

## The OBT 2021 London Marathon Training Plan - Novice

Marathon success requires you, the athlete, to be both mentally and physically prepared to cope with the challenges involved when running 26.2 miles. This plan has been devised to get you to the start line based on 3 runs per week. It assumes you have done very little (if any) running previously, but you are in good health.

This 16 week plan is aimed at novice individuals who are committed to running the marathon distance for the first time. There will be some challenges along the way, and some opportunities to push yourself a little harder if your training is going really well i.e. a fourth run.

The days of the week shown are not fixed and only proposed. If you change them, try to ensure that a run day is followed by a rest day (e.g. run Monday, Wednesday and Saturday or Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday). Remember, a training plan is a guide to help you reach the start line prepared, injury-free, confident and race-ready. Listen to your body as you work through the plan - aim to stick to it, yet adapt it and be flexible when you need to.

The marathon training plan is broken down into four key phases each of which is four weeks long. Work through each week concentrating only on the daily run and week that lies ahead.

If you are completely new to running then start at week 1. This initial phase is a 4 week walk / run plan which aims to get you ready to run for 30 minutes.

However, if you can already run for 30 minutes but have not completed a marathon then I suggest you start at week 5 and repeat this block in order to build your base and get into the routine of exercising regularly.

### Training Plan Key

- Minute ( ' ): eg 30' = 30 minutes : Second ( " ): eg 30" = 30 seconds
- Brisk Walk (BW): exactly that - brisk.
- Easy Run (ER): less than 60% maximum effort, you should feel relaxed. You should be breathing comfortably. You should be able to hold a conversation throughout the run. If not slow down, walk if necessary and control your effort.
- Steady Run (SR): 60 - 70% maximum effort. These along with easy runs will make up the bulk of your training. Steady runs build the physical endurance base that is the foundation for the rest of your training. Sentences are still possible at this pace.
- Marathon Pace (MP): this is the realistic goal pace at which you aim to run the marathon.
- Tempo Run (TR): 70 - 85% of your maximum effort. These runs will improve your running economy thus enabling you to run faster for longer. They require concentration so you should only be able to speak 3 - 4 word short sentences but not a conversation. You will probably find these runs uncomfortable but stick with it.
- Interval Run (IR): interval runs are made up of short periods of higher intensity running interspersed with active recovery periods. The rest between efforts means you can maintain the quality and pace when doing the higher intensity work.

## Getting Started and Building a Routine : Weeks 1 - 4 (14.06.21 - 11.07.20)

As you are completely new to running the aim of this first 4 week training phase is to build the foundation for your marathon journey. Stick closely to the plan and you will quickly improve. Look at your schedule (work, social and home) and identify 3 - 4 opportunities to commit too fitting in training sessions. Be realistic rather than being overambitious.

### Week 1: Training

This week is about committing yourself to regular exercise, and finding a routine that works for you.

**Tuesday:**

4 x (5' ER : 3' BW) (32')

**Thursday:**

5' BW : 10' ER : 5' BW : 15' ER : 5' BW (40')

**Sunday:**

10' BW : 30' ER : 10' BW (50')

### Week 1: Notes and Tips

*Practice: this is your first month of running - positive self-talk can help motivate and build confidence - try it when motivation is waning. Self-talk is a vital tool throughout the next few months so its important to practice as the days and weeks go on.*

*Tip: don't be afraid of breathlessness. Understanding and regulating (by keeping calm and walking if you need to) your breathing is a part of becoming a marathon runner.*

### Week 2: Training

Running should start to feel a little easier. Week 2's goal is to increase the running to walking ratio.

**Tuesday:**

4 x (6' ER : 4' BW) (40')

**Thursday:**

10' BW : 10' TR : 5' BW 10' ER : 5' BW (40')

**Sunday:**

10' BW : 20' ER : 5' BW : 15' ER : 10' BW (60')

### Week 2: Notes and Tips

*Practice: this is your first month of running - positive self-talk can help motivate and build confidence - try it when motivation is waning. Self-talk is a vital tool throughout the next few months so its important to practice as the days and weeks go on.*

*Tip: after a long or hard run recovery is accelerated by having a carbohydrate and protein drink within the first 30 min post run*

### Week 3: Training

Take your time to ease into each workout. Marathon training is a little like race day - you've got to pace your effort over the months

**Tuesday:**

3 x (5' TR : 2' BW : 5' ER : 2' BW) (42')

**Thursday:**

5' BW : 45' ER : 5' BW (55')

**Sunday:**

10' BW : 30' ER : 10' BW : 30' ER : 10' BW (90')

### Week 3: Notes and Tips

*Note: easy runs make up the bulk of the plan. Pacing is optimal for easy / steady runs. A common error is to run easy runs too fast. Check your heart rate, breathing, and perceived exertion to make sure you're running easy - marathon training requires you to work at different intensities to challenge different systems which results in adaptations and progression*

*Tip: sleep is key to running well - try going to bed 20 or 30 minutes earlier than usual*

### Week 4: Training

### Week 4: Notes and Tips

Stress plus rest results in progress - over stressing or under resting you will risk injury or burnout

**Tuesday:**

15' ER : 10' SR : 15' ER (40')

**Thursday:**

5' BW : 20' ER : 5' BW 10' TR : 10' ER (50')

**Sunday:**

10' BW : 25' ER : 5' BW : 25' ER : 10' BW (75')

*Reminder: stick to the prescribed pace range on easy days to avoid overtraining burnout and injury - this is a common runner's mistake*

*Tip: start a training diary, for example record what you ate before a good run or what you ate before a bad run, how far you ran, did you have to walk, what went well, what didn't - you can look back on this as the plan goes on to work out what works well for you*

### Maintaining Consistency : Weeks 5 - 8 (12.08.21 - 08.08.21)

The aim of this second 4 week block is to build the foundation you have built and to establish an exercise routine. This phase of your marathon journey is about sticking with the training and starting to notice the positive changes both physically and mentally that will begin to emerge as you get more and more into your running. It's time to be consistent and develop your distance.

#### Week 5: Training

This week your runs are continuous but a little shorter in duration. Bank them and boost your confidence.

**Tuesday:**

40' ER (40')

**Thursday:**

45' ER (45')

**Sunday:**

30' ER : 5' BW : 30' ER : 5' BW (70')

#### Week 5: Notes and Tips

*Tip: visualise yourself at before and during the race - how do you stay relaxed, calm and in control of pacing your effort?*

*Want more? Base miles are important. If you've got a little more time available for your training then add in a fourth run this week: an easy 40 minutes. Or if you're feeling good and seeking a little more, then drop or reduce the walking breaks from the runs this week.*

*Goal: aim to enjoy the process and journey and try not to focus solely on the end result*

#### Week 6: Training

This is when your marathon training truly starts to kick in. You're layering up strength with some higher intensity work.

**Tuesday:**

40' ER (40')

**Thursday:**

10' ER : IR 10 x (1' TR : 1' BW) : 10' ER (40')

**Sunday:**

3 x (30' ER : 5' BW) (105')

#### Week 6: Notes and Tips

*Tip: when tempo running, don't do too much, too soon. Gradually increase your effort, control your form, feel your stride lengthen and your cadence quicken. Stay smooth.*

*Strength and Conditioning: if you have time you can add 30 - 40' to strengthen your muscles so you can run faster and reduce the risk of injury. This can easily be done at home. Try single leg squats, step ups and abdominal crunches for example - get advice from an exercise professional on the types of exercises you need to do to support your running.*

#### Week 7: Training

#### Week 7: Notes and Tips

You are now entering into the vital second half of your plan - aim for a steady, controlled and well-executed week of running.

**Tuesday:**

40' ER (40')

**Thursday:**

10' ER : IR 6 x (2' TR : 2' BW or ER) : 10' ER (44')

**Sunday:**

3 x (30' ER : 5' BW) (105')

*Tip: fuelling and hydration. As your runs increase in duration, consider how to carry your fuel, as well as what and how much to drink and eat when you run. Make sure you now what is available on the course - is this good for you?*

*Want more? Add an two steady miles to your longest run*

*Tip: rest days are important as they allow the body to recover and adapt, and prepare for the next training day.*

## Week 8: Training

The days are getting warmer - try to avoid running in the heat of the day - start early particularly on your longer runs. This week get your head down and deliver on your runs.

**Tuesday:**

20' ER: 20' SR (40')

**Thursday:**

10' ER : IR 8 x (2' TR : 1' BW or ER) : 10' ER (44')

**Sunday:**

3 x (25' ER : 5' BW) : 25' SR : 5' BW (120')

## Week 8: Notes and Tips

*Goal: create a plan beat the tough moments - coping strategies / mental techniques help us push on and overcome difficulties - for example using self-talk to control negative thoughts and emotions - these mental skills take practice just like physical skills*

*Want more? If you've got a little more time available for your training then add an easy 40'*

*Tip: focus on and remember your good runs - don't dwell or invest in bad runs - learn from them and move on*

## Going Long : Weeks 9 - 12 (09.08.21 - 05.09.21)

This third phase is probably the most important and toughest, yet also the most beneficial to your marathon success story. You'll start to feel the benefits of the training you've done, you'll feel more confident and will be able to run for longer.

## Week 9: Training

The next few weeks are all about progressing your long run and building your capacity to cover the marathon distance.

**Tuesday:**

25' ER : 20' SR (45')

**Thursday:**

10' ER : IR 4 x (4' TR : 3' BW or ER) : 10' ER (48')

**Sunday:**

2 x (25' ER : 5' BW : 25' SR : 5' BW) (120')

## Week 9: Notes and Tips

*Tip: you might think you need to cover 26 miles in training . Relax, you don't! It's the accumulation of regular runs that prepares you to do the distance. Consistency matters.*

*Goal: to run between 10 and 12 miles on Sunday*

*Goal: reflect. How do you feel? Confident? Motivated? Tired? What and how do things need to change to ensure you follow the training plan? Maybe its time to set some SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound)*

## Week 10: Training

This is when your marathon training truly starts to kick in. You're layering up strength with some higher intensity work.

### Tuesday:

40' ER (40')

### Thursday:

10' ER : IR 10 x (1' TR : 1' BW) : 10' ER (40')

### Sunday:

3 x (30' ER : 5' BW) (105')

## Week 10: Notes and Tips

*Tip: when you apply pressure, your form can slip. Lock in good form when you run with posture reminders. Keep your hips high, your chin level, your shoulders square, look upwards and forwards. Lift your spirits and run tall.*

*Prepare: for tomorrow's run by planning to run relaxed and easy and let the miles go by - take 10 min each day to try to visualise yourself running like this, try to get an idea of how good this feels using all your senses*

## Week 11: Training

These few weeks are arguably the toughest - distances get longer and the pressure builds. Stay calm. Be disciplined. Be consistent.

### Tuesday:

40' ER (40')

### Thursday:

10' ER : IR 4 x (6' TR : 3' BW) : 10' ER (56')

### Sunday:

5 x (28' ER / SR : 2' BW) (150')

## Week 11: Notes and Tips

*Reflect: this is an opportunity to ask questions of last week's race day preparations. Note in your diary what you did, what was good, and importantly what you would've done differently.*

*Want more? Set yourself a target distance goal of 14 - 16 miles on Sunday. Run continuously if you're confident to do so. Include a few miles, say 4 to 6, at target marathon pace*

## Week 12: Training

Pay attention to how you're feeling. Listen to your body - look after it with rest, recovery and food.

### Tuesday:

25' ER : 25' SR (50')

### Thursday:

10' ER : IR 8 x (2' TR : 1' BW) : 10' ER (44')

### Sunday:

6 x (28' ER / SR : 2' BW) (180') or target distance goal of 16 - 18 miles

## Week 12: Notes and Tips

*Plan: set yourself goals and a strategy to achieve them for Sunday.*

*Tip: get to know your target marathon pace. This is your ideal finish time divided by 26 to reveal a race-pace or minutes-per-mile. An average pace of 11-minutes-per-mile will produce a 4 hour 48-minute finish time.*

*Want more? Add a mid-week eight-mile run at your target marathon pace.*

## Preparing to Race : Weeks 13 - 16 (06.09.21 - 03.10.21)

This final phase is about holding yourself together, staying healthy and injury-free. The hard work is done and you'll be starting to ease back, run smart, do less, feel stronger, feel more confident (although a few last-minute wobbles are really common).

## Week 13: Training

## Week 13: Notes and Tips



This week is all about your longest run. Plan and prepare. Relax, be smooth and consistent. Tick off the miles. Complete your long run.

**Tuesday:**

50' ER (50')

**Thursday:**

10' ER : 10' SR : 10' MP : 10' SR : 10' ER (50')

**Sunday:**

7 x (28' ER / SR : 2' BW) (210') or target distance goal of 18 - 22 miles (see Week 15 Want more?)

*Goal - your last long run! Aim for 18-22 miles to complete your physical endurance and mental strength preparation for your race*

*Practice: get everything ready for Sundays run - prepare like it is race day - practice your relaxation techniques and visualise your morning preparations*

### Week 14: Training

You'll start your race 'taper' this week, which means you'll run smarter, run less, feel fresher, reach a peak and be race-ready.

**Tuesday:**

40' ER (40')

**Thursday:**

10' ER : IR 5 x (3' MP : 3' TR) : 10' ER (50')

**Sunday:**

2 x (45' ER / SR : 2' BW) (94') or 90' continuous SR / ER

### Week 14: Notes and Tips

*Tip: don't be tempted to do more and throw in last-minute panic miles or you'll risk being fatigued on the start line*

*Note: the taper decreases the number of hours you train but maintains the intensity - this prevents you feeling sluggish on race day*

### Week 15: Training

A steady week will tie up your marathon training routine. If you have a pre-race wobble, don't panic. Be confident, kind to yourself and try to sleep a few extra hours over the week.

**Tuesday:**

30' ER (30')

**Thursday:**

10' ER : 20' MP : 10' TP : 10' ER (44')

**Sunday:**

20' ER : 30' MP : 20' TR 70'

### Week 15: Notes and Tips

*Tip: you'll run a better marathon slightly under-prepared and fresh than you will slightly over-prepared and fatigued. Be confident you've done all you can. If you're still not sure then reconsider your expectations and set your goals accordingly.*

### Week 16: Training

This week is about you - you've done the training now it is time to have a great race. You can only do too much this week - keep training light. Run regularly, but just a little.

**Tuesday:**

30' ER (30')

**Friday:**

5' ER : 10 - 15' MP : 5' ER (20 - 25')

**Sunday:**

26.2 miles

### Week 16: Notes and Tips

*Race Day - take a moment to stand confidently on the start line. Look around; you've made it. Reflect on how far you've come, close your eyes, breathe deeply, and get ready for one of the best days of your life. It's totally normal to doubt yourself, question your sanity, and worry about whether you can do it. Turn your 'maranoia' on its head, take control and reassure yourself*

Training plan devised and supported by:



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