

Marathon Training for Beginners

Marathon training will be challenging, but should be fun and enjoyable. Finishing a marathon is an accomplishment that less than 1% of people in the world can say they have achieved. You are about to be one of them!

Are you a beginning runner? Already a runner? Haven't run in a long time? Either way, you can finish a marathon. Learning some of the basics will help you get started.



Motivation:

Building mental stamina is essential. It's one thing to be motivated to begin training. It's another to stay motivated every day. Naturally, we think running a marathon will not be easy. Even so, many finishers say it was even tougher than they thought. Staying motivated and developing the proper mindset is key to enjoying training and crossing the finish line with a smile on your face.

Goals:

Finish time goals, weight loss goals, "just finish" goals...we all have a reason(s) for wanting to run a marathon. If your only goal is to lose weight, good luck. You're likely to quit. You are likely to quit just like so many people who join health clubs each year for the same reason only to stop going after seeing little results in little time. You *must* have the right goals and reasons for running in order to be successful.

Wear the right gear:

Treat your feet to a good pair of running shoes (or three!). Running shoes will be the most important piece of gear. Shoes are designed to fit feet with different arches, pronation, and more. Visit a local specialty running store to find the best shoes for your feet.

Nutrition:

Carbohydrates provide the fuel runners need. During marathon training, 65% of your total calories should come from carbohydrates, particularly complex carbohydrates. 10%

should come from protein (you need 0.5 to .07 grams per pound of your body weight each day). 20-25% of your total calories should come from unsaturated fats. Be sure to get the nutrition you need to keep you strong and allow for adequate recovery.

Recovery:

Obviously, it is important to run as marathon training, but recovery is equally important. You should not run every day. Your body needs to rest between runs so it can recover from one run to the next, getting stronger between each run. Nutrition and eating the right foods at the right time also play a vital role in recovery. Take recovery days equally as serious as your running days.

Hydration:

On runs of an hour or more, carry fluids with you and consume 6-8 oz. every 20 minutes. During pre-training and marathon training, weigh yourself before and after each run and get your body weight back to the weight it was before the run by drinking water or sports drink within the first hours after the run.

Avoiding Injury:

Use your non-running days to rest and recover. Ice down any soreness, particularly in knees or shins (most common) four times per day for 15-20 minutes. Injuries often sneak up without warning. Doing all the right things right will minimize your chances of injury.

Pre-Training:

Before you begin marathon training, you should be able to run for at least 30 minutes without stopping. Distance is not important right now. You just need to get your body used to running.

Combinations of run/walks are great to use during pre-training because they ease your body into the exercise and minimizes the chance of experiencing a running injury.

It's also a good idea at this point to go ahead and [select a marathon](#) and get signed up!

Training:

Your mileage should gradually increase each week with your longest run being 18-20 miles. You should then taper off in the final weeks leading up to the marathon to allow your body to recover from training and so you will be strong on marathon day. Having a 20-mile run under your belt will give you a major psychological advantage on marathon day.

Following is a suggested beginner marathon training schedule. The schedule assumes you have been running for at least 6-10 weeks at can run for at least 30 minutes without stopping (See [26-week schedule](#)).

16-Week Marathon Training Schedule								
Week	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Total
1	3	Rest	4	3	Rest	5	Rest	15
2	3	Rest	4	3	Rest	6	Rest	16
3	3	Rest	4	3	Rest	7	Rest	17
4	3	Rest	5	3	Rest	8	Rest	19
5	3	Rest	5	3	Rest	10	Rest	21
6	4	Rest	5	4	Rest	11	Rest	24
7	4	Rest	6	4	Rest	12	Rest	26
8	4	Rest	6	4	Rest	14	Rest	28
9	4	Rest	7	4	Rest	16	Rest	31
10	5	Rest	8	5	Rest	16	Rest	34
11	5	Rest	8	5	Rest	17	Rest	35
12	5	Rest	8	5	Rest	18	Rest	36
13	5	Rest	8	5	Rest	20	Rest	38
14	5	Rest	8	5	Rest	9	Rest	27
15	3	Rest	5	3	Rest	8	Rest	19
16	3	Rest	3	Walk 2	Rest	26.2	Rest	34.2

Marathon Day:

Tapering in the final weeks before the marathon will help your body recover from marathon training and be strong for your big day. You will also want to carbo-load the week leading up to the race. Given the atmosphere at most marathons, you will likely feel full of adrenaline after leaving the starting line. Remember though, marathons are about endurance and pace is critical. Maintain pace to save everything you have left for your **big finish!**

<http://www.marathonrookie.com/marathon-training.html>