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Training Plan

Marathon

4 days/week

Intro

Our Plans

Our Training Plans are designed by Olympic finalist Andy Baddeley in collaboration with Andy Hobdell, who has coached runners to the last four Olympics at distances from 1,500m to the marathon. Andy also works with runners of all abilities to help them achieve their goals, whether that's completing the distance or dipping under a target time.

Your Current Training Level

It's really important that you don't jump straight into a new training plan without carefully assessing your current level of training. **This training plan is based on running four times per week.** Whilst the paces are adaptable to your target race goal, the overall volume of training should only be attempted if you've already built up sensibly to this frequency of running.

Flexibility

We've laid out our training plan to give you the optimum balance of different types of training and recovery. We know that life sometimes gets in the way and that you might not always be able to do exactly what is planned. If you have a tough day and can't face a planned interval workout, just getting out for an easy run is absolutely fine. You can move the days around to fit with your life and, similarly, if you need to miss a day, that's fine too. Don't panic and try to make up for lost time - **try to be sensible and remember that cramming lots of training into back-to-back days without any recovery could lead to injury or illness.**

Setting Pace Goals

Listen to your body. Choose an overall target for your marathon that is realistic - you'll soon find out in sessions if the target pace you've picked is a stretch too far. Don't be afraid to adjust once you've done a few sessions; if you can't complete the workouts at the planned pace, then the pace is too hard at this stage.

Terminology (i)

Intervals

You're going to need to be able to run repeated efforts at specific paces with relatively short recovery. Interval training workouts should be the hardest efforts of your week. We've given intervals as a set time or distance depending on the workout and also provided the recovery you should take after each interval. Think about an effort level, or Rate of Perceived Exertion (RPE) of 8 or 9 out of 10.

Tempo

A vital part of training for a marathon is a threshold or tempo run. This is a sustained effort harder than your normal runs, but not as fast as your interval training. This is one of the most efficient ways of improving your aerobic fitness. This should be at an RPE of around 7 out of 10.

Long Runs

One of the most important elements of marathon training, you'll need to gradually build up the distance of your long runs to give you the confidence when it comes to race day.

Easy and Steady Runs

There's a distinction between steady and easy runs. Both of these are easier than threshold runs. On some days in the plan, you will see 'Easy to steady run'; this means you should listen to your body and run at a sensible intensity depending on whether you feel tired or fresh. For easy runs, aim for an RPE of 3-4 out of 10. For steady runs, you're looking for 5-6.

Terminology (ii)

Strides

If you're feeling okay, after an easier run can be a great time to do some strides. That's when you run around 100m at a faster pace (think about faster than your 5km pace), then walk or jog slowly, then repeat. They're not all-out sprints, but should be controlled and are a fantastic opportunity to think about good running form when you're not too fatigued. Build into them gently, accelerating for the first 30m or so, then holding good form and coming to a gradual stop after you've run 100m.

Rest/Recovery

In the interval sessions in this plan, as well as some of the threshold runs, we've provided rest or recovery times. Where two times are given, the longer one will be the rest you take between sets and the shorter one is the rest after each interval. We'd always advocate jogging your recoveries if possible, or at the very least walking to keep yourself moving. Stay tall to get the air in, and resist the temptation to bend over with your hands on your knees.

Paces

Within interval and threshold sessions, we've provided guides for what pace to run, to help gauge your efforts. Your 'marathon pace' will be your target race pace that you're using this plan to work towards. You can use that pace or finish time to calculate your 5km, 10km and half marathon paces using an online race predictor. Alternatively, you may already have run one or more of those distances in a race and can therefore use your actual times to set your paces.

The Plan

Warm Up

For easy and steady runs, start slower with shorter strides and an increased cadence until you feel like you're warmed up and are moving nicely. **For the interval sessions and threshold runs, make sure you do a thorough warm up before starting your hard efforts** - this should be a minimum of 5 minutes easy running and ideally would include some basic drills or dynamic stretches. Head to therunningchannel.com for videos to talk you through them if you need some tips!

Cool Down

We'd recommend some gentle stretching and activations after your runs whilst you're still warm. For the tougher workouts, we would also suggest a cool down jog (again aim for at least 5 minutes).

Where to start if you have less time

The first few weeks of this 16 week plan aim to build your confidence with different types of training. If you are already training at a total weekly volume and intensity similar to that in the early weeks, you may find you are able to start the plan slightly later (eg Week 4 or 5) if your marathon race is less than 16 weeks away.

Intensities

We've colour coded each day's training so that you can see at a glance when the easiest and hardest days are.

Easiest

Hardest

The Plan

Week

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

Sun

1

Rest

Easy run
30 mins
Easy

Easy to steady run
8km
Easy/steady
Plus 8 x 100m strides

Rest

Intervals
2 sets of (5x 1min)
Run at 10km pace
30s & 3min recovery

Rest

Long run
60 mins
Easy

2

Rest

Easy run
30 mins
Easy

Easy to steady run
8km
Easy/steady
Plus 8 x 100m strides

Rest

Intervals
3x (3,2,1 min)
Start at 10km pace
Progress as you feel
1min & 3min recovery

Rest

Long run
75 mins
Easy/steady

3

Rest

Easy run
30 mins
Easy

Easy to steady run
8km
Easy/steady
Plus 8 x 100m strides

Rest

Intervals
5,4,3,2,1 min
Start at 10km pace
Progress as you feel
1min jog recovery

Rest

Long run
80 mins
Start easy
Finish steady

The Plan

Week **Mon** **Tue** **Wed** **Thu** **Fri** **Sat** **Sun**

4

Rest

Easy run
30 mins
Easy

Rest

Intervals
10x 1min
Run at 10km pace
1min recovery

Rest

5km Time Trial
2km warm up
2x 100m strides
5km time trial
2km warm down

Long run
60 mins
Easy

5

Rest

Easy run
30 mins
Easy

Easy to steady run
10km
Easy/steady

Plus 8 x 100m strides

Rest

Intervals
4x (3min, 1min)
3min @ 10k pace
1min @ 5k pace

90s jog after 3mins
3min recovery
otherwise

Rest

Long run
16km
Run how you feel

6

Rest

Easy run
30 mins
Easy

Easy to steady run
10km
Easy/steady

Plus 8 x 100m strides

Rest

Intervals
4x (3,2,1 min)
Run at 10km pace
1min & 2min recovery

Rest

Long run
16km
Easy/steady

The Plan

Week **Mon** **Tue** **Wed** **Thu** **Fri** **Sat** **Sun**

7

Rest

Easy run
30 mins
Easy

Rest

Easy to steady run
8km
Easy/steady

Plus 8 x 100m strides

Rest

Tempo
2km warm up
5km @ marathon pace
4min jog recovery
5km @ faster than first
5km

Long run
60 mins
Easy

8

Rest

Easy run
30 mins
Easy

Easy to steady run
10km
Easy/steady

Plus 8 x 100m strides

Rest

Intervals
8x 3min
Run at 10km pace
2min recovery

Rest

Long run
Half marathon
Start easy
Finish steady

9

Rest

Easy run
30 mins
Easy

Easy run
30 mins
Easy

Plus 8 x 100m strides

Rest

Easy run
30 mins
Easy

Rest

Long run
60 mins
Easy/steady

The Plan

Week

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

Sun

10

Rest

Easy run
30 mins
Easy

Intervals
5km steady
3min jog recovery
10x 1min
Run at 5km/10km pace
30s recovery

Rest

Easy to steady run
60 mins

Rest

Long run
24km
Easy

11

Rest

Easy run
30 mins
Easy

Easy to steady run
10km
Easy/steady
Plus 8 x 100m strides

Rest

Intervals
2x (10x 1min)
Run at 10km/5km
pace
30s & 3min recovery

Rest

Long run
30km
1st 10km easy
2nd 10km steady
3rd 10km at
marathon pace

12

Rest

Easy run
30 mins
Easy

Easy to steady run
8km
Easy/steady
Plus 8 x 100m strides

Rest

Mixed paces
5km easy
4mins recovery
5km @ 5km/10km pace
5mins recovery
5km @ marathon pace

Rest

Long run
90 mins
Easy/steady

The Plan

Week

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

Sun

13

Rest

Easy run
30 mins
Easy

Easy to steady run
10km
Easy/steady
Plus 8 x 100m strides

Rest

Intervals
8x 1km
Run at 10km/HM pace
2min recovery

Rest

Long run
Half marathon
Marathon pace

14

Rest

Easy run
30 mins
Easy

Easy to steady run
8km
Easy/steady
Plus 8 x 100m strides

Rest

Tempo
5km easy
10km @ marathon
pace
5km easy

Rest

Long run
90 mins
Easy/steady

15

Rest

Easy run
30 mins
Easy

Easy to steady run
10km
Easy/steady
Plus 8 x 100m strides

Rest

Intervals
2x (8x 1min)
Run at 10km pace
1min & 2min recovery

Rest

Long run
60 mins
Easy/steady

The Plan

Week **Mon** **Tue** **Wed** **Thu** **Fri** **Sat** **Sun**

16

Rest

Easy run
30 mins
Easy

Easy to steady run
30 mins
Easy/steady
Plus 4 x 100m strides

Rest

Pre-race run
1km easy
3km at marathon
pace
1km easy

RACE

Nothing New On Race Day

You've had up to 16 weeks to practise your warm up routine, what you like to eat and drink and which shoes and clothing you feel most comfortable in - don't change anything on race day!

Pacing Is Everything

The workouts in our plan make sure you're comfortable running both faster and slower than your target race pace. They should also have given you a good idea of what each pace feels like, so don't be tempted to get carried away and go too hard too early!

Enjoy It

Training is hard work and races are where you get the chance to reap the rewards. Enjoy the experience and let us know how you get on, we'd love to hear from you!

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