Training for a 50k trail run with hills 24-week plan

**Key to the Plan:**

* **Gradual Progression:** Mileage and long run duration increase steadily over the 24 weeks.
* **Hill Focus:** Specific hill workouts are incorporated to build strength and efficiency on inclines and declines.
* **Variety:** The plan includes easy runs, tempo runs, long runs, hill repeats, cross-training, and rest to provide a well-rounded approach.
* **Listen to Your Body:** This is a guideline. Adjust the plan based on how your body feels. Don't hesitate to take extra rest days if needed.
* **Nutrition and Hydration:** Fueling and hydration are crucial for endurance events. Practice your race-day nutrition and hydration strategies during your long runs.
* **Gear:** Break in your trail shoes and any other gear you plan to use on race day.

**Training Zones (Heart Rate or Perceived Exertion - RPE):**

* **Easy:** Conversational pace, you should be able to talk comfortably. (RPE 2-3)
* **Moderate (Tempo):** Sustainably hard, you can speak in short sentences. (RPE 4-5)
* **Hard (Intervals/Hill Repeats):** Difficult, you can only speak a few words at a time. (RPE 6-8)
* **Cross-Training (XT):** Activities like swimming, cycling, hiking, or strength training.
* **Strength Training:** Focus on core, legs, and glutes. 2-3 times per week for 30-45 minutes.

**The 24-Week Training Plan:**

| **Week** | **Monday** | **Tuesday** | **Wednesday** | **Thursday** | **Friday** | **Saturday** | **Sunday** | **Notes** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **1-4 (Base Building)** | Easy Run 3-4 mi | Strength Training | Easy Run 3-4 mi | XT 45 min | Rest | Easy Run 5-6 mi | Long Run 6-8 mi | Focus on consistency and easy effort. |
| **5-8 (Increasing Mileage)** | Easy Run 4-5 mi | Strength Training | Easy Run 4-5 mi | XT 45-60 min | Rest | Easy Run 6-8 mi | Long Run 8-10 mi | Gradually increase long run distance. |
| **9-12 (Introduction to Hills)** | Easy Run 4-5 mi | Strength Training | Hill Repeats (6-8 short, moderate incline) | Easy Run 4-5 mi | Rest | Easy Run 6-8 mi | Long Run 10-12 mi | Introduce short hill repeats. Focus on effort. |
| **13-16 (Building Hill Strength)** | Easy Run 5-6 mi | Strength Training | Tempo Run (3-4 mi @ moderate pace) | Hill Repeats (8-10 medium, varied incline) | Rest | Easy Run 7-9 mi | Long Run 12-15 mi | Increase tempo run distance and hill repeats. |
| **17-20 (Peak Mileage & Long Hills)** | Easy Run 5-6 mi | Strength Training | Easy Run 5-6 mi | Hill Repeats (6-8 long, challenging incline) | Rest | Easy Run 8-10 mi | Long Run 15-18 mi | Incorporate longer, sustained hill climbs. |
| **21-24 (Taper)** | Easy Run (decreasing) | Strength (lighter) | Easy Run (decreasing) | XT (optional) | Rest | Easy Run (shorter) | Long Run (decreasing) | Gradually reduce mileage to allow for recovery. |

**Detailed Weekly Breakdown (Example - Week 15):**

* **Monday:** Easy Run 5 miles (conversational pace)
* **Tuesday:** Strength Training (focus on squats, lunges, calf raises, core work)
* **Wednesday:** Easy Run 5 miles
* **Thursday:** Hill Repeats: Warm-up with 1 mile easy running. Find a long, challenging hill. Run up hard (but controlled) for 3-4 minutes. Jog back down for recovery. Repeat 6 times. Cool-down with 1 mile easy running.
* **Friday:** Rest
* **Saturday:** Easy Run 8 miles (conversational pace, focus on enjoying the trails)
* **Sunday:** Long Run 16 miles (include some rolling hills if possible, practice your nutrition and hydration)

**Important Considerations:**

* **Long Runs:** Gradually increase your long run distance each week, generally by no more than 10% of the previous week's long run. These runs are crucial for building endurance. Practice running on trails and incorporating hills into your long runs.
* **Hill Repeats:** These workouts build strength and improve your running economy on inclines. Focus on maintaining good form. Experiment with different hill lengths and gradients.
* **Tempo Runs:** These sustained effort runs improve your lactate threshold, making you more efficient at a faster pace.
* **Easy Runs:** These should feel comfortable and help with recovery. Don't push the pace on these days.
* **Cross-Training:** Incorporate activities you enjoy that provide a cardiovascular workout without the impact of running.
* **Strength Training:** Focus on exercises that strengthen your legs, core, and glutes, which are essential for trail running and injury prevention.
* **Rest:** Rest and recovery are just as important as the running workouts. Allow your body time to adapt.
* **Nutrition and Hydration:** Practice your fueling and hydration strategy during your long runs. Experiment with different gels, chews, and drinks to see what works best for you.
* **Listen to Your Body:** If you feel pain, stop running and rest. Don't be afraid to adjust the plan based on how you're feeling.
* **Trail Specificity:** As you get closer to the race, try to do more of your long runs and some of your easy runs on trails that are similar to the race course. This will help you get used to the terrain.
* **Mental Preparation:** Visualize yourself running the race successfully. Practice positive self-talk.

**Tapering (Weeks 21-24):**

The final few weeks are crucial for allowing your body to recover and be fresh for race day. Gradually reduce your mileage while maintaining some intensity with shorter, faster efforts earlier in the taper. Your last long run should be about 2-3 weeks before the race.

**Race Week:**

* Keep your runs short and very easy.
* Focus on nutrition and hydration.
* Trust your training!

This is a general plan, and you may need to adjust it based on your individual fitness level and the specific characteristics of your 50k race. Good luck with your training! You've got this!