

Running Training Plan



Spice — Half Marathon Training Plan

Goal

To move on from the ability of completing a half marathon to improving speed over the 13.1 mile distance.

Plan duration

8 weeks

This plan assumes that you have followed our beginner's half marathon plan and/or are able to run 13 miles continuously.

The beginners' plans prepare runners for the distance only; this Spice plan shifts focus to time and develops running speed accordingly. Most people, having completed their first half marathon want to do the next one quicker; this plan is compiled to help you do it.

Running a half marathon can be hard; running it as fast as you can is much harder. This training plan aims to get you used to running at speed when you are tired. In physiological terms, the demands of the half marathon are not very different to those of the 10k, but of course it is more than twice the distance, so you need to be prepared for a sustained effort.

The focus on speed introduces some mixed pace running and these sessions can be either completed on or off the road or on the track.

We also introduce a more active warm up which will help to condition the body and also help to make you a more resilient runner. Details of the active warm-up can be found on the [Running Training Plan website](#).

Your Sunday long run continues of course, and this forms the backbone of your training for the half marathon. The shorter midweek runs are important too because these are the sessions that will develop your speed.

This schedule naturally makes greater demands of your body than the beginner's plan; remember,

we are not just 'getting round', we are pushing ourselves faster. Running faster brings new stresses and strains to the body and so you are encouraged to do some body-conditioning exercises once a week in addition to the schedule; again, these can be found on the [Running Training Plan website](#).

As with all our training plans, the training days might not fit exactly with your lifestyle, so you might prefer to adapt as necessary. Do keep to the same basic structure, and importantly, do not train hard on consecutive days at this stage.

Training paces

As usual, the session duration is given in both time and distance, use whichever unit you prefer. The schedule assumes a jogging pace of 10 mins per mile, so if you jog faster or slower than this then make distance adjustments as necessary. If your steady running pace is considerably faster than 10 mins per mile, then our more advance schedule might be more appropriate.

The Spice plans introduce some variation in training paces. Whereas, the beginners' plans use just one gentle pace, the spice plans encourage and develop faster running. Of course, these plans are not targeted at one specific runner's ability, so you'll need to adjust a session's running speed to your own pace. The jogging pace remains just that; an easy running pace that you can maintain comfortably. With mixed pace sessions, aim to run the harder parts (reps) at a demanding pace that you can maintain for all those parts of the session.

It's not flat-out, but it's not very comfortable either; you should be able to speak, but not hold a lengthy conversation. The shorter reps should be run faster than the longer reps. Don't be too hung-up on the actual speed, the important thing is that there is a definite increase in speed compared to your more normal running (we'll look at these training paces in more detail in the more advance training plans).

Weeks one and two

We pick up at a similar level to where we left off from the beginners half marathon plan. Week 2 sees the introduction of some variation in running pace. The actual speed is not important at this stage, what is important though, is that there's a distinction between running and jogging. It's a faster pace than the one you are probably used to, and this is why we only do it in short bursts. This is the beginning of repetition and interval training, and it's where the real development in running fitness happens.

The undulating and hilly runs will naturally determine a variance in effort levels. Aim to work hard up the hills and recover on the way down. If you live in a very flat area without easy access to hills then vary the intensity of your running as you feel, e.g. run fast for 4 mins and then easy for 2, then fast for 6 and easy for 3, etc. This, in essence, is 'fartlek' (Swedish for speed-play), a tried, trusted and very effective training strategy.

In this schedule the bursts of faster running (or 'repetitions') range from 2 minutes to 8 minutes. You'll run the shorter repetitions at a faster pace than the longer ones. It will be harder running at these speeds and you will become more breathless. During these faster phases concentrate on your running form: focus on lifting the knees higher and picking your heels up closer to your bottom as your leg comes through for the next stride.

Weeks one and two

Day	Warm up	Session	Duration	Notes
Monday		rest		
Tuesday	5 min light jog	jog 45 mins (or 4.5 miles)	0.50	post-session stretch
Wednesday		rest		
Thursday	5 min light jog	jog 40 mins (or 4 miles)	0.45	post-session stretch
Friday	5 min light jog	jog 50 mins (or 5 miles)	0.55	post-session stretch
Saturday		rest		
Sunday	5 min light jog	jog 80 mins (or 8 miles)	1.25	post-session stretch
Monday		rest		
Tuesday	10 min active	run 5 mins jog 3 mins (repeat x 4)	0.42	post-session stretch
Wednesday		rest		
Thursday	5 min light jog	jog 50 mins (or 5 miles)	0.55	post-session stretch
Friday	5 min light jog	40 mins (4 miles) undulating route	0.45	post-session stretch
Saturday		rest		
Sunday	5 min light jog	jog 100 mins (or 10 miles)	1.45	post-session stretch
Total exercise time for 14 days			8.02	

Weeks three and four

Day	Warm up	Session	Duration	Notes
Monday		rest		
Tuesday	10 min active	run 6 mins jog 2 mins (repeat x 4)	0.42	post-session stretch
Wednesday		rest		
Thursday	5 min light jog	jog 50 mins (or 5 miles)	0.55	post-session stretch
Friday	10 min active	5 miles time trial 10 mins jog cool down	1.10	post-session stretch
Saturday		rest		
Sunday	5 min light jog	jog 80 mins (or 8 miles)	1.25	post-session stretch
Monday		rest		
Tuesday	10 min active	run 3 mins jog 2 mins (repeat x 8)	0.50	post-session stretch
Wednesday		rest		
Thursday	5 min light jog	jog 50 mins (or 5 miles)	0.55	post-session stretch
Friday	5 min light jog	45 mins (4.5 miles) undulating route	0.50	post-session stretch
Saturday		rest		
Sunday	5 min light jog	jog 100 mins (or 10 miles)	1.35	post-session stretch
Total exercise time for 14 days			8.22	

Weeks three and four

The time trial on Friday should be over a route that is conveniently close so that you can use it regularly to get a measure of your fitness.

Weeks five and six

This block includes a 10k a race. Racing is excellent training, aim to run it at constant speed. It will of course be hard, but the pace will be slightly quicker than your half marathon race-pace.

The long run at the end of the following week finishes with a faster 3 miles or 30 minutes. You do not need to run all of your long runs fast, because that will take its toll on the training days that follow. But, getting used to finishing off a run with good speed and form will help you run strongly at the end of your races; it is a very effective training strategy (especially so if you move up to the marathon distance).

Weeks five and six

Day	Warm up	Session	Duration	Notes
Monday		rest		
Tuesday	10 min active	run 8 mins jog 1 min (repeat x 4)	0.46	post-session stretch
Wednesday		rest		
Thursday	5 min light jog	jog 60 mins (or 6 miles)	1.05	post-session stretch
Friday	5 min light jog	45 mins (4.5 miles) hilly	0.35	post-session stretch
Saturday		rest		
Sunday	10 min active	10k race (or 6m time trial) 10 min jog	1.20	post-session stretch
Monday		rest		
Tuesday	10 min active	run 2 mins jog 2 mins (repeat x 10)	0.50	post-session stretch
Wednesday		rest		
Thursday	5 min light jog	jog 50 mins (or 5 miles)	0.55	post-session stretch
Friday	5 min light jog	45 mins (4.5 miles) undulating route	0.50	post-session stretch
Saturday				
Sunday	5 min light jog	120 mins (or 12m) last 30 mins faster	2.05	post-session stretch
Total exercise time for 14 days			8.26	

Weeks seven and eight

The final week ends with a half marathon race. Again, aim to run it at a constant pace, your recent training at faster paces will mean that your half marathon pace will feel much more controlled and manageable.

After your race, take a few days of easy running — you've earned it!

Weeks seven and eight

Day	Warm up	Session	Duration	Notes
Monday		rest		
Tuesday	10 min active	run 6 mins jog 2 min (repeat x 5)	0.50	post-session stretch
Wednesday		rest		
Thursday	5 min light jog	jog 50 mins (or 5 miles)	0.55	post-session stretch
Friday	5 min light jog	45 mins (4.5 miles) undulating route	0.50	post-session stretch
Saturday		rest		
Sunday	5 min light jog	100 mins (or 10m) last 30 mins faster	1.45	post-session stretch
Monday		rest		
Tuesday	10 min active	run 4 mins jog 2 min (repeat x 5)	0.40	post-session stretch
Wednesday		rest		
Thursday	5 min light jog	jog 30 Mins (or 3 miles)	0.35	post-session stretch
Friday	5 min light jog	35 mins (3.5 miles) undulating route	0.40	post-session stretch
Saturday		rest		
Sunday	10 min active	half marathon race!	2.20	post-session stretch
Total exercise time for 14 days			8.35	

Special Notes

This training plan is for people who have completed our beginners half marathon plan (or those who can run for 13 miles+). It is not for those new to running. Some people should speak to their doctor before undertaking any form of physical exercise, in particular, those who are (or have):

- More than 20% over their ideal weight
- More than 40 years old
- A smoker or ex-smoker
- Pregnant
- Personal or family history of heart trouble
- High blood pressure, diabetes or other medical condition