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**THE  
RUNNING  
CHANNEL**

**Training Plan**

**Marathon**

**4 days/week**

# Intro

## Our Plans

Our Training Plans are designed by Olympic finalist Andy Baddeley in collaboration with Andy Hobdell, who has coached runners to the last four Olympics at distances from 1,500m to the marathon. Andy also works with runners of all abilities to help them achieve their goals, whether that's completing the distance or dipping under a target time.

## Your Current Training Level

It's really important that you don't jump straight into a new training plan without carefully assessing your current level of training. **This training plan is based on running four times per week.** Whilst the paces are adaptable to your target race goal, the overall volume of training should only be attempted if you've already built up sensibly to this frequency of running.

## Flexibility

We've laid out our training plan to give you the optimum balance of different types of training and recovery. We know that life sometimes gets in the way and that you might not always be able to do exactly what is planned. If you have a tough day and can't face a planned interval workout, just getting out for an easy run is absolutely fine. You can move the days around to fit with your life and, similarly, if you need to miss a day, that's fine too. Don't panic and try to make up for lost time - **try to be sensible and remember that cramming lots of training into back-to-back days without any recovery could lead to injury or illness.**

## Setting Pace Goals

Listen to your body. Choose an overall target for your marathon that is realistic - you'll soon find out in sessions if the target pace you've picked is a stretch too far. Don't be afraid to adjust once you've done a few sessions; if you can't complete the workouts at the planned pace, then the pace is too hard at this stage.

# Terminology (i)

## Intervals

You're going to need to be able to run repeated efforts at specific paces with relatively short recovery. Interval training workouts should be the hardest efforts of your week. We've given intervals as a set time or distance depending on the workout and also provided the recovery you should take after each interval. Think about an effort level, or Rate of Perceived Exertion (RPE) of 8 or 9 out of 10.

## Tempo

A vital part of training for a marathon is a threshold or tempo run. This is a sustained effort harder than your normal runs, but not as fast as your interval training. This is one of the most efficient ways of improving your aerobic fitness. This should be at an RPE of around 7 out of 10.

## Long Runs

One of the most important elements of marathon training, you'll need to gradually build up the distance of your long runs to give you the confidence when it comes to race day.

## Easy and Steady Runs

There's a distinction between steady and easy runs. Both of these are easier than threshold runs. On some days in the plan, you will see 'Easy to steady run'; this means you should listen to your body and run at a sensible intensity depending on whether you feel tired or fresh. For easy runs, aim for an RPE of 3-4 out of 10. For steady runs, you're looking for 5-6.

# Terminology (ii)

## Strides

If you're feeling okay, after an easier run can be a great time to do some strides. That's when you run around 100m at a faster pace (think about faster than your 5km pace), then walk or jog slowly, then repeat. They're not all-out sprints, but should be controlled and are a fantastic opportunity to think about good running form when you're not too fatigued. Build into them gently, accelerating for the first 30m or so, then holding good form and coming to a gradual stop after you've run 100m.

## Rest/Recovery

In the interval sessions in this plan, as well as some of the threshold runs, we've provided rest or recovery times. Where two times are given, the longer one will be the rest you take between sets and the shorter one is the rest after each interval. We'd always advocate jogging your recoveries if possible, or at the very least walking to keep yourself moving. Stay tall to get the air in, and resist the temptation to bend over with your hands on your knees.

## Paces

Within interval and threshold sessions, we've provided guides for what pace to run, to help gauge your efforts. Your 'marathon pace' will be your target race pace that you're using this plan to work towards. You can use that pace or finish time to calculate your 5km, 10km and half marathon paces using an online race predictor. Alternatively, you may already have run one or more of those distances in a race and can therefore use your actual times to set your paces.

# The Plan

## Warm Up

For easy and steady runs, start slower with shorter strides and an increased cadence until you feel like you're warmed up and are moving nicely. **For the interval sessions and threshold runs, make sure you do a thorough warm up before starting your hard efforts** - this should be a minimum of 5 minutes easy running and ideally would include some basic drills or dynamic stretches. Head to [therunningchannel.com](https://therunningchannel.com) for videos to talk you through them if you need some tips!

## Cool Down

We'd recommend some gentle stretching and activations after your runs whilst you're still warm. For the tougher workouts, we would also suggest a cool down jog (again aim for at least 5 minutes).

## Where to start if you have less time

The first few weeks of this 16 week plan aim to build your confidence with different types of training. If you are already training at a total weekly volume and intensity similar to that in the early weeks, you may find you are able to start the plan slightly later (eg Week 4 or 5) if your marathon race is less than 16 weeks away.

## Intensities

We've colour coded each day's training so that you can see at a glance when the easiest and hardest days are.

Easiest

Hardest

# The Plan

**Week**      **Mon**                      **Tue**                      **Wed**                      **Thu**                      **Fri**                      **Sat**                      **Sun**

**1**

Rest

Easy run  
30 mins  
Easy

Easy to steady run  
8km  
Easy/steady  
Plus 8 x 100m strides

Rest

Intervals  
2 sets of (5x 1min)  
Run at 10km pace  
30s & 3min recovery

Rest

Long run  
60 mins  
Easy

**2**

Rest

Easy run  
30 mins  
Easy

Easy to steady run  
8km  
Easy/steady  
Plus 8 x 100m strides

Rest

Intervals  
3x (3,2,1 min)  
Start at 10km pace  
Progress as you feel  
1min & 3min recovery

Rest

Long run  
75 mins  
Easy/steady

**3**

Rest

Easy run  
30 mins  
Easy

Easy to steady run  
8km  
Easy/steady  
Plus 8 x 100m strides

Rest

Intervals  
5,4,3,2,1 min  
Start at 10km pace  
Progress as you feel  
1min jog recovery

Rest

Long run  
80 mins  
Start easy  
Finish steady

# The Plan

**Week**      **Mon**                      **Tue**                      **Wed**                      **Thu**                      **Fri**                      **Sat**                      **Sun**

**4**

Rest

Easy run  
30 mins  
Easy

Rest

Intervals  
10x 1min  
Run at 10km pace  
1min recovery

Rest

5km Time Trial  
2km warm up  
2x 100m strides  
5km time trial  
2km warm down

Long run  
60 mins  
Easy

**5**

Rest

Easy run  
30 mins  
Easy

Easy to steady run  
10km  
Easy/steady  
  
Plus 8 x 100m strides

Rest

Intervals  
4x (3min, 1min)  
3min @ 10k pace  
1min @ 5k pace  
  
90s jog after 3mins  
3min recovery  
otherwise

Rest

Long run  
16km  
Run how you feel

**6**

Rest

Easy run  
30 mins  
Easy

Easy to steady run  
10km  
Easy/steady  
  
Plus 8 x 100m strides

Rest

Intervals  
4x (3,2,1 min)  
Run at 10km pace  
1min & 2min recovery

Rest

Long run  
16km  
Easy/steady

# The Plan

Week

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

Sun

7

Rest

Easy run  
30 mins  
Easy

Rest

Easy to steady run  
8km  
Easy/steady  
Plus 8 x 100m strides

Rest

Tempo  
2km warm up  
5km @ marathon pace  
4min jog recovery  
5km @ faster than first  
5km

Long run  
60 mins  
Easy

8

Rest

Easy run  
30 mins  
Easy

Easy to steady run  
10km  
Easy/steady  
Plus 8 x 100m strides

Rest

Intervals  
8x 3min  
Run at 10km pace  
2min recovery

Rest

Long run  
Half marathon  
Start easy  
Finish steady

9

Rest

Easy run  
30 mins  
Easy

Easy run  
30 mins  
Easy  
Plus 8 x 100m strides

Rest

Easy run  
30 mins  
Easy

Rest

Long run  
60 mins  
Easy/steady



# The Plan

**Week**      **Mon**                      **Tue**                      **Wed**                      **Thu**                      **Fri**                      **Sat**                      **Sun**

**10**

Rest

Easy run  
30 mins  
Easy

Intervals  
5km steady  
  
3min jog recovery  
10x 1min  
Run at 5km/10km pace  
  
30s recovery

Rest

Easy to steady run  
60 mins

Rest

Long run  
24km  
Easy

**11**

Rest

Easy run  
30 mins  
Easy

Easy to steady run  
10km  
Easy/steady  
  
Plus 8 x 100m strides

Rest

Intervals  
2x (10x 1min)  
  
Run at 10km/5km  
pace  
  
30s & 3min recovery

Rest

Long run  
30km  
  
1st 10km easy  
2nd 10km steady  
3rd 10km at  
marathon pace

**12**

Rest

Easy run  
30 mins  
Easy

Easy to steady run  
8km  
Easy/steady  
  
Plus 8 x 100m strides

Rest

Mixed paces  
5km easy  
4mins recovery  
5km @ 5km/10km pace  
5mins recovery  
5km @ marathon pace

Rest

Long run  
90 mins  
Easy/steady

# The Plan

Week

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

Sun

13

Rest

Easy run  
30 mins  
Easy

Easy to steady run  
10km  
Easy/steady  
Plus 8 x 100m strides

Rest

Intervals  
8x 1km  
Run at 10km/HM pace  
2min recovery

Rest

Long run  
Half marathon  
Marathon pace

14

Rest

Easy run  
30 mins  
Easy

Easy to steady run  
8km  
Easy/steady  
Plus 8 x 100m strides

Rest

Tempo  
5km easy  
10km @ marathon  
pace  
5km easy

Rest

Long run  
90 mins  
Easy/steady

15

Rest

Easy run  
30 mins  
Easy

Easy to steady run  
10km  
Easy/steady  
Plus 8 x 100m strides

Rest

Intervals  
2x (8x 1min)  
Run at 10km pace  
1min & 2min recovery

Rest

Long run  
60 mins  
Easy/steady

# The Plan

Week	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
16	Rest	Easy run 30 mins Easy	Easy to steady run 30 mins Easy/steady  Plus 4 x 100m strides	Rest	Pre-race run 1km easy  3km at marathon pace  1km easy	RACE	

## Nothing New On Race Day

You've had up to 16 weeks to practise your warm up routine, what you like to eat and drink and which shoes and clothing you feel most comfortable in - don't change anything on race day!

## Pacing Is Everything

The workouts in our plan make sure you're comfortable running both faster and slower than your target race pace. They should also have given you a good idea of what each pace feels like, so don't be tempted to get carried away and go too hard too early!

## Enjoy It

Training is hard work and races are where you get the chance to reap the rewards. Enjoy the experience and let us know how you get on, we'd love to hear from you!