

BEGINNER'S TRAINING PLAN

This training plan is aimed at novice marathon runners covering the distance for the first time, with a few tweaks and challenges if you want to test yourself, or if you feel like pushing on a bit if your training is going really well.

The plan assumes that you will run three times a week and that you've done very little running in the past but are generally in good health and committed to your marathon journey.

The days of the week shown are not fixed and only proposed. If you change them, try to ensure that a run day is followed by a rest day.

WEEK 1

MONDAY

REST.

TUESDAY

Warm up: 10 min easy run at 2-3/10 effort. Main Session: 4 sets of 5 minutes at 6-7/10 effort with 90-120s jog recovery. Cool down: 5-10 min easy run at 2-3/10 effort

WEDNESDAY

REST.

THURSDAY

Run Session: 30-45 min easy run at 2-3/10 effort.

FRIDAY

REST.

SATURDAY

Run/XT session: 30-40 min easy at 2-3/10 effort.

SUNDAY

1:30 - 1:45 hrs at 3-5/10 effort. Include short brisk walk breaks as needed.

WEEK 2

MONDAY

REST.

TUESDAY

Warm up: 10 min easy run at 2-3/10 effort. Main Session: 5 mins, 4 mins, 3 mins, 2 mins, 1 min with 90 secs recovery. Work between 6/10 & 8-9/10 aim to get faster as you go through. Cool down: 5-10 min easy run at 2-3/10 effort.

WEDNESDAY

REST.

THURSDAY

Run Session: 30-45 min easy run at 2-3/10 effort.

FRIDAY

REST.

SATURDAY

Run/XT session: 30-40 min easy at 2-3/10 effort.

SUNDAY

1:45 - 2:00 hrs at 3-5/10 effort. Include short brisk walk breaks as needed.

WEEK 3

MONDAY

REST.

TUESDAY

Warm up: 10 min easy run at 2-3/10 effort. Main Session: 4 sets of 6 minutes at 6-7/10 effort with 90-120s jog recovery. Cool down: 5-10 min easy run at 2-3/10 effort

WEDNESDAY

REST.

THURSDAY

Run Session: 40-50 min easy run at 2-3/10 effort with final 10 minutes at 6-7/10 if you feel good.

FRIDAY

REST.

SATURDAY

Run/XT session: 30- 40-50 min easy at 2- 3/10 effort.

SUNDAY

2:00 – 2:15 hrs at 3-5/10 effort. Include short brisk walk breaks as needed. Keep this week shorter if very tired.

WEEK 5

MONDAY

REST.

TUESDAY

Warm up: 10 min easy run at 2-3/10 effort. Main Session: 5 sets of 6 minutes at 7/10 effort with 90-120s jog recovery. Cool down: 5-10 min easy run at 2-3/10 effort

WEDNESDAY

REST.

THURSDAY

Run Session: 45-60 min easy run at 2-3/10 effort

FRIDAY

REST.

SATURDAY

Run or XT Session: 45 min as: 15 mins easy at 2-3/10, 15 mins steady at 4-5/10, 15 mins at controlled discomfort 6-7/10 effort

SUNDAY

2:20 – 2:45 hrs at 3-5/10 effort. Include short brisk walk breaks as needed.

WEEK 4

MONDAY

REST.

TUESDAY

Warm up: 10 min easy run at 2-3/10 effort. Main Session: 5 minutes at 6-7/10 effort, 2 minute jog, then 5 x 4 minutes at 8/10 with 90s rest Cool down: 5-10 min easy run at 2-3/10 effort

WEDNESDAY

REST.

THURSDAY

Run Session: 50 min easy run at 2-3/10 effort

FRIDAY

REST.

SATURDAY

Run/XT session: 30- 40-50 min easy at 2- 3/10 effort

SUNDAY

2:10 – 2:25 hrs at 3-5/10 effort. Include short brisk walk breaks as needed.

WEEK 6

MONDAY

REST.

TUESDAY

Run Session: 30 min run as: 10 mins easy at 2-3/10, 10 mins steady at 4-5/10, 10 mins at controlled discomfort 6-7/10 effort

WEDNESDAY

REST.

THURSDAY

Run Session: 30-45 min easy run at 2-3/10 effort

FRIDAY

REST.

SATURDAY

Rest or Run/XT session: 30 min easy at 2-3/10 effort

SUNDAY

Run Session: 90-110 minutes at 2-4/10 effort include short brisk walk breaks as needed

WEEK 7

MONDAY

REST.

TUESDAY

Warm up: 10 min easy run at 2-3/10 effort. Main Session: 20 minutes at 7/10 effort. Cool down: 5-10 min easy run at 2-3/10 effort

WEDNESDAY

REST.

THURSDAY

60-75 mins at 3-4/10 effort

FRIDAY

REST.

SATURDAY

Run/XT session: 40-50 min easy at 2-3/10 effort

SUNDAY

2:40hrs - 2:50 hrs at 3-5/10 effort. Include short brisk walk breaks as needed.

WEEK 9

MONDAY

REST.

TUESDAY

Warm up: 10 min easy run at 2-3/10 effort. Main Session: 6-8 x 3 mins running numbers 1, 3, 5, 7 at 6-7/10, numbers 2, 4, 6, 8 at 8-9/10 with 90 secs rest. Cool down: 5-10 min easy run at 2-3/10 effort

WEDNESDAY

REST.

THURSDAY

60-75 minutes with 45 minutes at your goal marathon effort, the remainder easy at 2-3/10 effort.

FRIDAY

REST.

SATURDAY

Run/XT session: 40-50 min easy at 2-3/10 effort

SUNDAY

120 minutes at 3-4/10 if you feel good pick up the pace in the final 30 minutes.

WEEK 8

MONDAY

REST.

TUESDAY

Warm up: 10 min easy run at 2-3/10 effort. Main Session: 3 sets of 8-10 minutes at 7/10 effort with 90-120s jog recovery. Cool down: 5-10 min easy run at 2-3/10 effort

WEDNESDAY

REST.

THURSDAY

60-75 mins starting at 2-3/10 and building to run the final 20 mins @ 7/10 effort

FRIDAY

REST.

SATURDAY

Run/XT session: 40-50 min easy at 2-3/10 effort

SUNDAY

2:45hrs - 3:00hrs at 3-5/10 effort. Include short brisk walk breaks as needed. Practice with race day fuelling.

WEEK 10

MONDAY

REST.

TUESDAY

Warm up: 10 min easy run at 2-3/10 effort. Main Session: 3 sets of 7 minutes at 7/10 effort with 90s jog recovery. Cool down: 5-10 min easy run at 2-3/10 effort

WEDNESDAY

REST.

THURSDAY

Run Session: 45 min run as: 15 mins easy at 2-3/10, 15 mins steady at 4-5/10, 15 mins at controlled discomfort 6-7/10 effort

FRIDAY

REST.

SATURDAY

Rest or Run/XT session: 30 min easy at 2-3/10 effort

SUNDAY

Run Session: 90-110 minutes at 2-4/10 effort include short brisk walk breaks as needed

WEEK 11

MONDAY

REST.

TUESDAY

Run Session: 40 mins at 2-3/10 building to 4-5/10 if you feel good

WEDNESDAY

REST.

THURSDAY

Run Session: 20-30 mins at 2-3/10

FRIDAY

REST.

SATURDAY

Accra Marathon Race Day! Have a great race!

SUNDAY

This plan is aimed at runners who are new to the marathon distance. You might be stepping up from a 10km or even half marathon and you should feel happy running 75-90 minutes continuously at an easy pace, and longer with the aid of short recovery breaks.

The majority of the sessions are runs, but you can replace with cardiovascular cross training using a bike, rowing machine, swimming or elliptical trainer. You might see cross training included in the plan to – these are labelled as ‘XT’. Take ownership of the plan and adapt it to suit your situation, background and needs. If you need to swap days run not to do two runs harder than 6/10 effort on back to back days. It’s fine to add more running but always remember you need to recover well to progress and you are better to do a little less than too much. If you are tired, sore, have a cold or are worried about a niggle stop, rest and if necessary, speak to a physio or medical expert. Only start on this training plan if you feel confident in your health and we always recommend undergoing a medical checkup with a professional before undertaking any running training plan.

The plan is written to time and perceived effort to make it flexible for runners at different levels, running over different terrain and in different weather conditions. As you build confidence you will learn what the right pace is for you on the 0-10 scale of rate of perceived exertion (RPE).

Legend

RPE scale	What it might feel like...
0	You are still in bed...
1	Brisk walking for some, very easy jogging for others. Able to fully chat away with no effort.
2-3	Easy running, able to hold conversation, you might have consciously work to slow down. Gentle, relaxed, feeling like you could run forever.
4-5	Steady running. Able to speak but in shorter sentences. You might hear yourself breathing but could still keep going for between 75 minutes – 2 hours
6-7	Controlled discomfort. A pace you could hold for around 60 mins in a race. You should be able to speak 2-3 words at a time. Cruising at speed.
8-9	Working hard at 3km-10km effort. You have to focus to maintain pace. You’ll be breathing strongly and will feel like you need the recovery between efforts
10	Working very hard. A effort you can sustain for only short periods before you effort feels unsustainable.