

**RUNNER'S WORLD**

**50+**

**HALF  
MARATHON**

**RUN**

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**PLAN**

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# M E E T   Y O U R   C O A C H



## JOHN HONERKAMP

CERTIFIED RUN COACH +  
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### WELCOME TO YOUR 50+ HALF MARATHON RUN PLAN



As a runner in my mid-40s who has coached hundreds of masters runners (40+ in running categories), I know firsthand what some of the challenges can be when starting to run for the first time or starting back up after a long hiatus. We're not as young as we used to be. We're not as fast (a relative term) as we once were. And more than likely, we don't have as much free time as we once did. But one of the many great things about running is that you can start at any time.

I was fortunate enough to be introduced to running at a very early age when Uncle Dan would bring me along to some of the shorter races during his preparation for the New York City Marathon in the early 1980s. I ran my first race—an out-and-back mile fun run on the Long Beach Boardwalk in Long Beach, New York—in 1982 as a 6-year-old, and finished in 6 minutes and 54 seconds. I enjoyed it so much that I’ve been hooked on running ever since, the spirit of competition serving as motivation to keep getting better. I would eventually go on to win a National Championship by running the fastest time in the country as part of the Chaminade High School 4x800 relay, qualify for several NCAA Championships in both Cross Country and Track & Field at St. John’s University (Queens, New York), and set the American record in 2000 as part of the 4x1,500 Relay with the Reebok Enclave based in Washington, D.C.

Running has done so much for my life that helping others get as much out of their own training felt like a natural next step for me. Over the years, I’ve coached runners from all walks of life—many of whom started out right where you are now, hesitant and concerned about whether your aging body can handle this type of activity. But that’s the beauty of running—whether you’re just starting out or you want to take your running to the next level, it’s never too late. I’ve known runners who picked up running for the first time in their 80s, and I’ve coached many runners who ran their fastest times as masters. All you need to do is take that first (or next) step, and I’ll help guide you on your running journey.

**—JOHN HONERKAMP**

Certified Run Coach  
Founder & CEO of Run Kamp

# HOW TO MAKE THE PLAN YOUR OWN



s you’re choosing the right plan for your running needs, keep in mind that this plan is not set in stone. Think of it more like a training guide—it’s designed to be written in pencil, not pen. If you follow the set plan to a tee, that’s fantastic! Or you can modify and tweak by reducing mileage, intensity, or time when pain crops up or switching days up when busy schedules interfere with training. For your reference, I’ve included a list of terms used throughout the plan. Life happens when you are training. Adjust.

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

### Regular Run

Relaxed or conversational pace (you can talk comfortably while running)

### Easy Run

Recovery run with a focus on running very easy

### Cross-Train

Any activity that gets your heart rate up but doesn’t involve running. Examples: cycling, spinning, swimming, aqua-jogging, elliptical. Recommended duration: 30–45 minutes

### Flex Day

Run as you feel, take a day off, or cross-train. Recommended duration: Less than 45 minutes

### Quiz

Test your fitness and break up the monotony of training with a local race. Suggested distance: 5K, 4 miles, 5 miles, or 10K

### Quality Day

Any workout that gets your heart rate up and has a specific purpose. A run that isn’t easy or regular. Examples: intervals, fartlek, hills, tempo run, and even a long run

### Intervals

Running faster repeats—typically ranging from 200 to 1,600 meters—with recovery jogs in between. Builds speed and endurance

### Fartlek

“Speed play” in Swedish. Blends continuous training with interval training. Periods of fast running mixed with periods of slower running

### Hills

Hidden speedwork. Hill repeats can be done on any hill and are typically 100 meters to a mile long.

### Tempo Run

Slightly slower than 10K race pace and faster than half marathon pace

### Long Run

Most important workout of the week for anyone tackling the half marathon distance or longer

## ELEMENTS OF THE PLAN

**THIS PROGRAM IS** designed to give you the option to run/work out three to five days a week.

- **3 OR 4 RUNS/WEEK**
- **1 OR 2 CROSS-TRAIN DAYS/WEEK**
- **2 OR 4 DAYS OFF/WEEK**

Flex days are for running, cross-training, or taking the day off to make room for busy schedules or maximizing recovery. And because we're building mileage, it's even more important to do strength-training two or three times a week, preferably after a run so you can focus on recovery on your days off.

The main goal of this 10-week program is to give you structure as you train for your first (or next) half marathon. You'll find that sticking to a plan instead of winging it will help you get in what you need to be able to conquer this race.

Training will focus a lot on pace. Your pace is important in training for a half marathon because it's easy to go out too fast. Half marathon pace isn't too hard, but it can be challenging to run that pace for 13.1 miles. So while we want to avoid going out too fast on race day, we do want to be more focused on effort throughout the next 10 weeks.

Correlating pace with effort is key, but there are a multitude of variables that can impact this. Recovery, soreness, weather, stress, sleep, and travel (to name a few) may make it harder to find that happy medium, but keeping a log and developing a sort of effort convertor based on some (or all) of these factors may help. You'll find your sweet spot, just give it time.

Ten weeks may sound intimidating, but thinking of this program as an eight-week program with a two-week taper period might help ease your anxiety. We will gradually build your mileage and efforts from week one to eight and then give you your legs back during the taper (last two weeks of training) by reducing running volume and intensity. You'll be recovered and ready for race day. Of course, there's always the risk that your legs feel so good—coupled with the adrenaline boost on race day—you might go

### **RUNNING TIPS**

- Take advantage of intervals in this program. They help you build speed and endurance.



## WAYS TO MEASURE EFFORT

### **The Talk Test**

Recite the Pledge of Allegiance as you're running on a treadmill. If you're huffing and puffing through the recitation, you're working too hard. This helps determine your easy or conversational pace.

### **Pace**

This term refers to the number of minutes it takes to cover 1 mile. If it takes you 15 minutes to walk 1 mile, that's your walking pace. By keeping a log

every time you go out for a run, it'll be easier to determine your pace for longer distances and gauge fitness gains.

### **Heart Rate**

Tracking your heart rate with a monitor when running tells you how hard—or easy—you're working. Multiply your age by 0.7 and subtract that from 207 to find out your estimated max heart rate. Typically, you'd want to be targeting 60 percent of your maximum heart rate to

get the max benefits of every step.

### **Perceived Exertion**

Using the Borg RPE (Relative Perceived Exertion) scale, you can monitor your intensity based on how you feel. This method uses a numbered scale from 6 to 20. You assign a number to how hard you think you're working—6 being no exertion and 20 being maximum exertion (much like rating pain on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is mild and 10 is severe).

out too fast. But as long as you learn your pace, and trust your pace, you'll do great.  
Ready?

# DAILY TRAINING PLAN

All workouts should start with a 1-2 mile warmup (10-20 min.) and same for the cooldown.

WEEK	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
		Quality Day		Reg/Easy Run		Flex Day	Long Run/Quiz
1	Off	3 Miles	Off	3 Miles	Off	Cross-Train	3 Miles or 30 Min.
2	Off	Tempo	Cross-Train	3 Miles	Off	Flex Day	4-5 Miles or 40-50 Min.
3	Off	Intervals	Off	3-5 Miles	Off	Cross-Train	6-7 Miles or 60-70 Min.
4	Off	Tempo	Cross-Train	3-5 Miles	Off	Flex Day	7-8 Miles or 60-70 Min.
5	Off	Hills	Off	4-6 Miles	Off	Cross-Train	6 Miles or 60 Min.
6	Off	Intervals	Cross-Train	5-7 Miles	Off	Flex Day	8-10 Miles or 100 Min.
7	Off	Tempo	Off	5-7 Miles	Off	Cross-Train	6 Miles or 60 Min.
8	Off	Intervals	Cross-Train	4-6 Miles	Off	Flex Day	10-12 Miles or 120 Min.
9	Off	Taper Tempo	Off	3-5 Miles	Off	Cross-Train	Taper Time 40 Min.
10	Off	Taper Intervals	Off	3 Miles	Off	Off	13.1-Mile Race

Week 2 Tempo:	1- to 2-mile warmup, 3-mile tempo run. Effort should start at 5 RPE and finish at 8 RPE (refer to Perceived Exertion on previous page). 1- to 2-mile cooldown.
Week 3 Intervals:	4-5 x 800m w/ 2 min. rest (active walk, not standing). 1-2 easy, 2 medium, 1-2 hard.
Week 4 Tempo:	4-mile tempo run (1 mile easy, 2 miles medium, 1 mile hard). Progression tempo.
Week 5 Hills:	8 x 1 min. hill jog downhill for recovery.
Week 6 Intervals:	Ladder up and down 400m-800m-1,200m-1,200m-800m-400m, 90 sec. rest after 400m, 2 min. rest after the 800m/1,200m (active walk, not standing).
Week 7 Tempo:	5-mile tempo run (2 miles at half marathon goal pace, 1 mile at sub goal half marathon pace or maybe 10K pace, 2 miles at half marathon goal pace).
Week 8 Intervals:	4 x 1K with 2 min. rest (active walk, not standing), see how you compared to Quality Day 1 Workout.
Week 9 Taper Tempo:	3-mile tempo run. AYF (As You Feel). Go slow if you're tired, go faster if you're feeling good.
Week 10 Taper Intervals:	1 x mile at goal half marathon pace, followed by 4 x 400m at faster than half marathon pace with 2 min. 30 sec. walk in between, but not hard.

This book is intended as a reference volume only, not as a medical manual. The information given here is designed to help you make informed decisions about your health. It is not intended as a substitute for any treatment that may have been prescribed by your doctor. If you suspect that you have a medical problem, we urge you to seek competent medical help.

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