Novice 1 Schedule

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| WEEK | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT | SUN |
| 1 | Rest | 3 m run | 3 m run | 3 m run | Rest | 6 | Cross |
| 2 | Rest | 3 m run | 3 m run | 3 m run | Rest | 7 | Cross |
| 3 | Rest | 3 m run | 4 m run | 3 m run | Rest | 5 | Cross |
| 4 | Rest | 3 m run | 4 m run | 3 m run | Rest | 9 | Cross |
| 5 | Rest | 3 m run | 5 m run | 3 m run | Rest | 10 | Cross |
| 6 | Rest | 3 m run | 5 m run | 3 m run | Rest | 7 | Cross |
| 7 | Rest | 3 m run | 6 m run | 3 m run | Rest | 12 | Cross |
| 8 | Rest | 3 m run | 6 m run | 3 m run | Rest | Rest | **Half Marathon** |
| 9 | Rest | 3 m run | 7 m run | 4 m run | Rest | 10 | Cross |
| 10 | Rest | 3 m run | 7 m run | 4 m run | Rest | 15 | Cross |
| 11 | Rest | 4 m run | 8 m run | 4 m run | Rest | 16 | Cross |
| 12 | Rest | 4 m run | 8 m run | 5 m run | Rest | 12 | Cross |
| 13 | Rest | 4 m run | 9 m run | 5 m run | Rest | 18 | Cross |
| 14 | Rest | 5 m run | 9 m run | 5 m run | Rest | 14 | Cross |
| 15 | Rest | 5 m run | 10 m run | 5 m run | Rest | 20 | Cross |
| 16 | Rest | 5 m run | 8 m run | 4 m run | Rest | 12 | Cross |
| 17 | Rest | 4 m run | 6 m run | 3 m run | Rest | 8 | Cross |
| 18 | Rest | 3 m run | 4 m run | 2 m run | Rest | Rest | **Marathon** |

Novice 2 Schedule

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| WEEK | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT | SUN |
| 1 | Rest | 3 m run | 5 m pace | 3 m run | Rest | 8 | Cross |
| 2 | Rest | 3 m run | 5 m run | 3 m run | Rest | 9 | Cross |
| 3 | Rest | 3 m run | 5 m pace | 3 m run | Rest | 6 | Cross |
| 4 | Rest | 3 m run | 6 m pace | 3 m run | Rest | 11 | Cross |
| 5 | Rest | 3 m run | 6 m run | 3 m run | Rest | 12 | Cross |
| 6 | Rest | 3 m run | 6 m pace | 3 m run | Rest | 9 | Cross |
| 7 | Rest | 4 m run | 7 m pace | 4 m run | Rest | 14 | Cross |
| 8 | Rest | 4 m run | 7 m run | 4 m run | Rest | 15 | Cross |
| 9 | Rest | 4 m run | 7 m pace | 4 m run | Rest | Rest | **Half Marathon** |
| 10 | Rest | 4 m run | 8 m pace | 4 m run | Rest | 17 | Cross |
| 11 | Rest | 5 m run | 8 m run | 5 m run | Rest | 18 | Cross |
| 12 | Rest | 5 m run | 8 m pace | 5 m run | Rest | 13 | Cross |
| 13 | Rest | 5 m run | 5 m pace | 5 m run | Rest | 19 | Cross |
| 14 | Rest | 5 m run | 8 m run | 5 m run | Rest | 12 | Cross |
| 15 | Rest | 5 m run | 5 m pace | 5 m run | Rest | 20 | Cross |
| 16 | Rest | 5 m run | 4 m pace | 5 m run | Rest | 12 | Cross |
| 17 | Rest | 4 m run | 3 m run | 4 m run | Rest | 8 | Cross |
| 18 | Rest | 3 m run | 2 m run | Rest | Rest | 2 m run | **Marathon** |

**Long runs**: The key to the program is the long run on weekends, which builds from 8 miles in Week 1 to 20 miles in the climactic Week 15. (After that, you taper to get ready for the marathon.) Starting at 8 miles, you get up over 15 miles sooner than in Novice 1 and have an additional run above that distance. You can skip an occasional workout, or juggle the schedule depending on other commitments, but do not cheat on the long runs. Notice that although the weekly long runs get progressively longer, every third week is a "stepback" week, where we reduce mileage to allow you to gather strength for the next push upward. Rest is an important component of any training program.  
  
**Run slow**: For experienced marathoners, I recommend that runners do their long runs anywhere from 30 to 90 seconds or more per mile slower than their marathon pace. The problem with offering this advice to many novice runners, however, is that they probably don't know what their marathon pace is, because they never have run a marathon before! As an experienced runner, you may or may not have run a prior marathon, but hopefully you have done enough races, including a half marathon, so that you can predict your marathon pace. If not, don't worry. Simply do your long runs at a comfortable pace, one that allows you to converse with your training partners, at least during the beginning of the run. Toward the end, you may need to abandon conversation and concentrate on the act of putting one foot in front of the other to finish. However, if you find yourself finishing at a pace significantly slower than your pace in the first few miles, you probably need to start much slower, or include regular walking breaks. It's better to run too slow during these long runs, than too fast. The important point is that you cover the prescribed distance; how fast you cover it doesn't matter.  
  
**Walking breaks**: Walking is a perfectly acceptable strategy in trying to finish a marathon. It works during training runs too. While some coaches recommend walking 1 minute out of every 10, or even alternating running and walking as frequently as every 30 seconds, I teach runners to walk when they come to an aid station. This serves a double function: 1) you can drink more easily while walking as opposed to running, and 2) since many other runners slow or walk through aid stations, you'll be less likely to block those behind. It's a good idea to follow this strategy in training as well. You will lose less time walking than you think. It's best to walk when you want to, not when your (fatigued) body forces you too.  
  
**Cross-training**: Sundays in this training program are devoted to cross-training. What is cross-training? It is any other form of aerobic exercise that allows you to use slightly different muscles while resting (usually) after your long run. In this program, we run long on Saturdays and cross-train on Sundays, although it certainly is possible to reverse that order. The best cross-training exercises are swimming, cycling or even walking. What about sports such as tennis or basketball? Activities requiring sideways movements are not always a good choice. Particularly as the mileage builds up toward the end of the program, you raise your risk of injury if you choose to play a sport that requires sudden stopping and starting. One tip: You don't have to cross-train the same each weekend. And you could even combine two or more exercises: walking and easy jogging or swimming and riding an exercise bike in a health club. Cross-training for an hour on Sunday will help you recover after your Saturday long runs.

**Strength Training:** A frequently asked question is: "Should I add strength training to my marathon program?" If you have to ask, you probably should not. I strongly endorse strength training for maximum fitness and long life, but if you never have pumped iron before, now is probably not the time to start. Wait until after you have that medal around your neck. For gym rats, continue to work out, but you might want to cut back on the weights as the long run mileage moves into the double digits. Tuesdays and Thursdays work well for strength training--after you finish your runs on those days.

**Midweek training**: Training on Tuesdays and Thursdays should be done at a comparatively easy pace. As the weekend mileage builds, the weekday mileage also builds. Add up the numbers, and you'll see that you run roughly the same mileage during the week as you do during long runs on the weekends. Midweek workouts on Wednesdays build from 3 to 8 miles, many of them done at race pace. (I call these my Sorta-Long Runs.) There are similar slight advances on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The program is built on the concept that you do more toward the end than at the start. That sounds logical, doesn't it? Believe me--as tens of thousands of marathoners using this schedule have proved--it works. How fast is "comfortably easy?" That might vary from day to day. On Tuesday after a day's rest, you might find yourself running faster than race pace. On Thursday after two days of running, your pace might be significantly slower.  
  
**Race Pace**: What do I mean by "race pace?" It's a frequently asked question, so let me explain. Race pace is the pace you plan to run in the race you're training for. If you're training for a 4:00 marathon, your average pace per mile is 9:09. So you would run that same pace when asked to run race pace (sometimes stated simply as "pace" on the training charts). If you were training for a 5-K or 10-K, "race pace" would be the pace you planned to run in those races. Sometimes in prescribing speedwork, I define paces for different workouts as 5-K pace or 10-K pace, but you won't be asked to run this fast in the Novice 2 program.  
  
**Rest**: Despite my listing it at the end, rest is an important component of this or any training program. Scientists will tell you that it is during the rest period (the 24 to 72 hours between hard bouts of exercise) that the muscles actually regenerate and get stronger. Coaches also will tell you that you can't run hard unless you are well rested. And it is hard running (such as the long runs) that allows you to improve. If you're constantly fatigued, you will fail to reach your potential. This is why I include two days of rest each week for novice runners. If you need to take more rest days--because of a cold or a late night at the office or a sick child--do so. The secret to success in any training program is consistency, so as long as you are consistent with your training during the full 18 weeks of the program, you can afford--and may benefit from--extra rest.