



LISTEN UP!

Looking for an effective way to maximise your runs? Then get ready to embrace audio workout coaching

WORDS: Joanna Ebsworth

Audio workouts have fast become the running buddy of choice for sweat enthusiasts wanting comprehensive coaching and a supportive voice in their ear while running clubs have been closed over lockdown. But don't expect audio training to fade into the background now that running crews and gyms are operating again. When you experience the game-changing advantages of having the words of a personalised PT or coach delivered straight to your earbuds, you may never want to rewind back to your old training ways.

MINDFUL MOVEMENTS

One of the major benefits of audio workouts is that they offer you a screen-free way to exercise – an absolute blessing when you've already spent your entire day staring at a screen. Plus, they provide a fresh and accessible training alternative for those of you who have OD'd on On Demand classes and are fed up with craning your neck in downward dog to

see the next asana. Of course, running outside while looking at a screen is nigh on impossible, but that's one of the reasons why audio coaching lends itself so perfectly to pounding the pavements.

Removing visual cues so you receive only audio direction allows for completely free and fluid movement. You can also take your workouts wherever you roam, plus you hear more safety tips to compensate for the lack of visual instruction (helping you avoid common injury-causing errors). What's more, you won't need to remember the details of your running plan or count laps while looking at your watch to know how long you've got left. All of this leaves your mind distraction-free to focus on your form and enjoy the surroundings.

PACE PERFECT

Indeed, audio running workouts take the guess work out of your training by giving you cues on when to stop and start on interval runs, and letting you know when you're half way through a session or two minutes from the end. And some services even supply you with your ideal 'match the beat' running

Photography: Getty Images

music so you can keep a steady pace, whether you're aiming for a new PB or taking a gentle recovery run.

Even better, when AI-driven audio running apps are synced with wearables to track your running metrics, you can enjoy a hyper-personalised training experience that tells you when to pick up the tempo, when to adjust your form and stride, and when to keep pushing if it senses you're flagging. Couple that with the fact that many of the workouts are devised and voiced by elite personal trainers, top running coaches and Olympic-level athletes – and that these apps often provide you with additional audio workouts for other types of exercise such as boxing, HIIT, strength training and

yoga – and you end up with a highly effective, affordable way to train that will only improve as technology develops.

'We are focusing on personalising workouts to suit every individual so that the intensity and duration of the workouts will adapt to the user in just the same way as a great PT would adapt fitness programmes individually for their client,' reveals Anta Pattabiraman, founder of AI-powered audio workout app Auro (auro.fit). 'And when you can make a year's audio workout subscription the same price as that of a single PT session, you can bring about meaningful and sustainable change to people's fitness habits that will impact on their health, wellbeing and longevity for the better.'

FOUR AWESOME AUDIO APPS TO TRY



WITHU

With over 1,000 On Demand audio workouts delivered by 18 coaches across 14 disciplines, you'll find a large selection of treadmill and outdoor running sessions for all levels. The workouts cover everything, from Fartlek and Endurance to Sprint and Recovery runs, plus there are programmes for beginners and those wanting to smash their PBs. The straight-talking instructors are super-motivating, and the originally curated soundtracks enhance the experience. The new 'workout scheduling and reminder' feature also keeps you on track and accountable; £59.99 a year or £7.99 a month. withutraining.com



AURO

Love music? This is the app for you. Filter running workouts by selecting the difficulty, duration and trainer, then choose from Dance, Pop, Hip Hop or Rock soundtracks – or select your own playlist. There are over 100 treadmill workouts, with all the usual runs alongside quirkier additions like 'Run for a Bigger Bum' and 'Speed of a Samarai'. The wide variety of outdoor runs even includes educational 'Practising your 10K' sessions and an informative 'Know Your Menstrual Cycle'. You can also compete in global leagues or private leagues against friends; £59.99 a year or £11.99 a month. auro.fit



AAPTIV

This service has thousands of On Demand workouts, with new classes added every week so you'll never get bored. There's a huge range of treadmill and outdoor running sessions, and multi-week running plans so aspiring racers can train for specific events from a 5K to full marathon. Aaptiv lets you hear fresh hits and classic tracks, and the best bit is that the music is all perfectly paced to your workout, which you can select by type, intensity level and trainer. The app also tracks your statistics like duration, frequency and how many miles you've run in a week; \$99.99 (equivalent to £72) a year. aaptiv.com



EASTNINE

This impressive British app from former GB high jumper Cat Forrest boasts 24 trainers, including pro athletes and Olympians. You can only listen to your own music, but the huge range of running workouts reflects the focus on improving technique and performance. You can enjoy sessions such as Find Your Tempo and Run A Faster parkrun, plus Half Marathon Check In and Mindful Running classes, and there's even inspiring podcast-style advice (covering nutrition, mindset, recovery and goal setting). It also links to Apple Health and Strava; £49.99 a year or £8.99 a month. eastnine.fit