

SUB 3:00 HOUR MARATHON PLAN

A Sub 3-Hour Marathon training plan is designed for experienced and ambitious runners aiming to break the magical 3-hour barrier in the marathon. This means you need to be able to maintain an average pace of about 4:16 minutes per kilometer over the full distance of 42.195 kilometers. The plan focuses on a combination of endurance, speed, strength training, and mobility work to prepare you physically and mentally for this challenging goal.

Goal and Strategy

Running a marathon in under 3 hours requires comprehensive preparation. You must not only have a solid base endurance but also be able to consistently maintain your race pace throughout the entire distance. The plan follows a structured approach, incorporating long runs, tempo sessions, interval training, and strength and mobility exercises to strengthen your muscles and improve your flexibility.

Weeks 1-4: Base Building and Speed Training

Goal: In the first four weeks, the focus is on building a solid foundation of endurance and speed. Mobility and core exercises help prevent injuries and improve your efficiency.

Exercise	Details	Breaks / Cool Down	Execution Tips
Week 1			
Monday			
Interval training + core	6x1000 meters at 10 km pace	90 seconds break, cool down: 10 minutes of easy running	Run evenly, pay attention to technique
Planks	3x60 seconds		Stabilize your core
Russian Twists	3x20 per page		Execute the rotation in a controlled manner
Tuesday			
Easy running + mobility	12 kilometers at an easy pace (4:45-5:00 min/km)	Mobility: 20 minutes of stretching (focus: hips, calves)	Run lightly to recover your legs
Wednesday			

Tempo run + core	8 kilometers at marathon pace (4:16 min/km)	Cool Down: 10 minutes of easy running	Maintain a constant pace
Side planks with rotation	3x45 seconds		Keep your hips stable
Leg raises	3x20		Execute slowly and in a controlled manner
Thursday			
Strength training + mobility	3x10 squats, 3x8 deadlifts, 3x12 Bulgarian split squats	Mobility: 15 minutes of yoga or foam rolling	Make sure you use clean technique when doing strength exercises
Friday			
Long run	22 kilometers at an easy pace (4:45-5:00 min/km)	Cool down: stretching and foam rolling	Run evenly and pay attention to your speed
Saturday			
Recovery run + mobility	10 kilometers at a slow pace (5:15-5:30 min/km)	Mobility: 20 minutes of stretching and light yoga exercises	Use the run for recovery, then mobility
Sunday			
Rest day			Full recovery
Week 2			
Monday			
Interval training + core	5x1200 meters at 10 km pace	2 minutes break, cool down: 10 minutes of easy running	Run evenly, pay attention to your technique
Planks	3x60 seconds		Stabilize your core, keeping your belly button pulled in
Mountain Climbers	3x20 per page		Maintain a stable posture and pull your knees forward in a controlled manner
Tuesday			
Easy running + mobility	13 kilometers at an easy pace (4:45-5:00 min/km)	Mobility: 20 minutes of stretching (focus on hips, calves and thighs)	Run lightly to recover your legs

Wednesday			
Tempo run + core	9 kilometers at marathon pace (4:16 min/km)	Cool Down: 10 minutes of easy running	Maintain a constant pace and keep your shoulders relaxed
Side planks	3x45 seconds		Keep your hips stable and keep your body line straight
Russian Twists	3x20 per page		Perform the rotation slowly and in a controlled manner
Thursday			
Strength training + mobility	3x10 squats, 3x8 deadlifts, 3x12 Bulgarian split squats	Mobility: 15 minutes of yoga or stretching	Make sure you use clean technique when doing the strength exercises and keep your back straight
Friday			
Long run	24 kilometers at an easy pace (4:45-5:00 min/km)	Cool down: stretching and foam rolling	Run evenly, pay attention to your speed and stay relaxed
Saturday			
Recovery run + mobility	11 kilometers at a slow pace (5:15-5:30 min/km)	Mobility: 20 minutes of stretching and light yoga exercises	Use the run to recover, followed by mobility exercises
Sunday			
Rest day			Full rest, focus on relaxation
Week 3			
Monday			
Interval training + core	6x1000 meters at 5 km pace	90 seconds break, cool down: 10 minutes of easy running	Pay attention to a steady pace and stable posture
Planks	3x60 seconds		Stabilize your core and pull your belly button in
Bicycle crunches	3x20 per page		Carry out the movement slowly and in a controlled manner
Tuesday			

Easy running + mobility	14 kilometers at an easy pace (4:45-5:00 min/km)	Mobility: 20 minutes of stretching (focus on hips, calves and legs)	Run lightly to recover your legs
Wednesday			
Tempo run + core	10 kilometers at marathon pace (4:16 min/km)	Cool Down: 10 minutes of easy running	Keep a constant pace and keep your posture relaxed
Side planks	3x45 seconds		Stabilize your hips and keep your body line straight
Russian Twists	3x20 per page		Perform the rotation slowly and in a controlled manner
Thursday			
Strength training + mobility	3x10 squats, 3x8 deadlifts, 3x12 Bulgarian split squats	Mobility: 15 minutes of yoga or stretching	Pay attention to clean technique and keep your back straight
Friday			
Long run	26 kilometers at an easy pace (4:45-5:00 min/km)	Cool down: stretching and foam rolling	Run evenly, pay attention to your speed
Saturday			
Recovery run + mobility	12 kilometers slow pace (approx. 5:15-5:30 min/km)	Mobility: 20 minutes of stretching and foam rolling	Use the run to recover, followed by mobility exercises
Sunday			
Rest day			Full rest, focus on relaxation
Week 4			
Monday			
Interval training + core	6x1000 meters at 5 km pace	90 seconds break, cool down: 10 minutes of easy running	Pay attention to a steady pace and stable posture
Planks with rotation	3x60 seconds		Stabilize your core, keep your hips stable

Mountain Climbers	3x20 per page		Make sure your posture is stable and pull your knees forward in a controlled manner
Tuesday			
Easy running + mobility	14 kilometers at an easy pace (4:45-5:00 min/km)	Mobility: 20 minutes of stretching (focus on hips, calves and thighs)	Run lightly to recover your legs
Wednesday			
Tempo run + core	11 kilometers at marathon pace (4:16 min/km)	Cool Down: 10 minutes of easy running	Keep a constant pace and keep your posture relaxed
Side planks	3x45 seconds		Keep your hips stable and keep your body line straight
Russian Twists	3x20 per page		Perform the rotation slowly and in a controlled manner
Thursday			
Strength training + mobility	3x10 squats, 3x8 deadlifts, 3x12 Bulgarian split squats	Mobility: 15 minutes of yoga or stretching	Pay attention to clean technique and keep your back straight
Friday			
Long run	28 kilometers at an easy pace (4:45-5:00 min/km)	Cool down: stretching and foam rolling	Run evenly, pay attention to your speed
Saturday			
Recovery run + mobility	12 kilometers slow pace (approx. 5:15-5:30 min/km)	Mobility: 20 minutes of stretching and foam rolling	Use the run to recover, followed by mobility exercises
Sunday			
Rest day			Full rest, focus on relaxation
Week 5			
Monday			

Interval training + core	6x1200 meters at 10 km pace	2 minutes break, cool down: 10 minutes of easy running	Make sure you maintain a steady pace and an upright posture
Planks	3x60 seconds		Stabilize your core, keeping your belly button inward
Bicycle crunches	3x20 per page		Carry out the movement in a controlled and slow manner
Tuesday			
15 kilometers at an easy pace (4:45-5:00 min/km)	Mobility: 20 minutes of stretching (focus on hips, calves and thighs)	Run loosely and steadily to help your legs recover	Full rest, relax your body and mind
Wednesday			
Tempo run + core	12 kilometers at marathon pace (4:16 min/km)	Cool Down: 10 minutes of easy running	Keep a constant pace and keep your posture relaxed
Side planks with rotation	3x45 seconds		Stabilize your hips and keep your body line straight
Russian Twists	3x20 per page		Perform the rotation slowly and without momentum
Thursday			
Strength training + mobility	3x10 squats, 3x8 deadlifts, 3x12 lunges per leg	Mobility: 15 minutes of yoga or stretching	Pay attention to clean technique when doing strength exercises and keep your back straight
Friday			
Long run	30 kilometers at an easy pace (4:45-5:00 min/km)	Cool down: stretching and foam rolling	Run steadily, focusing on your breathing
Saturday			
Recovery run + mobility	12 kilometers at a slow pace (5:15-5:30 min/km)	Mobility: 20 minutes of stretching and light yoga exercises	Use the run to recover, followed by mobility exercises
Sunday			
Rest day			Full rest, relax your body and mind

Week 6			
Monday			
Interval training + core	6x1000 meters at 5 km pace	90 seconds break, cool down: 10 minutes of easy running	Pay attention to consistent speed and controlled breathing
Planks	3x60 seconds		Keep your torso stable and pull your belly button inward
Mountain Climbers	3x20 per page		Make sure your posture is stable and pull your knees forward in a controlled manner
Tuesday			
Easy running + mobility	16 kilometers at an easy pace (4:45-5:00 min/km)	Mobility: 20 minutes of stretching (focus on hips, calves and thighs)	Run lightly to recover your legs
Wednesday			
Tempo run + core	13 kilometers at marathon pace (4:16 min/km)	Cool Down: 10 minutes of easy running	Keep a constant pace and pay attention to your breathing
Side planks with leg raises	3x45 seconds		Stabilize your hips and keep your body line straight
Russian Twists	3x20 per page		Perform the rotation slowly and in a controlled manner
Thursday			
Strength training + mobility	3x10 squats, 3x8 deadlifts, 3x12 Bulgarian split squats	Mobility: 15 minutes of yoga or stretching	Pay attention to clean technique when doing strength exercises and keep your back straight
Friday			
Long run	32 kilometers at an easy pace (4:45-5:00 min/km)	Cool down: stretching and foam rolling	Run evenly, pay attention to a relaxed posture and breathing
Saturday			

Recovery run + mobility	12 kilometers at a slow pace (5:15-5:30 min/km)	Mobility: 20 minutes of stretching and foam rolling	Use the run to recover, followed by mobility exercises
Sunday			
Rest day			Full rest, focus on relaxation
Week 7			
Monday			
Interval training + core	6x1200 meters at 10 km pace	2 minutes break, cool down: 10 minutes of easy running	Keep a steady pace, focus on technique
Planks	3x60 seconds		Stabilize your core, pull your belly button in
Bicycle crunches	3x20 per page		Make sure your movement is controlled and slow
Tuesday			
Easy running + mobility	16 kilometers at an easy pace (4:45-5:00 min/km)	Mobility: 20 minutes of stretching (focus on hips, calves and thighs)	Run loosely to relax your muscles
Wednesday			
Tempo run + core	14 kilometers at marathon pace (4:16 min/km)	Cool Down: 10 minutes of easy running	Pay attention to even breathing and a relaxed posture
Side planks	3x45 seconds		Make sure you stay in a straight line and stabilize your hips
Russian Twists	3x20 per page		Perform the rotation slowly and in a controlled manner
Thursday			
Strength training + mobility	3x10 squats, 3x8 deadlifts, 3x12 Bulgarian split squats	Mobility: 15 minutes of yoga or stretching	Make sure you use clean technique when doing the exercises and keep your back straight
Friday			

Long run	34 kilometers at an easy pace (4:45-5:00 min/km)	Cool down: stretching and foam rolling	Run evenly and keep a relaxed running posture
Saturday			
Recovery run + mobility	12 kilometers at a slow pace (5:15-5:30 min/km)	Mobility: 20 minutes of stretching and foam rolling	Use the run to recover, followed by mobility exercises
Sunday			
Rest day			Full rest, focus on relaxation
Week 8			
Monday			
Interval training + core	6x800 meters at 5km pace	90 seconds break, cool down: 10 minutes of easy running	Keep the pace stable and pay attention to technique
Planks with rotation	3x60 seconds		Stabilize core, slow rotations
Mountain Climbers	3x20 per page		Maintain a stable posture and controlled movement
Tuesday			
Easy running + mobility	16 kilometers at an easy pace (4:45-5:00 min/km)	Mobility: 20 minutes of stretching (focus on hips, calves and thighs)	Run lightly to recover
Wednesday			
Tempo run + core	14 kilometers at marathon pace (4:16 min/km)	Cool Down: 10 minutes of easy running	Focus on a steady rhythm and breathing
Side planks	3x45 seconds		Keep your hips stable and your shoulders relaxed
Russian Twists	3x20 per page		Turn slowly and in a controlled manner
Thursday			
Strength training + mobility	3x10 squats, 3x8 deadlifts, 3x12 Bulgarian split squats	Mobility: 15 minutes of yoga or stretching	Pay attention to the correct technique, especially keeping your back straight

Friday			
Long run	36 kilometers at an easy pace (4:45-5:00 min/km)	Cool down: stretching and foam rolling	Run relaxed, maintain a steady pace
Saturday			
Recovery run + mobility	12 kilometers at a slow pace (5:15-5:30 min/km)	Mobility: 20 minutes of stretching and foam rolling	Recovery run, use the route for active recovery
Sunday			
Rest day			Full rest, focus on relaxation

Summary of Weeks 5-8

This phase brings you closer to your peak performance. Long runs reach their maximum distances, and speed sessions prepare you to maintain your marathon pace of 4:16 minutes/km for an extended period. The integration of mobility and core training remains crucial to keep you flexible, stable, and injury-free.

Weeks 9-12: Race Preparation and Tapering

The final four weeks of your Sub 3-Hour Marathon training plan focus on fine-tuning your form, reducing training load, and preparing for race day. This is the tapering phase, where you reduce your training to ensure that you are well-rested and in peak condition at the start line. Mobility and core training continue to be important for maintaining flexibility and improving efficiency.

Week 9			
Monday			
Interval training + core	5x1200 meters at 10 km pace	2 minutes break, cool down: 10 minutes of easy running	Maintain consistent speed and technique
Planks	3x60 seconds		Keep your torso stable and pull your belly button inwards

Leg raises	3x20		Control the leg movement and keep your back flat
Tuesday			
Easy running + mobility	16 kilometers at an easy pace (4:45-5:00 min/km)	Mobility: 20 minutes of stretching (focus on hips, calves and thighs)	Run relaxed to allow your muscles to recover
Wednesday			
Tempo run + core	14 kilometers at marathon pace (4:16 min/km)	Cool Down: 10 minutes of easy running	Focus on maintaining a consistent pace
Side planks with rotation	3x45 seconds		Keep your hips stable and rotate slowly and in a controlled manner
Russian Twists	3x20 per page		Perform the rotation without momentum
Thursday			
Strength training + mobility	3x8 squats, 3x6 deadlifts, 3x12 Bulgarian split squats	Mobility: 15 minutes of yoga or foam rolling	When doing the exercises, pay attention to clean technique and keep your back straight
Friday			
Long run	30 kilometers at an easy pace (4:45-5:00 min/km)	Cool down: stretching and foam rolling	Run evenly, avoid starting too quickly
Saturday			
Recovery run + mobility	10 kilometers at a slow pace (5:15-5:30 min/km)	Mobility: 20 minutes of stretching and light yoga exercises	Use the run for active recovery and stay relaxed
Sunday			
Rest day			Full rest, focus on relaxation
Week 10			
Monday			

Interval training + core	6x800 meters at 5km pace	90 seconds break, cool down: 10 minutes of easy running	Run evenly, pay attention to consistent technique
Planks	3x60 seconds		Stabilize the core, keep the body straight
Mountain Climbers	3x20 per page		Make sure your hips are stable and pull your knees in a controlled manner
Tuesday			
Easy running + mobility	14 kilometers at an easy pace (4:45-5:00 min/km)	Mobility: 20 minutes of stretching (focus on hips, calves and thighs)	Run relaxed to loosen the muscles
Wednesday			
Tempo run + core	12 kilometers at marathon pace (4:16 min/km)	Cool Down: 10 minutes of easy running	Keep a steady pace, shoulders relaxed
Side planks with rotation	3x45 seconds		Perform the rotations slowly and in a controlled manner
Russian Twists	3x20 per page		Control trunk rotation, keep hips stable
Thursday			
Strength training + mobility	3x8 squats, 3x6 deadlifts, 3x12 Bulgarian split squats	Mobility: 15 minutes of yoga or stretching	Make sure you do it cleanly and keep your back straight
Friday			
Long run	28 kilometers at an easy pace (4:45-5:00 min/km)	Cool down: stretching and foam rolling	Run consistently, avoid starting too fast
Saturday			
Recovery run + mobility	10 kilometers at a slow pace (5:15-5:30 min/km)	Mobility: 20 minutes of stretching and foam rolling	Use the run to recover, then focus on mobility
Sunday			
Rest day			Full rest, focus on recovery

Week 11			
Monday			
Interval training + core	4x1000 meters at 10 km pace	2 minutes break, cool down: 10 minutes of easy running	Run evenly, pay attention to consistent technique
Planks	3x60 seconds		Stabilize the core, keep the body straight
Leg raises	3x20		Carry out the movement slowly and in a controlled manner
Tuesday			
Easy running + mobility	12 kilometers at an easy pace (4:45-5:00 min/km)	Mobility: 20 minutes of stretching (focus on hips, calves and thighs)	Run relaxed to loosen the muscles
Wednesday			
Tempo run + core	10 kilometers at marathon pace (4:16 min/km)	Cool Down: 10 minutes of easy running	Keep a steady pace, shoulders relaxed
Side planks with rotation	3x45 seconds		Perform the rotations slowly and in a controlled manner
Bicycle crunches	3x20 per page		Make sure your hips are stable and your movements are slow
Thursday			
Light strength training + mobility	2x8 squats, 2x6 deadlifts	Mobility: 15 minutes of light stretching or yoga	Perform the movements with lighter weight and correct technique
Friday			
Long run	20 kilometers at an easy pace (4:45-5:00 min/km)	Cool down: stretching and foam rolling	Run consistently, avoid starting too fast
Saturday			
Recovery run + mobility	8 kilometers at a slow pace (5:15-5:30 min/km)	Mobility: 20 minutes of stretching and foam rolling	Use the run to recover, then focus on mobility

Sunday			
Rest day			Full rest, focus on recovery

Week 12: Tapering and Race Preparation

The final week is all about tapering to ensure that you are well-rested and in peak condition when race day arrives.

Week 12			
Monday			
Light interval training + core	3x800 meters at a moderate pace (10 km pace)	2 minutes break, cool down: 10 minutes of easy running	Pay attention to clean technique and a moderate pace
Planks	3x60 seconds		Keep your torso stable, pull your belly button inward
Russian Twists	3x20 per page		Control trunk rotation, avoid momentum
Tuesday			
Easy running + mobility	8 kilometers at an easy pace (4:45-5:00 min/km)	Mobility: 20 minutes of light stretching (focus: relaxation)	Run relaxed to recover your legs
Wednesday			
Tempo run + core	5 kilometers at marathon pace (4:16 min/km)	Cool Down: 10 minutes of easy running	Keep a steady pace, shoulders relaxed
Side planks	2x30 seconds		Keep your hips stable and keep your body line straight
Russian Twists	2x15 per page		Carry out the movement slowly and in a controlled manner
Thursday			

Rest day / light mobility training	20 minutes of light stretching or yoga		Focus on relaxation and slow movements
Friday			
Activation unit	5 kilometers at an easy pace (4:45-5:00 min/km)	Cool Down: 15 minutes of light stretching and movement exercises	Stay relaxed, activate the muscles, but avoid exertion
Saturday			
Rest day			Focus on recovery, carb loading, hydration
Sunday			
Race day – marathon	Do your best and put all your hard work into action!		Start at a controlled pace, stay calm and focused

Summary of Weeks 9-12

In these final four weeks, the focus is on tapering and recovery, ensuring that your body is fresh and ready to tackle the challenge of completing the marathon in under 3 hours. Reducing the training volume helps you maintain your performance while ensuring that you are in peak condition on race day.