

MARATHON RUNNING GUIDE



THANK YOU

Thank you for running on behalf of Action on Hearing Loss.

We hope you find this guide useful and that, most importantly, you really enjoy the event. Please do contact us for further information if you have any queries.

A marathon is a hugely rewarding event to compete in, and is a great achievement – wherever you finish in the field.

This training guide takes you through to race day and includes a multitude of tips and advice to help you reach your marathon goal.

Kind regards,



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WHO IS THIS TRAINING GUIDE FOR?

Get your training on track with our comprehensive running guide. Running a marathon is a fantastic achievement and will certainly be a day to remember. We hope this running guide gives you the information you need to ensure your training is as pain-free as possible!

This guide has been put together with an intermediate runner in mind, who will aim to run the marathon in under five hours.

You'll have been running for a minimum of several months and probably completed a 10k or half marathon event and be comfortable with training for approximately four to five hours per week. You may have already completed a marathon and looking to improve your time.

SAFETY FIRST

To start with, it's vitally important to ensure that it's **safe** for you to begin an exercise programme.

If you're at all concerned about starting training, then make an appointment with your doctor for a check-up before you start.

GETTING STARTED: STRUCTURING YOUR SESSIONS

Following safe and correctly balanced exercise protocol is key to getting the most out of your training, so try to adhere to the following sequence each time you train:

Warm-up

The warm-up raises the heart rate, gets blood flowing to the working muscles and prepares the body for exercise. It should be for a minimum of five minutes and replicate the movements or activities of the main session. For example, when beginning a run, five minutes of very easy jogging will prime your body for the main training session.

Mobility

Some basic actions, to put the limbs through the range of movement that the main session requires will ensure that your joints are loosened up, lubricated and functioning more efficiently.

Main session

This will form the bulk of the training session. For example, a brisk 10-minute run.

Cool down

The cool down should be at a lower intensity than the main session and should bring the body temperature and heart rate closer to pre-exercise levels. Waste by-products of exercise will be flushed from the muscles and tissues, accelerating recovery before the next training session. For example, the cool down should be a minimum of five to 10 minutes light exercise (jogging or walking is ideal).

Flexibility

Stretching exercises should be carried out after the main session and cool down, as the body is more relaxed than at the beginning of the session. Five to 10 minutes spent stretching the muscles worked will maintain suppleness.

GETTING STARTED: HOW TO STRETCH

To get the most out of your post-exercise stretching session, simply follow the step-by-step guide below:

Relax

It's very important to be relaxed. Physical and mental tension will inhibit your range of movement and prevent your muscles from stretching as effectively.

Ease into the stretch

Gradually move your body or the limb being stretched into the stretch position. Once you feel slight tension in the muscle, (known as the point of bind, which is the limit of the muscle's flexibility), hold the position. Avoid bouncing, or any other movement that could overstretch the muscle and result in injury.

Relax your breathing

Always keep your breathing easy and relaxed because that will reduce all-round muscular tension that, in turn, will allow you to stretch further. Holding your breath will tense up your entire body, making stretching much harder.

Hold for 30 seconds

To get maximum stretching benefits, you need to hold the stretch for a minimum of 30 seconds. Stretching each muscle for just a few seconds brings no flexibility benefits.

Pain means no gain

Stretching should invoke a mild feeling of 'tightness' or tension within the stretched muscle. Pain when stretching indicates injury, or a muscle that's been overstretched, so never stretch beyond a 'comfortable tightness'.

A large, abstract blue shape with a wavy, organic edge, starting from the top left and extending towards the right, partially overlapping the white background.

GETTING STARTED: HOW TO STRETCH

Rest and repeat

A single stretch for each muscle is very beneficial but, if time permits, carry out two stretches for each muscle, separated by a short break of 30 seconds. The second stretch will help extend your range of movement further.

Frequency

Ideally stretch the major muscles after every run but if that proves too time-consuming, stretching twice a week is fine.

GETTING STARTED: ADDITIONAL TRAINING

Obviously, running will form the core of all your training, because you're training to condition your body to complete 26.2 miles under your own steam. However, it's also beneficial to incorporate other types of training in your programme, so that you get to the start line in the best possible shape.

Flexibility training

There are a multitude of flexibility exercises for stretching every muscle in the body. Primarily, you need to focus on leg stretches to keep your muscles long, supple and injury-free.

The key is to ensure that the muscles that have been utilised during your workout are stretched at the end of the training session. For example, at the end of your run and cool down, spend a few minutes stretching the hamstrings, quadriceps, calves and adductors.

Cross-training

Cross-training is the name given to other forms of training that complement your running regime. Cross-training can be extremely beneficial because it allows your body to recover from a run whilst still providing training benefits.

Running is a very repetitive activity that, if not carried out correctly, can lead to overuse injuries. By occasionally adding different activities to your programme, you keep fresh and significantly reduce any injury risk. For example, the day after a long endurance training run, a light swimming session or bike ride will still provide cardiovascular benefits but without the same loading on muscles that have been fatigued from running.



GETTING STARTED: ADDITIONAL TRAINING

Resistance training (weight training)

Resistance training is extremely beneficial to complement your running, strengthening all around the body and correcting any muscle imbalances. The range of resistance training exercises for training specific muscles is immense, and can enhance your running performance through improved posture and all-round strength.

Specific resistance training sessions are not included in this programme because, as a new marathon runner, it's important to focus as much as possible on building your endurance base for the challenge of running 26.2 miles. If you find that you have time to add in some resistance sessions to your training week, then one to two workouts per week is ample.

GETTING STARTED: TRAINING PACE GUIDE

Use the pace guide below to monitor the intensity of your training throughout each stage of the eight week guide.

★ **Top Tip:** Don't be a slave to the guide! The training programme incorporates rest days, recovery sessions and lower volume weeks. These will ensure your body has time to adapt to the training. However, everyone is different and, if you feel that an extra day's rest will be beneficial to your training, simply take out one of the shorter sessions in that week.

If you find it difficult to complete some weeks due to lack of training time, always try to complete the long run sessions. The most important factor with training for the marathon is to build endurance, so try to complete all the long runs.

Type of training run Intensity index

1 = incredibly easy, 10 = incredibly hard

Super slow: 2	Really, really, slow; so easy it hardly seems worth putting your gear on.
Easy jog: 3	No pressure, just loosening up or a recovery run.
Jog: 4	Still an easy pace but a little faster than an easy jog.
Comfortable: 5	You can talk easily to your training partner and keep the pace going.
Steady: 6	Even-paced run, can chat in short sentences.
Brisk: 7	Slightly breathless pace, not easy to hold a conversation with your training partner.
Hard: 8+	You certainly know you're working, conversation is definitely out.

GETTING STARTED: TERMINOLOGY

The programme will frequently refer to the term '**fartlek**'. Fartlek is a Swedish word that means speed-play. A fartlek session is an unstructured, quality training session where, instead of running at a uniform pace, you vary it throughout the run, depending on how you feel.

For example, a 70-minute fartlek session could be:

- Warm-up for 10 minutes
- Run hard for 10 minutes
- Alternately sprint and jog for 5 minutes
- Steady running for 10 minutes
- Race pace for 20 minutes
- 10 minutes cool down

The key thing with a fartlek session is that you simply run as you feel, backing off when you start to tire, speeding up if and when you want to and for as long as you like.

TRAINING GUIDE

Week 1

- Mon:** 45 mins steady run. Try to maintain an even pace.
- Tue:** Rest
- Wed:** 60 mins fartlek, ideally off-road
- Thu:** Rest
- Fri:** 60 mins easy
- Sat:** Rest
- Sun:** 80 mins steady pace. Comfortable effort.

Week 2: Introducing mid-week quality

- Mon:** 45 mins easy
- Tue:** R]
- Wed:** 3 x 8-10 mins hard, 3 minutes recovery between efforts, with warm-up and cool down. Aim for consistency.
- Thu:** Easy 25 mins jog
- Fri:** 50 mins steady pace
- Sat:** Rest
- Sun:** 90 mins long, slow run

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Week 3: Building

- Mon:** 30 mins easy
- Tue:** 50 mins hilly circuit with efforts on hills
- Wed:** Rest
- Thu:** 60 mins steady
- Fri:** 35 mins steady
- Sat:** Rest
- Sun:** 100-110 mins taken very easy

Week 4: Moving up

- Mon:** Rest
- Tue:** 35 mins steady
- Wed:** 3 x 8-10 mins hard, 3 mins recovery between efforts, with warm-up and cool-down. Repeat of Week 2 session but with more confidence.
- Thu:** 35 mins jog
- Fri:** 50 mins steady
- Sat:** Rest
- Sun:** 50 mins fast-paced run with warm up and cool down. Treat as a race.

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Week 5

Mon: 25 mins recovery jog

Tue: Steady 45 mins

Wed: 60 mins off-road and hilly fartlek session

Thu: R]

Fri: Easy 45 mins

Sat: Rest

Sun: 120 mins slow. First two hour run, so take it easy

Week 6

Mon: 24 mins jog

Tue: 45 mins steady

Wed: Warm up, then alternate 3 mins hard bursts with 3 mins of easy jogging, cool down

Thu: R]

Fri: 60 mins comfortable pace

Sat: R]

Sun: 120-130 mins slow. Don't push; ease back if you feel tired.

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Week 7

Mon: 25 mins very easy

Tue: 45 mins steady

Wed: 60 mins fartlek with long duration efforts

Thu: Rest

Fri: 50 mins steady

Sat: 25 mins easy jog

Sun: 90 mins good pace with long warm-up and cool-down

Week 8: Mini taper and half marathon race

Mon: R]

Tue: 45 mins steady

Wed: Rest

Thu: 45 mins steady

Fri: R]

Sat: 20 mins very slow jog; really, really slow

Sun: Half marathon race and warm-up and cool-down

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Week 9: Build up again

- Mon:** R]
- Tue:** 45 mins easy pace
- Wed:** 4 x 8-10 mins hard, 2½ mins recovery between efforts, with warm up and cool down
- Thu:** 45 mins easy
- Fri:** 70 mins at race pace
- Sat:** Rest
- Sun:** 145 mins. Long, slow run.

Week 10

- Mon:** 25 mins jog recovery
- Tue:** 45 mins steady
- Wed:** Rest
- Thu:** 75 mins off-road fartlek
- Fri:** 45 mins easy
- Sat:** R]
- Sun:** 160 mins taken easy, slow start and take drinks

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Week 11: Build up again

Mon: R]

Tue: 50 mins steady

Wed: 2 x 15 mins hard, 4 minutes, recovery between efforts, with warm up and cool down

Thu: 45 mins steady

Fri: 25 mins easy jog

Sat: R]

Sun: 180 mins slow, take drinks en route

Week 12: Mini taper and 10k race

Mon: R]

Tue: 45 mins steady

Wed: 50 mins relaxed fartlek

Thu: 45 mins steady

Fri: Rest

Sat: 20 mins easy jog

Sun: 10k race and good warm up and cool down. Hard effort.

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Week 13: Peak week

Mon: 25 mins easy recovery

Tue: 45 mins steady

Wed: 4 x 15 mins hard, 2½ minutes recovery between efforts, with warm up and cool down.
Try to improve on previous distances.

Thu: 35 mins slow

Fri: 50 mins steady

Sat: R]

Sun: 200 mins slow. Last long run, so be economical.

Week 14: Start of race taper

Mon: R]

Tue: 50 mins steady

Wed: 60 mins easy fartlek

Thu: 35 mins jog

Fri: 45 mins at marathon race pace

Sat: R]

Sun: 130 mins steady

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Week 15: Further tapering

- Mon:** 5 mins easy off-road
- Tue:** Easy 25 min jog or rest if tired
- Wed:** 35 mins brisk pace, warm up and cool down
- Thu:** 45 mins steady
- Fri:** R]
- Sat:** 25 mins easy
- Sun:** 50 mins steady – slower than intended race pace

Week 16: Final taper and preparation week

- Mon:** R]
- Tue:** Warm up, 10 mins at race pace, cool down
- Wed:** 30 mins very easy
- Thu:** Rest or 25 mins easy
- Fri:** R]
- Sat:** 15 mins very, very easy jog
- Sun:** **Marathon day – good luck!**

WELL DONE!

You've come to the end of the 16-week plan, and your fitness has advanced dramatically. Along the way, you've made significant health and fitness gains and, equally importantly, you've progressed safely.

By maintaining your training, you'll be making a major contribution to your long-term health and fitness and this intermediate plan can also serve as a foundation and springboard to increase your fitness levels further. Statistics show that most runners can continue to improve and progress for at least seven years after they first take up the sport.

Now you've advanced and improved, you may be tempted to step up further and try to knock more minutes off your finishing time.

Enjoy your training!

Disclaimer

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Our purpose is to help people confronting deafness, tinnitus and hearing loss to live the life they choose. We enable them to take control of their lives and remove the barriers in their way.

To find out more about what we do and how you can support us, go to www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk

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Join us



Action on Hearing Loss



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