



Welcome to The Big Half Training Plans

Complete beginner
half marathon training plan.

We've pulled together this training programme to help you understand the basics of what, how much and when to run over the next 13 weeks to ensure you reach the Finish Line of your 13.1-mile adventure. A half marathon is quite a physical and mental challenge and the better prepared you are for it, the better your experience on Race Day will be!

13-week Plan



No Half Measures

You're running the first Big Half, so I'm guessing that for some of you, simply thinking about getting out and going for a run (or even a walk where you might be considering breaking into a run!) can seem daunting, particularly, if you've never done any running before. That's ok; it's very normal to be unsure, uncertain and doubt your knowledge, current fitness, ability and confidence to go the distance.

Rules

4



Instructions

9



Schedule

11



Rules

GET YOUR HEAD RIGHT

If this is your first half marathon, you're probably seriously questioning if you've got what it takes to do the distance. The answer is that you have, but you've got to get a few things sorted first to make the most of your half marathon journey.

Firstly, despite any doubts you may have about where you are right now, how fit (or unfit!) you are, it's super likely that with careful, progressive and appropriate training over the next few months you'll be ready to go. Remember that there isn't one right, perfect or correct way to start, get going and finish. The trick of getting started and keeping going is to make your half marathon personal to you. However you get to the Start Line over the next few months, and however you make it to the Finish Line, if it's your way, then it's the right way.

There are a few golden rules you can follow to create an effective framework for your training.

RUN REGULARLY

The training plan will help you teach your body to cope with the half marathon distance. Regular running develops stamina, strength and staying power and is the key to a successful half marathon.

Regular running means different things to different people. Your current fitness levels, motivation and half marathon target will influence your goal. It's totally okay at this point to have done no regular running. Your objective is to build up the amount of walking, jogging and running you do so you feel more confident every time you venture out. This schedule is based around three runs a week.

DEVELOP A ROUTINE

Developing the fitness to complete a half marathon takes time and it is with consistent training that you will arrive at The Big Half confident of going the distance.

Identify the times in your week when you can go for your run, whether it's in the morning, at lunchtime or after work. Find the best times that fit with your commitments and try to stick to them. Missing a few runs here and there is okay, but a stop-start running routine won't see your fitness improve.

It might seem like you've got ages until The Big Half, but your body needs time to adapt. The next 13 weeks will fly past.

BE CONSISTENT

So, you get going and establish a routine, then the novelty factor comes to an end, there's a spell of bad weather, work and family pressures kick in and you grind to a halt.

Week after week of a little regular training is much better than stop-start, disjointed weeks. Following a plan consistently over the 13 weeks will make a huge difference to your fitness.

That said, it's important to recognise when you need to prioritise other areas in your life. Sometimes, you might need to change your routine and be flexible. That's just fine; make your training fit around your life and your schedule.

YOU CAN DO IT

The hardest steps to take for many runners (novice or experienced) are the first ones up off the sofa and out of the front door.

The greatest hurdle is making that first commitment. Taking those first tentative steps outside in running shoes and getting going is easy once you've decided you want, and can, do it.

Don't be daunted by the prospect of getting started.

HURRY SLOWLY

A common problem with novice runners is that they leave their front door and sprint as fast as they can. By the time they reach the end of the road, they're red in the face, doubled over and thinking, 'It's no good, I can't do this running'. They give up and drag themselves home, exhausted and dejected.

Spend the first few weeks of your new regime regularly walking until you feel confident enough to break into short periods of jogging with regular walk breaks.

Gradually lengthen the time you spend jogging and shorten the time you spend walking.

GET THE TRAINING RIGHT

This 13-week training plan is designed to get you gently to the start and finish. Even if you've done no running in the past you can start with this plan.

Consider your effort level when getting going. Be kind to yourself. Walk when you need to, slow down when it feels right, gather yourself and keep moving. The plan starts off with walking and running and builds up so you are running longer, and then faster, and feel confident and ready for The Big Half.

Remember: there are no style prizes in running. What matters most is not what you look like but the fact you are doing it!

FORM AND POSTURE POINTERS

1. Keep your head relaxed and steady
2. Let your shoulders hang naturally; don't hunch
3. Bend your arms to 90 degrees by your sides and allow them to swing freely backwards and forwards close to your body like a pendulum
4. Keep your body upright
5. Keep your knees, hips and lower legs in a forward line
6. Most of all – feel relaxed, balanced and in control



Instructions

HOW TO FOLLOW THE TRAINING PLAN

Begin the plan by walking, then progress to faster walking before you try slow jogging. Once you can jog slowly, try to run a little quicker. Take rest periods when you need them. The fitter you get, the shorter and less frequent the rest periods will become until you are running continuously over a greater distance. If you progress well through this plan, you'll start to get a feel for reducing the walk breaks to work for you.

WALK



At any pace, simply relax and walk. Sometimes you might feel like a brisk walk, at other times you might want a relaxing stroll. These workouts are designed to help you get used to being outside and spending time on your feet.

EASY RUN



This simply means moving slightly quicker than walking, with a bit of spring in your step. You'll probably find that you become a little out of breath when you start moving at quicker-than-walking pace, but by doing more and more easy running you'll begin to get used to this feeling and find that you can manage to run for longer.

STEADY RUN



This is running with a little more purpose and focus. You'll be concentrating and trying to keep going. The intensity will feel like you are working harder, your breathing rate will go up, your heart rate will increase, but as you get fitter your body will adapt and find a rhythm, efficiency and smoothness at this pace.



Schedule

WEEK 1

This is your first week! Find three opportunities to get outside and move

TUESDAY

20'

- 20 min walk

THURSDAY

20'

- 20 min walk

SATURDAY

35'

- 10 min walk
- Easy run for 1 min, walk for 2 min **x5**
- 10 min walk

TRAINING TIP

Wear kit that is comfortable, flexible, functional and that you feel good in. Your running shoes are your most important piece of kit, if possible choose them carefully so they are right for you.

MOTIVATION TIP

Be brave. Take the steps needed to start. Don't doubt yourself. Just get going!

WEEK 2

This week is about continuing to build your exercise routine

TUESDAY

30'

- 30 min walk

THURSDAY

30'

- 30 min walk

SATURDAY

40'

- 10 min easy walk
- 2 min easy run, 2 min walk **x5**
- 10 min easy walk

TRAINING TIP

Invest in a stopwatch, GPS device or fitness tracker. It'll help you time your walk-runs and understand effort level and pace. You can also track your distance via a fitness app on your smart phone.

MOTIVATION TIP

Get your friends, family, and local community involved. Meeting them for a walk or run or to share your journey means you are more likely to stick to the schedule and reach your half marathon goal.

WEEK 3

This week affirms your routine and includes your longest weekly workout so far

TUESDAY

35'

- 10 min walk
- 2 min easy run, 1 min walk **x5**
- 10 min walk

THURSDAY

38'

- 10 min walk
- 4 min easy run, 2 min walk **x3**
- 10 min walk

SATURDAY

50'

- 10 min walk
- 8 min easy run, 2 min walk **x3**
- 10 min walk

TRAINING TIP

Write your training down and tick off your workouts as you complete them.

MOTIVATION TIP

Don't worry about what other people say or think about your run. You have your reasons for wanting to run The Big Half and you are inspiring those around you to get going and get fit too.

WEEK 4

This week, start to run more and walk less. Get into the groove of your running

TUESDAY

40'

- 10 min walk
- 4 min easy run, 1 min walk **x4**
- 10 min walk

THURSDAY

30'

- 5 min easy run, 5 min walk **x3**

SATURDAY

48'

- 10 min easy run, 2 min walk **x4**

TRAINING TIP

You should start to feel your commitment to the past few weeks shining through as your fitness level improves. You are starting to adapt and become stronger and fitter.

MOTIVATION TIP

Remind yourself that sticking to four weeks of training is a great milestone. Well done you! Move into next week feeling great about yourself.

WEEK 5

It's time to play with the pace a little and increase your total time on your feet

TUESDAY

50'

- 10 min walk
- 2 min easy run, 1 min walk **x10**
- 5 min easy run
- 5 min run

THURSDAY

33'

- 10 min easy walk
- 1 min steady run, 2 min walk **x6**
- 5 min easy walk

SATURDAY

53'

- 5 min walk, 20 min easy run
- 3 min walk, 20 min easy run
- 5 min walk

TRAINING TIP

After five weeks of training, focus on increasing duration in a continuous run. Stay relaxed and keep good form, posture and balance.

MOTIVATION TIP

It's normal to not want to run sometimes. On some days you'll feel better for running when you didn't feel like it. On others, rest will do you good. Don't feel guilty about missing days here and there.

WEEK 6

Increase the amount of time you are able to run and break the hour for a single workout!

TUESDAY

50'

- 10 min easy walk
- 3 min steady run, 1 min easy run, 1 min walk **x6**
- 10 min easy run

THURSDAY

50'

- 10 min easy run
- 30 min steady run
- 10 min easy run

SATURDAY

66'

- 20 min easy run, 2 min walk **x3**

TRAINING TIP

As your runs become longer, it pays to have a route in mind before you set out. Think about routes where you'll feel safe and relaxed, or which are exciting or different.

MOTIVATION TIP

Sometimes you'll feel out of breath, especially as the duration of your runs increase. That's okay. Slow down, gain control, and focus on your breathing rate and running at a manageable pace.

WEEK 7

Progress to your longest, continuous steady run and your total time on your feet

TUESDAY

50'

- 10 min easy run
- 4 min steady run, 1 min walk **x6**
- 10 min easy run

THURSDAY

40'

- 40 min steady run

SATURDAY

77'

- 10 min easy run, 1 min walk **x7**

TRAINING TIP

Varying your pace means you'll be asking more of yourself and understanding what kind of pace you can maintain and for how long. This will help you understand what kind of finish time to aim for.

MOTIVATION TIP

You're over half way and flying! Tell someone about your journey, share it with someone unexpected. Be proud of how far you've come. It's countdown to Race Day now!

WEEK 8

A week of easy running. Refresh your spirit, re-energise your motivation and enjoy!

TUESDAY

30'

- 30 min easy run

THURSDAY

48'

- 15 min easy run, 1 min walk **x3**

SATURDAY

90'

- 90 mins of easy running

Walk as and when you feel it's necessary for however long like but aim to stay on your feet for 90 mins. Where possible, track the total distance that you cover.

TRAINING TIP

When you run, concentrate on relaxing 'from the eyebrows down'. Tension in your face, neck and shoulders can bring about fatigue and inefficient running form.

MOTIVATION TIP

Every run should be a chance to spend time with yourself, or with other running friends, calmly ensuring you're on track. Let the day's stresses or problems slide away and just 'be' when you run.

WEEK 9

Introduce some faster running. Start to understand distance in your training

TUESDAY

52'

- 10 min easy run
- 3 min steady run, 1 min walk **x8**
- 10 min easy run

THURSDAY

40'

- 10 min easy run
- 2 min fast run, 2 min walk **x5**
- 10 min easy run

SATURDAY

98'

- 1 mile run with a 2 min walk **x8**

The time taken for this run will vary depending on the pace at which you cover each mile. For example, at 10 minutes per mile pace, the total time will be 1hr 38 mins

TRAINING TIP

A fast run will see you up your effort level. You're aiming for your best pace for the duration of the 'fast' period. Quicken your arm action, speed up your legs and you'll find you'll go quicker!

MOTIVATION TIP

What works for you when it gets tough? Different things work for different people. Try a personal mantra; remind yourself of your reason to run; count, or look around for something to focus on!

WEEK 10

This is probably the hardest week of your half marathon training.

TUESDAY

40'

- 10 min walk
- 4 min easy run, 1 min walk **x4**
- 10 min walk

THURSDAY

40'

- 5 min easy run, 5 min walk **x3**

SATURDAY

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- 10 mile run.

Walk as and when you feel it is necessary and appropriate for you however long you feel like, but aim to cover 10 miles in total

TRAINING TIP

Take your time for your 10 mile run. Some people will be able to run all of the distance at a controlled pace without stopping; others may find regular walk breaks help them to go the distance. Try to spread out your effort evenly throughout the full 10 miles, covering each mile at approximately the same pace (and therefore in roughly the same time). What feels easy for the early miles will feel harder as you run further.

MOTIVATION TIP

10 miles is a big milestone. Be prepared for this run physically and mentally. It's normal to experience some ups and downs in how you're feeling. Work through the tough moments, allow them to pass, slow down if you need to, and continue to the next mile.

WEEK 11

You are almost there. This week is about doing your final and longest run.

TUESDAY

40'

- 40 min steady run

THURSDAY

45'

- 10 min easy run
- 3 min fast run, 2 min walk **x5**
- 10 min easy run

(Try to run this session more controlled, even-paced and feeling stronger than the previous week)

SATURDAY

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- 12 mile run

Walk when you feel it is necessary for however long you feel like, but aim to cover 12 miles in total. You may decide to run the whole way or break the run up into 4 x 3-mile chunks with a short break between each. This run will give you the confidence that you can cover the distance on Race Day.

TRAINING TIP

Relax. All your hard work is now complete. You are ready for Race Day!

MOTIVATION TIP

As you cover your 12 miles, run each of the last three miles with a different person in mind: someone who has helped you, someone you love, and someone you wish could share your journey with you.

WEEK 12

Do a little less running as Race Day draws closer.

TUESDAY

30'

- 30 min easy run

THURSDAY

40'

- 40 min steady run

SATURDAY

60'

- 60 min easy paced run

TRAINING TIP

Your final two weeks are about feeling prepared for The Big Half. Keep your regular three runs a week but keep them light, relaxed and in control. Do less, not more, this week.

MOTIVATION TIP

Be confident. It's easy to doubt yourself and your training as Race Day approaches. Trust your training. You're in a great place.

WEEK 13

It's race week! Relax and enjoy the fact that you've made it this far. Enjoy The Big Half!

TUESDAY

30'

- 30 min easy run

THURSDAY

20'

- 20 min easy run

SUNDAY

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TRAINING TIP

Nothing you do this week will make you any fitter, so run smart. You've made it. Run your own race. Pace your effort evenly and smoothly for the full half marathon distance.

MOTIVATION TIP

When Race Day arrives, believe in your hard work. Never give up, always keep moving forwards, keep focused on the Finish Line and how important it is to you.