

RUNNER'S WORLD

50+

BEGINNER
RUN
PLAN

M E E T Y O U R C O A C H



WELCOME TO YOUR 50+ BEGINNER 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

As 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

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

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

DESIGNED TO GET you the right amount of volume (running mileage per week) coupled with the right amount of rest and recovery, this program is flexible enough for unpredictable schedules and how your body might respond to each run or workout.

This six-week program is broken down into runs, cross-train days, and days off as follows:

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

Flexibility is key. If you need an extra day off, take it. If you need to swap days around, swap up.

Pay attention to your pace. It is easy to start out too fast and make things more difficult than they have to be. I often hear beginners say, “Oh, I am not a runner. I can’t make it more than a block.” But really, they just started out too fast. Others remember running as a punishment or conditioning for another sport when they were younger. I believe everyone is a runner, but some just don’t know how to start. Take your time and learn your pace.

Most runs are at an easy or conversational pace (you can talk comfortably while running) with one quality day (tempo, intervals, hills) almost every week to run harder and test yourself.

To complement the program, I highly recommend strength-training two or three times a week, particularly right after a run so you can maximize recovery on your days off. Resistance training builds muscle strength, anaerobic endurance, size of skeletal muscles, and bone density—all of which are extra important as we get older. Some examples of strength-training include push-ups, situps, planks, and weight training.

Recovery, sleep, and nutrition are also just as important as running itself, so don’t skimp on them.

Ready to start?

RUNNING TIPS

- Aim for a peak long run of 8 miles over the course of the program.
- Cap tempo runs at 3 miles.
- If you plan to run a race at the end of this 6-week program, cap your race distance at 5 miles.

DAILY TRAINING PLAN

All workouts should start with a 1-mile warmup (10-15 min.) and same for the cooldown.

WEEK	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
		Quality Day		Cross-Train/ Easy Run		Long Run	
1	Off	2 Miles	Off	Cross-Train	Off	3 Miles	Off
2	Off	3 Miles	Off	Cross-Train	Off	4 Miles	Off
3	Off	Tempo	Off	3 Miles	Off	5 Miles	Cross-Train
4	Off	Intervals	Off	4 Miles	Off	6 Miles	Cross-Train
5	Off	Hills	Off	4 Miles	Off	7 Miles	Cross-Train
6	Off	Intervals	Off	4 Miles	Off	8 Miles or Race	Off

Week 3 Tempo: 3-mile tempo run (1 mile easy, 2 miles medium). Progression tempo.

Week 4 Intervals: 4-6 x 400m with 2 min. rest (active walk, not standing).

Week 5 Hills: 6 x 1 min. hill jog downhill for recovery.

Week 6 Intervals: 3-4 x 800m with 3-4 min. rest (active walk, not standing).

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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