



IMPROVER'S TRAINING PLAN

Improver's training plan

This training plan is for runners who may have already completed a marathon and are looking to improve on a previous performance. The plan assumes you will run four times a week at the start of your training and that you've done plenty of running in the past. The days of the week shown are not fixed and only proposed, so you can complete your sessions at the times that suit you best.

Different types of training run

EASY RUNS (less than 60 per cent maximum effort)

During an easy run, you should feel relaxed. You should be breathing comfortably and capable of holding a conversation throughout the run. If you're a new runner nothing may feel easy at first – slow down, walk if necessary and control your effort.

STEADY RUNS (60-70 per cent maximum effort)

These are the bread and butter of your training - the 'miles in the bank'. Steady runs build the base that is the foundation for the rest of your training. Conversations are still possible at this pace but only in shorter sentences.

TEMPO RUNS (70-80 per cent maximum effort)

Running at tempo pace is great for improving your running economy. It's a sustained cruise pace that requires concentration. You will find these runs slightly uncomfortable as you try to run faster, but they are worth it.

LONG RUNS

These are a real focus of the plan. They should be used to develop strength and endurance but also to practise your target marathon pace and control. Long runs are shown in both time and distance.

WEEK 1

MONDAY

REST DAY - The next four weeks are about building a base of easy running - building time on your feet. This will form the basis from which to introduce more marathon-specific training

TUESDAY

20 MINUTES EASY RUN

WEDNESDAY

30 MINUTES EASY RUN

THURSDAY

REST DAY

FRIDAY

40 MINUTES EASY RUN

SATURDAY

REST DAY

SUNDAY

60 MINUTES EASY RUN

WEEK 3

MONDAY

REST DAY - The third week of the plan is important. The steady miles are setting the foundation for the rest of your training

TUESDAY

30 MINUTES EASY RUN

WEDNESDAY

50 MINUTES STEADY RUN

THURSDAY

REST DAY

FRIDAY

35 MINUTES EASY RUN

SATURDAY

REST DAY

SUNDAY

80 MINUTES EASY RUN

WEEK 2

MONDAY

REST DAY - Continue to establish your routine. Find the time to get out to run

TUESDAY

30 MINUTES EASY RUN

WEDNESDAY

40 MINUTES STEADY RUN

THURSDAY

REST DAY

FRIDAY

40 MINUTES EASY RUN

SATURDAY

REST DAY

SUNDAY

70 MINUTES EASY RUN

WEEK 4

MONDAY

REST DAY - Build up your longest run to 90 minutes at the weekend. This will be a real confidence booster for the rest of your training

TUESDAY

35 MINUTES EASY RUN

WEDNESDAY

60 MINUTES STEADY RUN

THURSDAY

REST DAY

FRIDAY

35 MINUTES EASY RUN

SATURDAY

REST DAY

SUNDAY

90 MINUTES EASY RUN

WEEK 5

MONDAY

REST DAY - A lighter week to enable your body to adapt to the training loads

TUESDAY

20 MINUTES EASY RUN

WEDNESDAY

30 MINUTES STEADY RUN

THURSDAY

REST DAY

FRIDAY

20 MINUTES EASY RUN

SATURDAY

REST DAY

SUNDAY

60 MINUTES EASY RUN

WEEK 7

MONDAY

REST DAY - Make sure you show a range of pace during the sessions so you can maximise the fitness benefits

TUESDAY

45 MINUTES EASY RUN

WEDNESDAY

RUN 40 MINUTES - 10-minute easy run, (2 min tempo run, 2 min jog recovery) x 5, 10-minute easy run

THURSDAY

REST DAY

FRIDAY

RUN 46 MINUTES - 10-minute easy run, (8 min tempo run, 5 min steady run) x 2, 10-minute easy run

SATURDAY

REST DAY

SUNDAY

2 HOURS 10 MINUTES EASY RUN, or distance goal of 12 miles

WEEK 6

MONDAY

REST DAY - This week you'll introduce more intensity to boost fitness and build pace endurance. Run to feel and listen to your body to judge intensity

TUESDAY

40 MINUTES EASY RUN

WEDNESDAY

RUN 44 MINUTES - 10-minute easy run, (60 secs fast, 2 min jog recovery) x 8, 10-minute easy run

THURSDAY

REST DAY

FRIDAY

RUN 50 MINUTES - 10-minute easy run, (5 min steady, 5 min tempo) x 3, 10-minute easy run

SATURDAY

REST DAY

SUNDAY

1 HOUR 45 MINUTES EASY RUN, or distance goal of 10 miles

WEEK 8

MONDAY

REST DAY - Really attack your faster running and embrace the breathlessness

TUESDAY

50 MINUTES EASY RUN

WEDNESDAY

RUN 50 MINUTES - 10-minute easy run, (90 secs fast, 90 secs jog recovery) x 10, 10-minute easy run

THURSDAY

REST DAY

FRIDAY

RUN 47 MINUTES - 10-minute easy run, (12 min tempo, with 3 min jog recovery) x 2, 10-minute easy run

SATURDAY

REST DAY

SUNDAY

2 HOURS 30 MINUTES EASY RUN, or distance goal of 14 miles

WEEK 9

MONDAY

REST DAY - A consistent week where you should start to feel the benefits of the training that is behind you and more confident looking forward

TUESDAY

50 MINUTES EASY RUN

WEDNESDAY

RUN 56 MINUTES - 10-minute easy run, (4 min tempo run, 2 min jog recovery) x 6, 10-minute easy run

THURSDAY

REST DAY

FRIDAY

RUN 40 MINUTES - 10-minute easy run, 20-minute tempo run, 10-minute easy run

SATURDAY

REST DAY

SUNDAY

2 HOURS 45 MINUTES EASY RUN, or distance goal of 16 miles

WEEK 11

MONDAY

REST DAY - Recover from your half marathon. Continue to explore what your marathon pace feels like. Start to dial it in and feel more confident

TUESDAY

30 MINUTES EASY RUN

WEDNESDAY

60 MINUTES STEADY RUN

THURSDAY

REST DAY

FRIDAY

RUN 50 MINUTES - 10-minute easy run, 30 minutes at target marathon pace, 10-minute easy run

SATURDAY

REST DAY

SUNDAY

2 HOURS 45 MINUTES STEADY RUN, or distance goal of 16 miles

WEEK 10

MONDAY

REST DAY - Enter a half marathon to familiarise yourself with race day routines, such as pre-race nutrition, race clothing and hydration strategies

TUESDAY

50 MINUTES EASY RUN

WEDNESDAY

RUN 45 MINUTES - 10-minute easy run, (3 min tempo run, 2 min jog recovery) x 5, 10-minute easy run

THURSDAY

REST DAY

FRIDAY

30 MINUTES EASY RUN

SATURDAY

REST DAY

SUNDAY

1 HOUR 30 MINUTES EASY RUN, or race a half marathon

WEEK 12

MONDAY

REST DAY - Build up the long run and focus on your target marathon pace, hydration and fuelling. Plan these things in advance but don't panic if they don't go to plan!

TUESDAY

50 MINUTES EASY RUN

WEDNESDAY

RUN 50 MINUTES - 5-minute easy run, 40 minutes at target marathon pace, 5-minute easy run

THURSDAY

REST DAY

FRIDAY

35 MINUTES EASY RUN

SATURDAY

REST DAY

SUNDAY

RUN 3 HOURS - 1 hour easy, 1 hour steady, 1 hour easy, or distance goal of 18 miles. Include 6 miles in the middle at target marathon pace

WEEK 13

MONDAY

REST DAY - This week you will do your longest run. Use this as a dress rehearsal for Race Day - eat your pre-race breakfast, wear the clothes you intend to race in and practise your hydration and fuelling strategies

TUESDAY

50 MINUTES EASY RUN

WEDNESDAY

RUN 55 MINUTES - 10-minute easy run, (5 min tempo run, 2 min jog recovery) x 5, 10-minute easy run

THURSDAY

REST DAY

FRIDAY

RUN 60 MINUTES - 5-minute easy run, 35 minutes at target marathon pace, 5-minute easy run, 5-minute tempo run, 10-minute easy run

SATURDAY

REST DAY

SUNDAY

3 HOURS 30 MINUTES EASY RUN, or distance goal of 20 to 22 miles. Include a section, perhaps the final 8 miles, at target marathon pace. This is your longest run!

WEEK 15

MONDAY

REST DAY - Towards the end of this week your legs should find their spring again

TUESDAY

30 MINUTES EASY RUN

WEDNESDAY

RUN 41 MINUTES - 10-minute easy run, (60 secs fast, 60 secs jog recovery) x 5, 3-minute jog, 8 minutes at target marathon pace, 10-minute easy run

THURSDAY

REST DAY

FRIDAY

RUN 30 MINUTES - 5-minute easy run, 20 minutes at target marathon pace, 5-minute easy run

SATURDAY

REST DAY

SUNDAY

60 MINUTES EASY RUN

WEEK 14

MONDAY

REST DAY - The long run will taper from here, but you will still need to maintain your paced runs during the week

TUESDAY

40 MINUTES EASY RUN

WEDNESDAY

RUN 40 MINUTES - 10-minute easy run, (60 secs fast, 60 secs jog) x 10, 10-minute easy run

THURSDAY

REST DAY

FRIDAY

RUN 50 MINUTES - 10-minute easy run, 10-minute steady run, 10 minutes at target marathon pace, 10 minutes faster, 10-minute easy run

SATURDAY

REST DAY

SUNDAY

90 MINUTES EASY RUN

WEEK 16

MONDAY

REST DAY - Use any spare time to relax and put your feet up. Come Race Day, do not get too excited, set off at your race pace and stick to your plan

TUESDAY

20 MINUTES EASY RUN

WEDNESDAY

RUN 32 MINUTES - 10-minute easy run, 12 minutes at target marathon pace, 10-minute easy run

THURSDAY

REST DAY

FRIDAY

10 MINUTES EASY JOG

SATURDAY

REST DAY

SUNDAY

RACE DAY - You are ready. Good luck!