



Half Marathon Training Plan

Congratulations on signing up for a half marathon - tough enough to be rewarding but well within most people's capability - with the right training!

Following this training plan will ensure that you are physically prepared and able to complete the challenge safely and relatively comfortably. Being fit and well-prepared will also really contribute to your enjoyment of a half marathon!

Don't forget that, even if you are accustomed to jogging or walking, you will probably not be used to running for a prolonged amount of time. You should aim to increase your fitness levels to prepare yourself for this type of challenge.

Medical check-up

Before you start on a new training programme, it is always a good idea to consult with your doctor. You may wish to take our recommended training programme along with you so the doctor knows the level of training you are hoping to carry out.

NB all people have different levels of 'trainability' and natural potential. It is possible for complete beginners to make very rapid progress and move up through the targets, while others find initially that they can't achieve the early training levels.

Remember the two golden rules:

- build up very gradually
- you must rest and recover to enable the training to become beneficial.

Walking /Jogging/ Running / Levels

Miles per hour or heart rate can be a measure of exertion across different terrain so use Sing - Talk - Gasp

SING - easy jogging. You should be moving comfortably enough to sing your favourite songs

TALK - steady running. You are moving quickly but still able to talk intelligibly (if not intelligently!)

GASP - sprinting or speed work. You can't string a complete sentence together without running out of puff

For extra fat loss Do the short sessions in the morning after a glass of water but before eating. Otherwise leave three hours post-meal before heading out. On longer runs, sip a dilute juice drink (half and half with water) - 1 litre per hour.

Always eat within 30 minutes of finishing and include a portion of lean protein such as chicken, fish or cottage cheese.

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Important Note! Listen to your body. As you start and continue your training you will expect to feel slightly fatigued and your muscles may ache after training. Gentle stretching is important after exercise. If any tenderness or discomfort does not go away after rest, consult your doctor. If you experience any sudden pain, tightness in the chest or breathlessness seek medical advice immediately.

Kit Selection

Jogging and running are generally one of the cheaper activities to engage in, but it doesn't hurt to put in a little money and purchase the right gear to help make your jogging experience a lot more enjoyable.

Basic Kit consists of:

- Running top / vest
- Running shorts / leggings
- Water-resistant / windproof jacket
- Water bottle
- Good-quality running shoes

Socks

Running specific synthetic socks are light and cool, and do not add bulk to your feet. They also promote moving the sweat away from your feet.

Shorts / leggings / running tops

Synthetic fibres are definitely popular choices as they provide a dry jogging experience. These fibres move moisture away from the skin towards the outer layers of the material for easy evaporation.

Running Shoes

The most important piece of equipment any runner needs is a good and trusty pair of shoes. Choosing the right pair of shoes is essential to maximizing your running experience and helping to avoid injuries. Visit a reputable sports shop to have your feet measured and your gait analysed.

The Nutrition Plan

'Healthy eating' needn't be 'fun free', we need fat in our diet to remain healthy; we need carbohydrate in our diet and we need fibre too. At the end of the day it's a question of balance.

Leading up to your half marathon you should try to follow a healthy balanced diet. The training is very physically demanding, so you will need to increase your calorie intake. Food choices are important when training for any fitness challenge and whether you are looking at your half marathon as a fun day out or a race against the clock, subtle changes to what you eat and drink will

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help to improve your performance and help keep you healthy so you can train regularly and also recover afterwards.

Fluid intake is especially important during training. It is vital to drink plenty of water before and after exercise sessions – aim to drink two litres of water per day. Try to reduce your intake of tea, coffee, sugary drinks and alcohol.

Increase your intake of fruit and vegetables high in vitamins A, C and E as they contain anti-oxidants, which help to reduce toxin build up in the body. Eat lots of the following:

- Non citrus fruits such as strawberries, cherries and pears
- Brightly coloured vegetables such as peppers, carrots and aubergines
- Green vegetables, especially broccoli, courgettes and spinach

As always try and stick to the daily recommended intake of at least five fruit and vegetable portions per day. Everybody should try and do this as part of a healthy diet. 80g makes up a portion e.g. one apple, two plums, a glass of fruit juice, two heaped tablespoons of peas or one bowl of salad.

It is important to get enough protein, but you don't need to overdo it. Try and incorporate one or two servings of fish per week. White fish is a great low fat option and oily fish, like sardines or salmon gives us a good supply of unsaturated omega-3 fats.

Try and get around 60% of your calories from carbohydrates – at least one rice, pasta or potato portion per day should cover this. Think of these foods as fuel – these will give your muscles the energy you need to train.

You will have depleted your energy stores during your training sessions, so try to consume some carbohydrates as soon as possible. This will speed up your recovery and enable your body to rebuild, restock and be ready for your next exercise session. During the 15-minute period following your exercise session, your muscles are very receptive to loading on fuel and can restock at a much faster rate than usual. By refuelling correctly after exercise you will experience less overall fatigue for the remainder of the day. Even if you are not feeling very hungry try a piece of fruit and yoghurt. Within two hours of exercise you should try to eat a balanced meal of complex carbohydrates and low fat protein, for instance chicken with pasta. Go for wholegrain varieties where possible.

There is some sense in 'loading up' on carbohydrates the night before your run as they are slow energy releasers, but try healthier options such as brown rice, wholemeal or wheat free pasta with a light non dairy sauce. Don't eat anything too high in fat or heavy protein or you'll find it sitting on your stomach in the morning. Drink plenty of water the night before you race. On the morning of the run get up nice and early and have a light breakfast. Porridge made with water and a little honey would be a good option.

You will also need to experiment with forms of energy to take on board during the run. There are many different options ranging from pre mixed sports drinks to powdered energy gels and bars. Use a variety on your training sessions and find the one that suits you, and your stomach, the best. You

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need to also get used to drinking and snacking while running - most people 'hit the wall' because they are simply dehydrated. Work on a steady intake of one litre per hour of exercise.

The Training Plan

Try and follow the plan as closely as possible. If it looks a little daunting, don't worry - one of the best things about running is that it's so adaptable.

Short of time? Take a break from the computer screen at lunchtime and go for a jog or a brisk walk - why not get your colleagues to join you!

More of a gym bunny? No problem - the treadmill will be your friend - and the stepper is ideal for your hill training sessions too.

Worried about your training interfering with normal life at the weekend? The long runs at the weekend are ideal to catch up with fellow runners, friends, family and partners. The dogs will love the extra exercise too!

So, now's the time to get started

NB The Willow Foundation does not accept responsibility for any injury, loss or damage to you or your property incurred during training or participation in this event. Any participant who has any concern about his or her physical condition is advised to consult his/her own doctor before taking part in the event or any training leading up to the event.

Day	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3
Monday	Rest day	Rest day	Rest day
Tuesday	30 min easy run	30 min easy run	30 min easy run
Wednesday	30 min easy run	30 min tempo run	30 min tempo run
Thursday	Rest day	Rest day	Rest day
Friday	30 min easy run	30 min easy run	30 min easy run
Saturday	Rest day	Rest day	Rest day
Sunday	Long run: 3 miles	Long run: 40 mins	Long run: 5 miles

Day	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6
Monday	Rest day	Rest day	Rest day
Tuesday	40 min run	40 min easy run	40 min easy run
Wednesday	50 min tempo run	30 min tempo run	50 min tempo run
Thursday	Rest day	Rest day	Rest day
Friday	30 min fast run	40 min fast run	30 min fast run
Saturday	Rest day	Rest day	Rest day
Sunday	Long run: 60 mins	Long run: 7 miles	Long run: 8 miles

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Day	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9
Monday	Rest day	Rest day	Rest day
Tuesday	40 min easy run	40 min easy run	40 min easy run
Wednesday	40 min tempo run	40 min tempo run	50 min tempo run
Thursday	Rest day	Rest day	Rest day
Friday	40 min fast run	40 min fast run	50 min fast run
Saturday	Rest day	Rest day	Rest day
Sunday	Long run: 60 mins	Long run: 10 miles	Long run: 5 miles

Day	Week 10	Week 11	Week 12
Monday	Rest day	Rest day	Rest day
Tuesday	40 min easy run	40 min easy run	40 min easy run
Wednesday	40 min tempo run	40 min tempo run	40 min tempo run
Thursday	Rest day	Rest day	Rest day
Friday	40 min fast run	40 min fast run	50 min easy run
Saturday	Rest day	Rest day	Rest day
Sunday	Long run: 12 miles	Long run: 6 miles (race pace)	RACE DAY

Congratulations! You have finished your training and should now be fully prepared for your half marathon. You should be feeling fit, ready to go and confident that the past weeks have put you in the best shape to have a great race!

Good luck and thank you very much for taking on this challenge to raise funds for the Willow Foundation.