

Marathon training guide

Advanced



Thank you

Thank you so much for running on behalf of Brain Research UK, and welcome to Team #BrainResearch.

There are millions of people currently living with a neurological condition in the UK. By running a marathon and raising money, you are helping to fund ground-breaking neurological research to discover the causes, develop new treatments and improve the lives of those affected. We couldn't do it without you, and are incredibly grateful for your support.

This is an advanced training guide, best suited to someone who has already run a marathon. Beginner and Intermediate training guides are also available on our website; visit brainresearchuk.org.uk/training-guides/

Should you have any questions about your training, get in touch by emailing events@brainresearchuk.org.uk or by calling 020 7404 9982 — we'd love to hear from you.

Disclaimer

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Marathon training guide

Program notes

This program is a day-by-day 16 week schedule. The program assumes:

- You are already a runner
- You have been running for a year or more
- Your weekly long run is currently at least 15 miles
- You have competed in 10k and half marathon events
- You are currently comfortable with running approximately 40 miles per week
- You have already completed a marathon and are looking to improve your time

For each session in the programme, follow the protocols for warm-up, mobility, main session, cool-down and flexibility outlined earlier. Start at week one but if your training is slightly ahead, you can jump in at a later week. Simply check the week-by-week chart to see which week matches your current activity levels and then start at that point.

There is flexibility within the programme for switching training sessions around during the week to fit in with your other commitments such as work, home, family etc. The key point is to ensure that your training is balanced each week, including flexibility, cardiovascular activity and rest.

Tip

Don't be a slave to the guide! The training programme is designed with rest days, recovery sessions and lower volume weeks. This 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.

Marathon training guide continued

Use the pace guide below to monitor the intensity of your training throughout each stage of the 16 week guide.

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.

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

Terminology

The program 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 the pace throughout the run, depending on how you feel. For example, a 70-minute fartlek session could be:

- Warm-up for ten minutes
- Run hard for ten minutes
- Alternately sprint and jog for five minutes
- Steady running for ten minutes
- Race pace for 20 minutes
- Ten minutes cooldown

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.

Marathon training guide

Week 1: The start (43-53 miles)

- Optional: Two early morning runs totaling 10 miles
- Mon: 6 miles steady
- Tue: 3 x 1 mile (2 minutes recovery between miles) with warm-up and cool-down
- Wed: Resistance training (all-over body programme, including core)
- Thu: 5 miles easy (recovery from Tuesday and Wednesday)
- Fri: 6 x 800m (1 minute recovery) with good warm-up and cool-down
- Sat: 5 miles brisk
- Sun: 17 miles taken very easily (comfortable effort)

Week 2: First race (39-50 miles)

- Optional: Two early morning runs totaling 10 miles
- Mon: Easy 5 miles
- Tue: 2x2 miles (4 minute recovery) with warm-up and cool-down
- Wed: Resistance training as per week 1
- Thu: Steady 6-7 miles
- Fri: 8 miles hilly fartlek
- Sat: 5 miles easy
- Sun: 10k race and good warm-up and cool-down (maximum effort, record time)

Week 3: Building long runs (44-54 miles)

- Optional: Two early morning runs totaling 10 miles
- Mon: 6 miles, starting slowly
- Tue: Mile repetition session as per week 1 (look to improve fitness)
- Wed: 10 miles steady
- Thu: Resistance training session
- Fri: 6 x 800m (1 minute recovery) with good warm-up and cool-down
- Sat: Rest
- Sun: 18 miles steady (start easily)

Week 4: Endurance race week (45-55 miles)

- Optional: Two early morning runs totaling 10 miles
- Mon: 5 miles recovery run
- Tue: 8 x 1km (2 minutes recovery between each) with warm-up and cool-down
- Wed: Resistance training as per week 1
- Thu: 10 miles steady, off-road if possible
- Fri: 6 x 1 mins with equal distance jog recoveries with warm-up and cool-down
- Sat: 3 miles easy jog
- Sun: Half-marathon race or equivalent time-trial with warm-up and cool-down (full effort, record time)

Week 5: Long run hits 20 miles (49-59 miles)

- Optional: Two early morning runs totaling 10 miles
- Mon: Easy swimming or cycling for 35 minutes (massage if possible)
- Tue: Steady 6 miles
- Wed: Resistance training with easy 3 mile jog afterwards
- Thu: 10 miles even pace run (slower than marathon pace)
- Fri: 4 x 1 mile(2 minutes recovery) with good warm-up and cool-down
- Sat: 4 miles easy
- Sun: 20 miles steady (start easily)

Week 6 (43-53 miles)

Optional: Two early morning runs totaling 10 miles

Mon: Rest

Tue: Hill session. 8 x long hill repetition (3 mins each approx) with warm-up and cool-down

Wed: 6 miles steady

Thu: Off-road fartlek (go as please) (approx 9 miles)

Fri: 6 x 1 minute with equal distance jog with good warm-up and cool-down

Sat: 5 miles easy

Sun: 10 mile time-trial with warm-up and cool-down

Week 7 (47-57 miles)

Optional: Two early morning runs totaling 10 miles

Mon: Steady 6 miles

Tue: 3 x 2 miles (3 minutes recovery) with warm-up and cool-down

Wed: 4 miles relaxed run

Thu: Resistance training session

Fri: Brisk 8 miles

Sat: Rest

Sun: 21 miles slow

Week 8: Mini training reduction and half marathon race (34 miles)

Mon: 4 miles easy jog, ideally off-road

Tue: 7 miles fartlek

Wed: Resistance training

Thu: 6 miles steady

Fri: Rest

Sat: 2 miles easy

Sun: Half marathon race with warm-up and cool-down (look to beat week 4)

Week 9: Building up again (51-66 miles)

- Optional: Three early morning or lunchtime runs totaling 15 miles
- Mon: Easy swim or cycle for 30 minutes
- Tue: Resistance training
- Wed: 4 x 1 mile (2 minute recoveries) with warm-up and cool-down
- Thu: 10 miles steady pace
- Fri: 8 miles fartlek with 3 minute efforts throughout
- Sat: 5 miles light
- Sun: 22 miles steady pace

Week 10: Building up again (49-64 miles)

- Optional: Three early morning or lunchtime runs totaling 15 miles
- Mon: 5 miles easy
- Tue: 8 x 800m (1 minute recoveries) with warm-up and cool-down
- Wed: 12 miles steady (ideally off-road)
- Thu: Resistance training session
- Fri: 8 x 1 minute with equal distance jog recoveries with warm-up and cool-down
- Sat: 5 miles easy
- Sun: 15 miles fast pace (run as a time-trial)

Week 11 (53-68 miles)

- Optional: Three early morning or lunchtime runs totaling 15 miles
- Mon: 6 miles relaxed, ideally off-road
- Tue: 10 miles, inc. 8 x 2 minute hill efforts
- Wed: Resistance training
- Thu: 6 miles steady
- Fri: 7 miles starting slow, building to half marathon pace
- Sat: Rest
- Sun: 24 miles easy pace (start slowly)

Week 12: Mini training reduction and 10km race (44-54 miles)

- Optional: Two early morning or lunchtime runs totaling 10 miles
- Mon: 5 miles easy off-road run
- Tue: 4 x 1 mile (2 minute recoveries) with warm-up and cool-down
- Wed: 14 miles steady run
- Thu: Resistance training session
- Fri: 6 miles fartlek
- Sat: Easy 4 mile jog
- Sun: 10km race with good warm-up and cool-down (aim to beat week 2)

Week 13: Peak mileage week (55-70 miles)

- Optional: Three early morning or lunchtime runs totaling 15 miles
- Mon: Steady 6 miles
- Tue: 5 x 1 mile (2 minute recoveries with warm-up and cool-down)
- Wed: Resistance training
- Thu: 12 miles steady run
- Fri: 8 x 1 minute with equal distance jog recoveries with warm-up and cool-down
- Sat: Rest
- Sun: 24 miles at close to marathon pace (last long run)

Week 14: Start of training reduction (35-48 miles)

- Optional: Two early morning or lunchtime runs totaling 10 miles
- Mon: Swim or cycle for 30 minutes
- Tue: 8 miles including 8 x 3 minutes fast
- Wed: Steady 8 miles at marathon pace
- Thu: Resistance training session
- Fri: Rest or easy 3 mile jog
- Sat: 4 mile easy jog
- Sun: 15 miles steady, slightly slower than marathon pace

Week 15: Further reductions in training (34-39 miles)

- Optional: One early morning or lunchtime runs totaling 5 miles
- Mon: 5 miles easy off-road run
- Tue: 6 miles easy with 5 x 1 minute bursts
- Wed: 7 miles brisk pace (not flat out)
- Thu: 4 x 1 minute with equal distance recovery jog with warm-up and cool-down
- Fri: Rest
- Sat: 2 miles easy jog
- Sun: 10 miles slower than marathon pace (wear race-day kit)

Week 16: Final reductions and preparation week (39.2 miles)

- Mon: Rest (possible leg massage)
- Tue: 1 mile warm-up, 1 mile marathon pace, 1 mile cool-down
- Wed: Steady 4 miles
- Thu: Easy 4 miles with 6 x 20 second bursts
- Fri: Rest
- Sat: 2 miles easy jog
- Sun: **Race day!**

Thank you and well done!

You have come to the end of the 16 week guide, and your fitness has advanced dramatically. You will have made significant health and fitness gains, and equally importantly, you have progressed safely. By maintaining your training, you will be making a major contribution to your long-term health and fitness, and this schedule can also serve as a foundation and springboard to increase your fitness levels further. Now you've completed your race, you may be tempted to step up and try to improve your finishing time. Enjoy your training.



Inspiring progress, together



Team #BrainResearch

Together we can accelerate the progress of brain research

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