS LEE'S TRAINING PLAN, DOWNLOAD THE ALL OUT STUDIO APP (RUNNERSWORLD.COM/RUNALLOUT).** YOU'LL FIND THE FULL PLAN, PLUS HUNDREDS MORE ON-DEMAND WORKOUTS.