



Marathon Training Plan: Beginner

If this is your first marathon and you haven't done much running before, perhaps 15 to 20 minutes straight through, then this 16 week plan will take you to race day as safely as possible. We'll use walk breaks in the long run to allow you to cover distance in a smart way. Cross training allows us to build volume without additional impact in the legs. Our key with this plan is to keep you injury free.

It's important that you run at the right effort level and intensity to ensure you're training to reach your full potential. Most people think that training "harder is better" so we end up running too quickly, which can result in feeling tired, getting ill or picking up an injury. Understanding what each session is trying to achieve and how it should feel is the way to train smart. Here's our guide to the running sessions that you'll find mentioned in your training plan and a note of how they should feel as a 'talk test'.

| Type of Session | PERCEIVED EFFORT LEVEL (1-10)* | HOW IT SHOULD FEEL - "THE TALK TEST" |
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| Brisk Walk | 5-6 | You can speak in complete sentences, totally conversational, you're moving relaxed, enjoying being outside but getting a bit of a sweat on. |
| Recovery / Easy Run | 6-6.5 | You can speak in complete sentences, totally conversational, you're running relaxed, enjoying it and not worrying about the watch |
| Easy Cross Training (Gym Class) | 6-7 | We have plenty of cross training in the plan, it enables us to get the cardiovascular gains without the impact of running. Please use gym classes if you want to, just aim for Easy / Steady Effort level so it compliments the running you are doing. |
| Long Run | 6.5-7 | You're in control, running fluidly and very much at a conversational level but you'll feel slightly flushed with a gradual build up of muscular fatigue. We recommend trying some run / walk intervals for this run. Feel free to adjust the suggested run / walk intervals. |
| Steady Effort Run | 7-8 | You can speak in short sentences but have a slight pause on your breath. It sits between Easy and Threshold running. |
| Threshold runs | 8-8.5 | You could speak 4-5 words if somebody asked you a question. Your breathing is more laboured and you know you're working, we call this 'controlled discomfort' |

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| | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY | SUNDAY |
|--------|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Week 1 | 45 minutes Easy Cross Training / Gym Class | Rest Day | 5 minutes Brisk Walk, 12 minutes Easy Run, 5 minutes Brisk Walk | Rest Day | 30 minutes Conditioning Work | Rest Day | 65 minutes Long Run: 10 minutes Brisk Walk Warm Up, (15 x 2 minutes Easy Run, 1 minute Brisk Walk), 10 minutes Brisk Walk Cool Down |
| Week 2 | 30 minutes Conditioning Work | 10 minutes Brisk Walk Warm Up, 10 minutes Easy / Steady Run, 10 minutes Brisk Walk Cool Down | Rest Day | 45 minutes Easy Cross Training / Gym Class | Rest Day | 5 minutes Brisk Walk, 12 minutes Easy Run, 5 minutes Brisk Walk | 80 minutes Long Run: 10 minutes Brisk Walk Warm Up, (20 x 2 minutes Easy Run, 1 minute Brisk Walk), 10 minutes Brisk Walk Cool Down |
| Week 3 | 30 minutes Easy Cross Training / Gym Class | 5 minutes Brisk Walk, 5 minutes Easy Run, 6 x 2 minutes at Steady Effort with a 60 second Brisk Walk between sets, 5 minutes Easy Run, 5 Minutes Brisk Walk Cool Down | Rest Day | 30 minutes Easy Cross Training / Gym Class | 10 minutes Brisk Walk Warm Up, 12 minutes Easy / Steady Run, 10 minutes Brisk Walk Cool Down | 30 minutes Conditioning Work | 95 minutes Long Run: 10 minutes Brisk Walk Warm Up, (25 x 2 minutes Easy Run, 1 minute Brisk Walk), 10 minutes Brisk Walk Cool Down |
| Week 4 | 45 minutes Easy Cross Training / Gym Class | 5 minutes Brisk Walk, 5 minutes Easy Run, 6 x 2 minutes at Steady Effort with a 60 second Brisk Walk between sets, 5 minutes Easy Run, 5 Minutes Brisk Walk Cool Down | 30 minutes Conditioning Work | 25 minutes Easy Run | Rest Day | 30 minutes Easy Cross Training / Gym Class | 95 minutes Long Run: 10 minutes Brisk Walk Warm Up, (25 x 2 minutes Easy Run, 1 minute Brisk Walk), 10 minutes Brisk Walk Cool Down |

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| Week 5 | 45 minutes Easy Cross Training / Gym Class | 5 minutes Brisk Walk, 5 minutes Easy Run, 5 x 3 minutes at Steady Effort with a 90 second Brisk Walk between sets, 5 minutes Easy Run, 5 Minutes Brisk Walk Cool Down | 30 minutes Conditioning Work | Rest Day | 25 minutes Easy Run | 40 minutes Easy Cross Training / Gym Class | 110 minutes Long Run: 10 minutes Brisk Walk Warm Up, (30 x 2 minutes Easy Run, 1 minute Brisk Walk), 10 minutes Brisk Walk Cool Down |
| Week 6 | 30 minutes Conditioning Work | 5 minutes Brisk Walk, 5 minutes Easy Run, 6 x 2 minutes at Threshold Effort with a 90 second Brisk Walk between sets, 5 minutes Easy Run, 5 Minutes Brisk Walk Cool Down | 30 minutes Easy Cross Training / Gym Class | Rest Day | 45 minutes Easy Cross Training / Gym Class | 10 minutes Brisk Walk Warm Up, 12 minutes Easy / Steady Run, 10 minutes Brisk Walk Cool Down | 125 minutes Long Run: 10 minutes Brisk Walk Warm Up, (35 x 2 minutes Easy Run, 1 minute Brisk Walk), 10 minutes Brisk Walk Cool Down. |
| Week 7 | Rest Day | 5 minutes Brisk Walk, 5 minutes Easy Run, 5 x 2 minutes at Threshold Effort with a 90 second Brisk Walk between sets, 5 minutes Easy Run, 5 Minutes Brisk Walk Cool Down | 30 minutes Conditioning Work | Rest Day | 30 minutes Easy Cross Training / Gym Class | Rest Day | 110 minutes Long Run: 10 minutes Brisk Walk Warm Up, (30 x 2 minutes Easy Run, 1 minute Brisk Walk), 10 minutes Brisk Walk Cool Down |
| Week 8 | 30 minutes Conditioning Work | 5 minutes Brisk Walk, 5 minutes Easy Run, 5 x 3 minutes at Threshold Effort with a 90 second Brisk Walk between sets, 5 minutes Easy Run, 5 Minutes Brisk Walk Cool Down | 30 minutes Easy Cross Training / Gym Class | Rest Day | 30 minutes Easy Run | 30 minutes Conditioning Work | 140 minutes Long Run: 10 minutes Brisk Walk Warm Up, (40 x 2 minutes Easy Run, 1 minute Brisk Walk), 10 minutes Brisk Walk Cool Down |

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| Week 9 | 30 minutes Easy Cross Training / Gym Class | 5 minutes Brisk Walk, 5 minutes Easy Run, 6 x 3 minutes at Steady Effort with a 90 second Brisk Walk between sets, 5 minutes Easy Run, 5 Minutes Brisk Walk Cool Down | 30 minutes Conditioning Work | Rest Day | 45 minutes Easy Cross Training / Gym Class | Rest Day | 125 minutes Long Run: 10 minutes Brisk Walk Warm Up, (35 x 2 minutes Easy Run, 1 minute Brisk Walk), 10 minutes Brisk Walk Cool Down. |
| Week 10 | 30 minutes Conditioning Work | 5 minutes Brisk Walk, 5 minutes Easy Run, 4 x 2 minutes at Threshold Effort with a 90 second Brisk Walk between sets, 5 minutes Easy Run, 5 Minutes Brisk Walk Cool Down | Rest Day | 20 minutes Easy Run | Rest Day | Rest Day | Half Marathon Race |
| Week 11 | Rest Day | 30 minutes Conditioning Work | 45 minutes Easy Cross Training / Gym Class | Rest Day | 5 minutes Brisk Walk, 5 minutes Easy Run, 5 x 3 minutes at Threshold Effort with a 90 second Brisk Walk between sets, 5 minutes Easy Run, 5 Minutes Brisk Walk Cool Down | Rest Day | 110 minutes Long Run: 10 minutes Brisk Walk Warm Up, (30 x 2 minutes Easy Run, 1 minute Brisk Walk), 10 minutes Brisk Walk Cool Down |
| Week 12 | 45 minutes Easy Cross Training / Gym Class | 5 minutes Brisk Walk, 5 minutes Easy Run, 6 x 3 minutes at Threshold Effort with a 90 second Brisk Walk between sets, 5 minutes Easy Run, 5 Minutes Brisk Walk Cool Down | 30 minutes Conditioning Work | Rest Day | 10 minutes Easy, 10 minutes Steady, 10 minutes Easy | Rest Day | 155 minutes Long Run: 10 minutes Brisk Walk Warm Up, (45 x 2 minutes Easy Run, 1 minute Brisk Walk), 10 minutes Brisk Walk Cool Down |

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| Week 13 | 45 minutes Easy Cross Training / Gym Class | 30 minutes Conditioning Work | 5 minutes Brisk Walk, 5 minutes Easy Run, 6 x 3 minutes at Threshold Effort with a 90 second Brisk Walk between sets, 5 minutes Easy Run, 5 Minutes Brisk Walk Cool Down | Rest Day | 45 minutes Easy Cross Training / Gym Class | Rest Day | 170 minutes Long Run: 10 minutes Brisk Walk Warm Up, (50 x 2 minutes Easy Run, 1 minute Brisk Walk), 10 minutes Brisk Walk Cool Down |
| Week 14 | 30 minutes Conditioning Work | Rest Day | 5 minutes Brisk Walk, 5 minutes Easy Run, 5 x 3 minutes at Threshold Effort with a 90 second Brisk Walk between sets, 5 minutes Easy Run, 5 Minutes Brisk Walk Cool Down | 30 minutes Easy Cross Training / Gym Class | 30 minutes Easy / Steady Run | Rest Day | 120 minutes Long Run: (30 x 2 minutes Easy Run, 1 minute Brisk Walk) |
| Week 15 | 30 minutes Conditioning Work | 45 minutes Easy Cross Training / Gym Class | 5 minutes Brisk Walk, 5 minutes Easy Run, 4 x 3 minutes at Threshold Effort with a 90 second Brisk Walk between sets, 5 minutes Easy Run, 5 Minutes Brisk Walk Cool Down | Rest Day | 30 minutes Easy Cross Training / Gym Class | Rest Day | 60 minutes Long Run: (15 x 2 minutes Easy Run, 1 minute Brisk Walk) |
| Week 16 | Rest Day | 5 minutes Brisk Walk, 5 minutes Easy Run, 4 x 2 minutes at Threshold Effort with a 90 second Brisk Walk between sets, 5 minutes Easy Run, 5 Minutes Brisk Walk Cool Down | Rest Day | 20 minutes Easy Run | Rest Day | Rest Day | Marathon Race Day |

Making the Training Plan work for you

You'll probably not be able to follow the plan as it is set out. We've written our plans with this in mind:

Key sessions for each week are highlighted in Red. These are the non-negotiable sessions that you need to fit into your diary one way or view in order to run your best race.

Avoid key sessions on back to back days. You need to recover after the harder sessions, they can't be crammed into a few days within your week.

The only exception to this is a key session followed by an Easy Long Run, but this is for more advanced runners.

Sessions in Black are the supplementary training within the plan. These sessions are the ones to drop in your week if you can't fit it all in, although we hope you can find the time.