



BEGINNER'S TRAINING PLAN

Beginner's training plan

This training plan is aimed at novice marathon runners covering the distance for the first time, with a few tweaks and challenges if you want to test yourself, or if you feel like pushing on a bit if your training is going really well.

The plan assumes that you will run three times a week and that you've done very little running in the past but are generally in good health and committed to your marathon journey.

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 (for example, run on Monday, Wednesday and Saturday or Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday).

Different types of training

run

EASY RUNS

(less than 60 per cent maximum effort)

During an easy run, you should feel relaxed. You should be breathing comfortably and capable of holding a conversation throughout the run. If you're a new runner nothing may feel easy at first – slow down, walk if necessary and control your effort.

STEADY RUNS

(60–70 per cent maximum effort)

These are the bread and butter of your training – the 'miles in the bank'. Steady runs build the base that is the foundation for the rest of your training. Conversations are still possible at this pace but only in shorter sentences.

TEMPO RUNS

(70–80 per cent maximum effort)

Running at tempo pace is great for improving your running economy. It's a sustained cruise pace that requires concentration. You will find these runs slightly uncomfortable as you try to run faster, but they are worth it.

LONG RUNS

These are a real focus of the plan. They should be used to develop strength and endurance but also to practise your target marathon pace and control. Long runs are shown in both time and distance.

WEEK 1

MONDAY

REST DAY - Increase time on your feet and build a strong foundation and routine

TUESDAY

WALK 30 MINUTES

WEDNESDAY

REST DAY

THURSDAY

RUN/WALK 40 MINUTES - 10-minute brisk walk, 20-minute easy run, 10-minute brisk walk

FRIDAY

REST DAY

SATURDAY

REST DAY

SUNDAY

RUN/WALK 50 MINUTES - 10-minute walk, 30-minute easy run, 10-minute walk

WEEK 3

MONDAY

REST DAY - You're doing a great job. The more you do the easier it feels!

TUESDAY

RUN/WALK 40 MINUTES - 5-minute walk, 30-minute easy run, 5-minute walk

WEDNESDAY

REST DAY

THURSDAY

RUN/WALK 50 MINUTES - 5-minute brisk walk, 40-minute easy run, 5-minute brisk walk

FRIDAY

REST DAY

SATURDAY

REST DAY

SUNDAY

RUN/WALK 80 MINUTES - 10-minute walk, 30-minute jog, 10-minute walk, 20-minute jog, 10-minute walk

WEEK 2

MONDAY

REST DAY - The first few weeks are important. Find the time to fit in your workouts

TUESDAY

RUN/WALK 40 MINUTES - (10-minute walk, 10-minute run) x 2

WEDNESDAY

REST DAY

THURSDAY

RUN/WALK 50 MINUTES - 10-minute brisk walk, 30-minute easy run, 10-minute brisk walk

FRIDAY

REST DAY

SATURDAY

REST DAY

SUNDAY

RUN/WALK 65 MINUTES - 10-minute walk, 20-minute easy run, 10-minute walk, 15-minute easy run, 10-minute walk

WEEK 4

MONDAY

REST DAY - The first block of four weeks is almost done. Stick to your plan this week and build up to your longest time on your feet

TUESDAY

40 MINUTES EASY RUN

WEDNESDAY

REST DAY

THURSDAY

RUN/WALK 55 MINUTES - 5-minute brisk walk, 45-minute easy run, 5-minute brisk walk

FRIDAY

REST DAY

SATURDAY

REST DAY

SUNDAY

RUN/WALK 90 MINUTES - 10-minute walk, 30-minute jog, 10-minute walk, 30-minute jog, 10-minute walk, or distance goal of 6 to 8 miles

WEEK 5

MONDAY	REST DAY - A lighter week to allow for adaptation to the training loads
TUESDAY	20 MINUTES EASY RUN
WEDNESDAY	REST DAY
THURSDAY	30 MINUTES EASY RUN
FRIDAY	REST DAY
SATURDAY	REST DAY
SUNDAY	RUN 52 MINUTES - 25-minute easy run, 2-minute walk, 25-minute easy run

WEEK 7

MONDAY	REST DAY - A solid week in the bank allowing training to settle and routine to continue
TUESDAY	40 MINUTES EASY RUN
WEDNESDAY	REST DAY
THURSDAY	RUN 40 MINUTES - 10-minute easy run, (45-second tempo run, 1 minute 45-second walk/run) x 8, 10-minute easy run
FRIDAY	REST DAY
SATURDAY	REST DAY
SUNDAY	RUN 1 HOUR 45 MINUTES - (30-minute jog, 5-minute brisk walk) x 3, or distance goal of 8 miles

WEEK 6

MONDAY	REST DAY - This week is when the marathon training kicks in, building more time on your feet, and introducing some mixed paced running
TUESDAY	40 MINUTES EASY RUN
WEDNESDAY	REST DAY
THURSDAY	RUN 40 MINUTES - 10-minute easy run, (30-second tempo run, 2-minute walk) x 8, 10-minute easy run
FRIDAY	REST DAY
SATURDAY	REST DAY
SUNDAY	RUN/WALK 1 HOUR 40 MINUTES - (20-minute easy run, 5-minute brisk walk) x 4, or distance goal of 6 to 8 miles

WEEK 8

MONDAY	REST DAY - This week, feel your heart pounding and your breathing quicken with the tempo running
TUESDAY	40 MINUTES EASY RUN
WEDNESDAY	REST DAY
THURSDAY	RUN 50 MINUTES - 10-minute easy run, (60-second tempo run, 2-minute walk/jog) x 10, 10-minute easy run
FRIDAY	REST DAY
SATURDAY	REST DAY
SUNDAY	RUN 1 HOUR 40 MINUTES - (25-minute jog, 5-minute brisk walk) x 4, or distance goal of 8 to 10 miles

WEEK 9

MONDAY

REST DAY - The next few weeks are all about the long run, building your capacity to complete the marathon. Don't worry about covering the race distance before the event, just trust the training. Practise your hydration and fuel strategies on your long runs

TUESDAY

40 MINUTES EASY RUN

WEDNESDAY

REST DAY

THURSDAY

RUN 30 MINUTES - 10-minute easy run, (4-minute tempo run, 3-minute easy jog/walk recovery) x 4, 10-minute easy run

FRIDAY

REST DAY

SATURDAY

REST DAY

SUNDAY

RUN 2 HOURS - (28-minute run, 2-minute walk) x 4, or distance goal of 10 to 12 miles

WEEK 11

MONDAY

REST DAY - The next four weeks are about getting to know your race pace. Have a target time in minutes and work out your pace per mile

TUESDAY

45 MINUTES EASY RUN

WEDNESDAY

REST DAY

THURSDAY

RUN 60 MINUTES - 10-minute easy run (5-minute tempo run, 3-minute easy run/walk recovery) x 5, 10-minute easy run

FRIDAY

REST DAY

SATURDAY

REST DAY

SUNDAY

RUN 2 HOURS 30 MINUTES - (28-minute easy run, 2-minute walk) x 5, or distance goal of 14 to 16 miles. Include a few miles at target marathon pace

WEEK 10

MONDAY

REST DAY - Enter a half marathon to familiarise yourself with race day routines, such as pre-race nutrition, race clothing and hydration strategies

TUESDAY

RUN 35 MINUTES - 10-minute easy run, (3-minute tempo run, 2-minute jog recovery) x 3, 10-minute easy run

WEDNESDAY

REST DAY

THURSDAY

30 MINUTES EASY RUN

FRIDAY

REST DAY

SATURDAY

REST DAY

SUNDAY

RACE - Race a half marathon, or run for 2 hours 15 minutes, or distance goal of 12 miles

WEEK 12

MONDAY

REST DAY - There are just three more weeks of hard training left before the taper and you start to run less and sharpen up

TUESDAY

50 MINUTES EASY RUN

WEDNESDAY

REST DAY

THURSDAY

RUN 52 MINUTES - 10-minute easy run, (6-minute tempo run, 2-minute easy run/walk recovery) x 4, 10-minute easy run

FRIDAY

REST DAY

SATURDAY

REST DAY

SUNDAY

RUN 3 HOURS - (28-minute easy run, 2-minute walk) x 6, or distance goal of 16 to 18 miles. Include a few miles at target marathon pace

WEEK 13

MONDAY	REST DAY – Dial in to your long run this week. Focus, plan and prepare. Relax, tune in, and tick off the miles
TUESDAY	50 MINUTES EASY RUN
WEDNESDAY	REST DAY
THURSDAY	RUN 50 MINUTES – 10-minute easy run, 10-minute steady run, 10 minutes at target marathon pace, 10-minute tempo run, 10-minute easy run
FRIDAY	REST DAY
SATURDAY	REST DAY
SUNDAY	RUN 3 HOURS 30 MINUTES – (28-minute easy run, 2-minute walk) x 7, or distance goal of 18 to 20 miles. Include a few miles at target marathon pace. Remember, people run at different paces so the distance covered will vary

WEEK 15

MONDAY	REST DAY – The taper is here. Doing less is all about recovering from the hard training so you can stand on the Start Line ready to do your best
TUESDAY	RUN 30 MINUTES
WEDNESDAY	REST DAY
THURSDAY	RUN 50 MINUTES – 10-minute easy run, 20 minutes at target marathon pace, 10 minutes faster, 10-minute easy run
FRIDAY	REST DAY
SATURDAY	REST DAY
SUNDAY	70 MINUTES EASY RUN

WEEK 14

MONDAY	REST DAY – The long run is reducing in volume. Don't be tempted to do more or you will risk being tired on the Start Line
TUESDAY	40 MINUTES EASY RUN
WEDNESDAY	REST DAY
THURSDAY	RUN 50 MINUTES – 10-minute easy run, (3 minutes at target marathon pace, 3 minutes faster) x 5, 10-minute easy run
FRIDAY	REST DAY
SATURDAY	REST DAY
SUNDAY	RUN 1 HOUR 34 MINUTES – (45-minute easy run, 2-minute walk) x 2

WEEK 16

MONDAY	REST DAY – You can only do too much this week. Relax, look back at your training and see how far you have come. You are ready!
TUESDAY	RUN 30 MINUTES
WEDNESDAY	REST DAY
THURSDAY	RUN 22 MINUTES – 5-minute easy run, 12 minutes at target marathon pace, 5-minute easy run
FRIDAY	REST DAY
SATURDAY	REST DAY
SUNDAY	RACE DAY – Start sensibly at your race pace and stick to your race plan. Trust the training, smile and enjoy yourself. You can do it!