

How to train for a Marathon

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Process

This beginner marathon training program assumes you have been running consistently for at least 8-10 weeks and can run for at least thirty minutes without stopping before beginning the program. Do not run more than two consecutive days when following this 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

"Now if you are going to win any mind run the body. Never let the up. It is always tired in the morning, noon, and night. But the body is never tired if the mind is not tired."

- George S. Patton, U.S. Army General, 1912 Olympian

How much time do I need to train for a marathon?

We are all different so there is no universal answer to this. However, as a general guideline, it is safe to say one should be able to run for at least 30 minutes without stopping and should be running 12-15 total miles per week for several weeks before beginning most training programs. This also depends on your finish time goal and the level of training program you are looking to complete. The important thing is to gradually increase mileage each week and take it slow.

I missed a week of training. Can I still finish?

Many people miss training runs during the training period and it should generally be expected that something may come up over the course of training that simply does not allow you to run. Do not sweat it. Just pick back up and move along with the training. Do not try to make up for lost time, just move on.

Do I need to train using a heart rate monitor?

Heart rate monitors are helpful, but not essential. They can help you to avoid overtraining and provide confidence as you see your overall fitness level improve, but are optional.

What kind of diet should I follow?

Carbohydrates will provide your fuel. It is recommended that 65% of your calories come from carbohydrates, 10% from protein, and 25% from unsaturated fats.

Should I lift weights while training?

Lifting weights is optional during training. Light to moderate lifting can be good for increasing strength and confidence, but one does not have to lift weights in order to run a marathon or half marathon.

What are good snacks for runners?

Fruits and trail mix (nuts) are great. Do not be afraid to splurge and have some chocolate to reward yourself for your hard work.

What is a good finish time goal for a first marathon?

For a first marathon, we suggest setting a primary goal of finishing and any specific time goal being secondary. As you train, you will get a pretty good idea of when you might finish and can set a time goal accordingly. However, marathon training demands a lot of your body and demanding even more may prevent you from even reaching the starting line. After completing your first marathon, then you will have the training experience under your belt, know what to expect, and have a finish time you can set a target to beat should you wish to run another marathon in the future.

How do I select a pair of running shoes?

Running shoes will be the most important part of your running gear. To find the best pair for you, visit a local running specialty store. Most of these stores are owned and operated by highly experienced runners who can get you into the best shoe for your feet. Many even have a treadmill

or running area where you can test out several pair of shoes to find what feels most comfortable for you. If you have an old pair of running shoes, then take them along with you as looking at the bottoms of the shoes will help them evaluate your pronation.

How can I prevent blisters on my feet?

Blisters can be common among runners and can be painful, annoying, or simply unpleasant to look at. The culprit is generally friction and moisture. Before long runs, apply a small amount of Vaseline to both feet. The Vaseline will reduce friction and dramatically lessen the likelihood of getting blisters. Wear synthetic running socks that pull moisture from your feet and wear shoes that fit properly and are not too loose. If wearing a new pair, wear them on lower mileage runs before wearing them on a long run to help break them in first.

How can I stop a side stitch when I'm running?

Eating too soon before a run may lead to a side stitch. Always try to eat no less than an hour before a run. Eating 2-3 hours before a run should help to avoid side stitches. One popular remedy to side stitches during a run is to exhale slowly and fully to remove all the air from your lungs. Then pick back up with a breathing pattern such as a 2-2 breathing pattern where you take two steps while breathing in, then two steps while breathing out, and repeat. Maintaining a breathing pattern may also help to prevent a side stitch from occurring in the first place.

Should I run if I have a cold?

Be smart and use your best judgment as to whether or not to run when you have a cold or feel like you might be getting sick. Sometimes it can feel good knowing you ran or made your scheduled training run even though you were sick, but it could lead you to getting sicker and missing a week of training rather than only one day. If you are training for a race, a big part of training is breaking down your body and it repairing to become strong again. As you break down your body, your immune system may also weaken and make you more susceptible to becoming sick. Keep this in mind when considering whether or not to run when you are sick. Missing a single run is always better than missing 1-2 weeks while you are laid up in bed sick.