



TRAINING GUIDE



Your First Marathon

Everything you need to know to get to the start and finish lines feeling fit and ready to run your best

CONGRATULATIONS! You're on your way to a goal that very few people can accomplish: running 26.2 miles. For many people, finishing a marathon can be a life-transforming event. On the following pages you'll find tips on training, nutrition, motivation, and injury prevention to help you get to the starting line feeling fit, fresh, and ready to run your best. You'll also find a full 16-week marathon-training plan developed just for first-timers, plus a four-week recovery plan to help you bounce back strong from the marathon.

YOU AND 26.2

The six rules of marathon training

1 BUILD SLOWLY

The training plan gradually builds weekly mileage and the distance of the long runs. This slow-but-steady buildup allows you to get stronger and go longer, without getting hurt or burned out. Some days you'll want to add more miles, but it's best to stick to the plan.

2 UPGRADE YOUR SHOES

Worn-out or ill-fitting shoes can lead to injury, so it's best to replace yours now. Go to a specialty running shop, where you can get help finding the shoe that offers the fit and support that your feet need.

3 GO LONG

Each week, you'll do a long run to develop the endurance you'll need to cover the race distance. On these runs, focus on covering the mileage for the day, and forget about pace. Take walk breaks to stay energized throughout.

4 PRACTICE EATING ON THE RUN

You'll need to refuel every 30 to 45 minutes during the race, so on your long runs, experiment with different brands and flavors of sports drinks, gels, and chews to find out which one sits best in your stomach. Be sure to try out the brand and flavor that will be offered at the race.

5 LISTEN TO YOUR BODY

Any soreness at the beginning of the run that fades as you go is probably nothing to worry about. But stop if you have any pain that persists or gets worse during a run, and call the doctor. Take the rest days on the schedule, and if you feel worn out on a run day, move it to another day.

6 EAT WELL

In order to run your best, it's important to have a balanced diet. About half your daily calories should come from carbohydrates, like whole grains, fruits, and vegetables. About a quarter of your calories should come from lean protein, like dairy, lean meats, beans, and legumes. The remainder should come from heart-healthy fats like olive oil and avocados.

TRAINING PLANS INSIDE

First-Timer's Marathon

This plan will help you build more stamina so you can run stronger—for longer

THIS PLAN IS DESIGNED for someone who has been running for at least one year, has run at least one half-marathon and been regularly running about 20 miles per week for the last three months, or can

run at least eight miles. First-timers shouldn't think about time; just focus on getting to the race fit and injury-free, and getting to the finish line enjoying running so much that you want to do another.

| WEEK | M | T | W | T | F | S | S | MILES PER WEEK |
|------|------|------------|------------|------------|------|-------------------------------|------------|----------------|
| 1 | Rest | 4 miles EZ | 4 miles EZ | 4 miles EZ | Rest | 10 miles LSD | 3 miles EZ | 25 |
| 2 | Rest | 4 miles EZ | 5 miles EZ | 4 miles EZ | Rest | 12 miles LSD | 3 miles EZ | 28 |
| 3 | Rest | 3 miles EZ | 5 miles EZ | 3 miles EZ | Rest | 14 miles LSD | 5 miles EZ | 30 |
| 4 | Rest | 3 miles EZ | 4 miles EZ | 4 miles EZ | Rest | 10 miles LSD | 3 miles EZ | 24 |
| 5 | Rest | 3 miles EZ | 6 miles EZ | 4 miles EZ | Rest | 16 miles LSD | 3 miles EZ | 32 |
| 6 | Rest | 5 miles EZ | 4 miles EZ | 6 miles EZ | Rest | 18 miles LSD | 3 miles EZ | 36 |
| 7 | Rest | 5 miles EZ | 7 miles EZ | 5 miles EZ | Rest | 20 miles LSD | 3 miles EZ | 40 |
| 8 | Rest | 5 miles EZ | 8 miles EZ | 3 miles EZ | Rest | 13 miles LSD or half-marathon | 3 miles EZ | 32 |
| 9 | Rest | 7 miles EZ | 4 miles EZ | 7 miles EZ | Rest | 16 miles LSD | 5 miles EZ | 39 |
| 10 | Rest | 5 miles EZ | 3 miles EZ | 9 miles EZ | Rest | 18 miles LSD | 5 miles EZ | 40 |
| 11 | Rest | 4 miles EZ | 7 miles EZ | 5 miles EZ | Rest | 20 miles LSD | 4 miles EZ | 40 |
| 12 | Rest | 7 miles EZ | 7 miles EZ | 6 miles EZ | Rest | 18 miles LSD | 4 miles EZ | 42 |
| 13 | Rest | 7 miles EZ | 3 miles EZ | 7 miles EZ | Rest | 20 miles LSD | 3 miles EZ | 40 |
| 14 | Rest | 8 miles EZ | 6 miles EZ | 8 miles EZ | Rest | 13 miles LSD | 5 miles EZ | 40 |
| 15 | Rest | 5 miles EZ | 7 miles EZ | 5 miles EZ | Rest | 10 miles LSD | 5 miles EZ | 32 |
| 16 | Rest | 6 miles EZ | Rest | 5 miles EZ | Rest | 1-3 miles EZ | RACE DAY | 40.2 |

SCHEDULE KEY

PICK YOUR PACE → First-timers should focus on finishing the race, rather than aiming for a particular finishing goal. That said, it's important to keep your easy days easy throughout training, so that you have the energy and fitness to give your all to the quality workouts, like Yasso 800s and long runs. In order to do that, it's a good idea to learn the best pace for all of the runs on the schedule. If you've run a race within the past six months, plug that time into our training calculator at runnersworld.com/trainingcalculator.

culator. Look at the "training paces" to find your pace for each of the runs on the schedule. If you haven't raced recently, do a one-mile time trial. Here's how: Go to a 400-meter track or any one-mile stretch of road. After a 10-minute warmup, time yourself while running four laps (or one mile) as fast as you can. Note your time, then cool down with 10 minutes of walking and jogging. Plug your time into the training calculator at runnersworld.com/trainingcalculator.

REST → Ideally, you should do no exercise at all. But it's okay to do a nonimpact activity like yoga or swimming. Keep heart rate under 65 percent of max.

EZ → Run at a comfortable, conversational pace. Keep the effort at 70 percent of max heart rate. You can cross-train on a bike or elliptical trainer instead.

LSD → This is a long, slow distance run to build endurance. Run at an easy, conversational pace. Maintain 70 percent of max heart rate. Focus on covering the distance for the day.

FIVE WAYS TO THRIVE ON YOUR LONG RUNS

Done right, they will build up your endurance—along with your confidence

1 REHEARSE YOUR RACE

Hydrate well and eat plenty at lunch and dinner the day before. Plan a safe and scenic route with water stops. Try out the gear and fuel you hope to use in the race.

2 CONNECT WITH OTHERS

Finding a training partner or a group—particularly for long runs—will help the miles roll by much easier than they would going solo.

3 FOCUS ON DISTANCE

Don't even think about pace. Your long run is about getting from point A to point B in however long it takes you.

4 TUNE IN

Studies have shown that music can lower your perceived exertion, or how hard you feel you're working while running.

5 RECOVER RIGHT

Refuel within 30 minutes after you finish (with carbohydrates and a little protein), and consider a 15-minute ice bath to reduce soreness.



Train, Don't Strain

Marathon training should be tough, but it doesn't have to be torture. You'll do just fine by keeping the following in mind

DON'T TRY TO CRAM MILEAGE

→ If you miss a run, or have to cut one short, don't try to make up the mileage by doubling up your next run. A few missed miles aren't going to make or break your race, and trying to cram in mileage could get you hurt. It's far better to arrive at the starting line feeling slightly undertrained, but strong and eager, rather than to feel worn and on the edge of injury.

RECOVER, RECOVER, RECOVER

→ You don't have to train hard seven days a week. You have to train smart three or four days a week. You may feel strong enough to run on your rest days, or add miles to your easy days, but it's best to stick with the miles. Your body needs time to recover so that it can rebuild tissues and get stronger.

GET THOSE LONG RUNS DONE

→ The LSDs you see on the training plan are the foundation of your marathon preparation. They help you get accustomed to being on your feet for three, four, or five hours at a time so you don't get injured on race day. Running with a training partner at least once a week helps a lot, as it makes the journey eas-

ier, more exciting, and more fun. But even with support from regular training partners, you still need to be your own toughest boss. That means posting your training schedule where you'll see it often, and generally treating workouts as unbreakable appointments.

RICE ON A REGULAR BASIS

→ When you've got muscle aches or joint pains, there's nothing better than rest, ice, compression, and elevation for immediate treatment. These measures can relieve pain, reduce swelling, and protect damaged tissues, all of which speed healing. The only problem with RICE is that too many runners focus on the "I" while ignoring the "RCE." Ice reduces inflammation, but to ice-and-run, ice-and-run, without giving the tissues enough time to heal, is a little like dieting every day until 6 p.m. and then pigging out.

STAY FLEXIBLE

→ There may be days when you sleep through your morning run, or there will be days when it's 90 degrees for your long run. Don't hesitate to shuffle your runs around. Just don't do hard workouts—like long runs—back to back.



EAT LIKE AN ATHLETE

Five rules for everyday eating when you're in training

1 DON'T RUN ON EMPTY Have a 200-calorie snack at least an hour before your run so you stay energized while you're on the road. Head out on an empty stomach, you won't be able to go as far or as fast.

2 DEVELOP A DRINKING HABIT

Stay hydrated. Each day, aim to drink half your weight in ounces. That is, if you weigh 120 pounds, drink 60 ounces a day. If you weigh 180 pounds, drink 90 ounces a day.

3 MAINTAIN A HEALTHY BALANCE

Carbs are the body's preferred source of fuel, but the protein and fat are vital as well. Protein helps rebuild muscle tissue, and unsaturated fats help keep the heart healthy and prevent injuries. Be sure to get all three nutrients at each meal.

4 KEEP A FOOD DIARY Do this for three consecutive days to get a sense of your calorie and fat intake, overall food variety, and whether you are getting all the nutrients you need. Make any adjustments accordingly.

5 CUT BACK ON THE JUNK There's nothing worse than starting a long run when you're nursing a hangover or feeling bloated from that seventh chocolate-chip cookie. Follow the 80-20 rule: 80 percent of the time, be careful to eat healthfully; 20 percent of the time, give yourself some leeway to indulge a little.

Energy to go the distance

What to eat and drink before, during, and after long runs

| | WHAT | WHEN | SUGGESTIONS |
|-----------------------|--|--|---|
| Before the run | EAT 350 to 550 calories of high-carbohydrate, low-fiber, low-fat foods | 90 to 120 minutes before the run (the bigger the meal, the more time needed to digest) | Energy bars, sports drinks, low-fiber cereal and skim milk, fruit and yogurt, fig cookies, pretzels, bagel with jam |
| | DRINK at least 8 to 16 ounces | 1 hour before the run | Water, sports drink |
| During the run | EAT Have 45 to 60 grams of carbohydrates each hour | Take in some fuel every 20 minutes | Energy gels, bars, sports drinks, or chews |
| | DRINK 3 to 6 ounces of water or sports drink | Every 15 to 20 minutes. Aim for 16 to 20 ounces per hour (depending on your sweat rate) | Sports drinks |
| After the run | Aim for a 4:1 ratio of carbs to protein | Within 15 to 30 minutes of finishing | |
| | EAT a healthy, carbohydrate- and protein-rich, low-fat meal when you have fully recovered | Within 2 hours of finishing your healthy snack. If you're eating the meal right away, you can skip the above snack | Low-fat chocolate milk, energy bar, ham sandwich, pretzels and peanut butter, fruit smoothie with a little protein |
| | DRINK 8 to 24 ounces; more if it's hot | Within 60 to 90 minutes of finishing | Water or sports drink |

RUNNER'S DIGEST

Don't let GI distress sideline your training or your race

WATCH THE FIBER AND FAT

→ Fiber is good for your heart, and it helps keep your digestive system running smoothly, but on the run, it can give you trouble. Keep your pre-run meals low in fiber and fats, and high in carbs.

HOLD THE SWEETENERS

→ Check the label of your energy bar for anything ending in "ol"—sorbitol, mannitol, and so on, and avoid gels with fructose as the first sugar on the ingredient list. These can cause stomach problems. Also, take gels with water, not sports drinks, so you don't overload your GI tract.



WATCH THE TIMING

→ Allow three hours between big meals and your run, and eat dinner at least two hours before bed. Try to empty your system before a run. Coffee and tea can help move things along, but limit your intake to one cup. Caffeine can trigger GI complaints when taken in large amounts.



The Golden Rules of Injury Prevention

Follow these time-tested principles to get to the starting line feeling healthy and strong

Know your limits

ACTION PLAN → Be the Tortoise, not the Hare. Increase your weekly and monthly running totals gradually, as dictated by the plan. But if that's too aggressive for you, you may need to add more slowly. Be sure to alternate between hard and easy days, and never do any hard workouts—like speedwork or long runs—back to back.

Shorten your stride

ACTION PLAN → If you've had frequent running injuries, you might want to experiment running with your normal stride, just slightly shorter—about 10 percent. Overstriding has been linked to injuries. This will help reduce the length of your stride so you have more frequent turnover. The number of footstrikes trumps having a longer stride because it reduces your impact load.

Start with a short distance, like a quarter mile, when making this change.

Use strength training to balance your body

ACTION PLAN → You don't need to build bulging muscles. But it is important to develop core, hip, and lower-leg strength so you can run as fluidly and as symmetrically as possible. This can help prevent many common running injuries.

Cross-train for recovery

ACTION PLAN → Use cross-training activities to supplement your running, improve your muscle balance, and stay healthy. Swimming, cycling, elliptical training, and rowing will burn calories and improve your aerobic fitness while giving your body a break from the pounding of running.

THE USUAL SUSPECTS

The five most common running injuries—and how to rehab them

| INJURY | WHERE IT HURTS | ACTION PLAN |
|--------------------------------|---|---|
| Achilles tendinitis | Severe pain and swelling above your heel, or dull pain around your heel that lingers. | If your Achilles tendon hurts during a run, stop and rest right away. Ice regularly. Strengthen your calves, and cross-train with pool running or the elliptical machine. |
| Iliotibial-band (ITB) syndrome | Pain on outside of the knee that radiates up and down the leg when walking down stairs, or pain on outside of knee that starts during a run, then disappears. | Take a rest day or two and back off your mileage for a week to avoid a full-blown flare-up. If you ignore the first symptoms and keep up your usual mileage and intensity, it may get worse. Strengthen the hip abductors with lateral side steps, side leg lifts, and one-legged squats. Swim, pool-run, or use an elliptical trainer. |
| Plantar fasciitis | A dull ache or bruise along your arch or on the bottom of your heel, which is usually worse first thing in the morning. | Stop running for up to a week or until there's no pain. Running through it can delay healing. Cross-train with pool running or swimming; cycle or use an elliptical if you can without pain. Roll your foot on a frozen water bottle twice a day for 15 minutes. When returning to the road, run on softer surfaces, such as hard-packed trails. |
| Runner's knee | Pain under the kneecap, particularly during or after long runs, after long periods of sitting, or climbing stairs. | Run every other day and only as far as you can without pain. Avoid running downhill, which can worsen pain. Cycling may speed your recovery by strengthening the quads. See a doctor if the pain doesn't go away as the day progresses. |
| Shinsplints | Pain on the side or front of the shin that lessens as you warm up. | When the first twinges of pain strike, back off your running to a comfortable level for a few days to a week, then slowly up your mileage by no more than 10 percent each week. Bike, pool run, and swim instead. Icing your shins twice a day for 15 minutes each time; gentle calf, quadriceps, and hamstring stretching; and self-massage of the sore area can also help. If the pain persists for two weeks, see a doctor about a possible stress fracture. |

How to Race Your Best

Keep the following strategies in mind before, during, and after your first 26.2-miler

BEFORE THE RACE

STAY WITH YOUR ROUTINE

→ The days before the race aren't the time to try new shoes, new food or drinks, new gear, or anything else you haven't used on several training runs. Don't do anything new!

BROWSE, DON'T SHOP

→ At the race expo, pick up your race number and have a quick look around— expos can be very motivating—but give yourself a time limit and stick to it. It's best to stay off your feet and relax before the race.

GRAZE THE DAY BEFORE

→ Devouring a gigantic bowl of pasta the night before the race could upset your stomach. Try eating carbs in small increments throughout the day before the race. And drink plenty of fluids.

RACE DAY

DRESS FOR SUCCESS

→ Dress for 20 degrees warmer than it is outside. To stay warm at the start, bring a long-sleeve top that you can throw off after the first few miles.

SET AT LEAST TWO GOALS

→ Set one goal for your perfect race and a backup goal in case it's hot, windy, or it's just not your day.



FIX IT SOONER RATHER THAN LATER

→ If your shoelace is getting untied or you start to chafe early in the race, take care of it before it becomes really painful later in the race.

LINE UP EARLY

→ You don't want to rush to the starting line, so don't wait for "last call" to get there. And find your proper starting section, based on your intended pace.

START SLOW, AND STAY EVEN

→ Run the first two to three miles a good 10 to 15

seconds slower than goal pace, with the idea to finish strong. Don't try to "bank" time by going out faster than your goal pace, or you may burn out early. Try to keep an even pace throughout the race, and save energy for the last few miles.

BREAK IT UP

→ Mentally segment your race into smaller "pieces," which can make it seem a lot more doable.

AFTER THE RACE

KEEP MOVING

→ Get your medal and keep walking for five to 10 minutes to fend off stiffness and gradually bring your heart rate back to its resting state.

REFUEL RIGHT AWAY

→ Within 30 minutes of finishing, refuel with carbohydrates and protein. If you can't eat postrace because of a queasy stomach, pack a recovery drink in your gear bag.

GET WARM

→ Change out of the clothes you ran in, and get into dry clothes as soon as possible. After you cross the finish, your core temperature drops fast.

THE NEXT DAY, GET MOVING

→ As sore as you might feel the day after, do some sort of nonimpact activity, such as swimming, walking, or working out on the elliptical. You'll bounce back sooner.

BEST RACES FOR FIRST-TIMERS

FARGO MARATHON

For perks of a big-city race without the big fee

FLYING PIG MARATHON

For the fun theme and the 100,000 spectators

ING NYC MARATHON

To see all five NYC boroughs

MARINE CORPS MARATHON

To see the nation's capital

NAPA VALLEY MARATHON

To run through the scenic California vineyards

OGDEN MARATHON

For gorgeous views without the epic climbs

PORTLAND MARATHON

For ideal race-day temps and the laid-back Pacific Northwest vibe

ROCK 'N' ROLL ARIZONA MARATHON

For a 26.2-mile party (27 live music stages!)

STEAMTOWN MARATHON

For a low-key vibe, with lots of downhills and hospitality

THE WALT DISNEY WORLD MARATHON

To enjoy a family vacation after the race



Recovery Plan

Here's how to recuperate from your first marathon, and bounce back strong

| WEEK | M | T | W | T | F | S | S |
|------|------------------------------|---------------------|--|-----------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1 | Cross-train: 20 minutes easy | Rest | Rest or cross-train 20-30 minutes easy | Run/Walk 20-30 minutes easy | Rest | Cross-train or run 30 minutes | Cross-train or run 30-40 minutes |
| 2 | Rest | Run 30 minutes easy | Run 30 minutes | Rest | Cross-train 30 minutes | Run 30-45 minutes | Cross-train or run 30 minutes easy |
| 3 | Rest | Run 30-45 minutes | Run 30-45 minutes | Rest | Marathon Pace Run | Run or cross-train 20-30 minutes | Long run 45-60 minutes |
| 4 | Rest | Run 30-45 minutes | Run 30-45 minutes | Run 30-45 minutes | Rest or cross-train | Run 60-90 minutes | Run 30 minutes |



BEAT THOSE POSTMARATHON BLUES

Finishing your first marathon can lead to a big letdown. Here are some strategies that will help

EXPECT IT

When you go from four months of training to being without a plan or big goal, there will be a void, and you may feel a sense of loss. Simply expecting this and knowing that it's normal is a solid first step in getting through it.

MAKE SOME DIFFERENT PLANS

Avoid filling the space with more running events. This can lead to overtraining, injury, and burnout. Instead, plan a vacation or another activity the week or two after your race to give yourself something to look forward to.

MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR DOWNTIME

Fill in some of your new free time with activities you haven't been able to enjoy while training for the marathon. Get out on your bike, rent a kayak, or play some tennis.

SET NEW GOALS If you struggled to put in training for your marathon, you might want to target a shorter distance. If prerace jitters threw you off, race a few 5-Ks to calm those butterflies.

With contributions by Adam Bean, Jen Van Allen, Bob Cooper, Sarah Lorge Butler, Kristin Bjornsen, Scott Douglas, Kelly Bastone, Kelly Pate Dwyer, Michelle Hamilton, Christie Aschwanden