



20-Week Half Marathon Training Schedule

[AdSense-B]



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For some runners, the prospect of preparing to run a half marathon in three months is a bit daunting, so we've prepared this five-month training plan to offer a more gradual buildup to race day – both physical and mental – than our 12-week beginner and 16-week intermediate training plans offer.

This plan starts slowly with four days of running each week over the first six weeks, later transitioning to five days of running each week as the calendar proceeds further into the training:

Week	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
1	off	3 miles	off	3 miles	off	4 miles	3 miles
2	off	3 miles	off	3 miles	off	4 miles	3 miles
3	off	4 miles	off	4 miles	off	5 miles	3 miles
4	off	4 miles	off	4 miles	off	5 miles	3 miles
5	off	5 miles	off	5 miles	off	6 miles	2-3 miles
6	off	5 miles	off	5 miles	off	6 miles	2-3 miles
7	off	3 miles	5 miles	3 miles	off	7 miles	2-3 miles
8	off	3 miles	5 miles	3 miles	off	7 miles	2-3 miles
9	off	4 miles	5 miles	4 miles	off	8 miles	2-3 miles
10	off	4 miles	5 miles	4 miles	off	8 miles	2-3 miles
11	off	4 miles	6 miles	4 miles	off	9 miles	2 miles
12	off	4 miles	6 miles	4 miles	off	9 miles	2 miles
13	off	5 miles	6 miles	5 miles	off	10 miles	2 miles
14	off	5 miles	6 miles	5 miles	off	10 miles	2 miles
15	off	5 miles	6 miles	4 miles	off	11 miles	2 miles
16	off	5 miles	6 miles	4 miles	off	11 miles	2 miles
17	off	4 miles	6 miles	4 miles	off	12 miles	off
18	off	4 miles					



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For Beginning & Experienced Runners

Because this training plan spreads out the weekly and long runs over five months, it can be used by runners who are attempting their first half marathon as well as by someone who's run several halves already and wants a structured approach to their training.

The plan is designed to gradually ease the runner into the process with light, easy runs in the opening weeks, followed by longer, more demanding runs in the middle and later weeks, to help build your fitness level.

Slow Mileage Escalation

The 20-week plan is designed to escalate the mileage you'll run each week more slowly than the other two plans, by bumping up the mileage one week and repeating it the next, and then bumping it up again the following week, and so on.

This will help you develop



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Remember also to get plenty of rest on the days you don't run, or consider cross-training such as strength exercises, to give your legs ample time to rest and replenish, especially after your long runs.

Time Your Long Runs With Your Race

The schedule above places the weekly long run on Saturday, followed by a usually much shorter quick run (or walk) on Sunday. Feel free to swap these if the race you've signed up for falls on a Sunday; I've always found that it's best to do your long runs on the day you'll actually run your race, to allow your body to get used to the rhythm of the short run/long run each week.

Consult the Experts

Remember that there are a number of ways to structure a half marathon training plan. Running coaches [Hal Higdon](#) and [Jeff Galloway](#), who is well-known for his Run-Walk-Run approach to training, offer a number of training plans on their own websites that are excellent guides to getting ready for any race.



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74 comments... [add one](#)

Justine June 23, 2019, 8:50 am

Hi! I've used your plans quite a few times for half marathons and really enjoyed them. Any suggestions on training plans for my first full marathon? Do you have a full marathon plan?

[Reply](#)

Kaitlyn May 21, 2019, 2:26 pm

Hello! Love all these messages.

I'm planning to run my second half marathon. I've run 10ks and 5ks. I've done half marathon training plans for 16 weeks before but now I have 28 weeks before this upcoming HM. Do you have any recommendations for stretching out these plans accordingly?

[Reply](#)



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Reply

Nancy Brome November 2, 2018, 11:01 am

I'm looking for a customizable half marathon training plan where you put in the date of the race, how many days you want to run a week, and you anticipated finish time. MyAsics used to be an excellent tool but it is gone now. Any ideas where I can find an interactive, customizable plan that you can print out?

Reply

Graeme May 6, 2019, 6:06 am

Sorry I cant help but did you find one? that sounds like a great app. I'd really appreciate a link if anyone knows.

happy running! 😊

Reply

JOHN HO October 14, 2018, 4:07 pm

I RAN A MARATHON IN 56 MINUTES

Reply

Terrell Johnson October 15, 2018, 11:57 am

That seems... unlikely.

Reply

Jena September 10, 2019, 10:54 am

Especially since the world record is 58 minutes...

Reply



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Reply

Steve May 13, 2022, 10:10 am

Actually, the record was broken several years ago with a sub 2 hour time

Amy July 22, 2018, 11:15 pm

Hi I ran my first half marathon when I was fifteen. After I married, I quit running up until a couple years ago. I run short distances like 2-3 miles a day (5 times a week). In 2016 I ran a 12 Kilometer. I'm thinking about running a half marathon in April. My question is should I start the 20 weeks now or wait till December? If now, how should I continue my run schedule after December when I still have 4 months till the half marathon?

Reply

Martha Thornton July 18, 2018, 12:45 pm

Do you recommended any certain nutritional/dietary/ guidelines to go along with 20 week training plan?

Reply

Drew June 20, 2018, 7:26 pm

I ran my first Half Marathon two months ago in May and my goal was under 2 hours. I did a similar schedule, but made a lot of rookie mistakes. All my training was at race pace which gave me aches and pains that didn't go away. On race day, I wore a different shoe than the one I trained with, I did not eat a good dinner the night before and did not stay hydrated the morning of. During the race my feet started to hurt and I ended up cramping up half way through and struggled to finish. My time was 2:18 and I was very disappointed.. I am going to give it another shot in October \



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Reply

Emma June 15, 2018, 10:44 pm

For referencing purposes – who is the author of this training guide and when was it published?

Thanks

Reply

Terrell Johnson June 16, 2018, 8:14 am

Hi Emma! I'm the author of it, and it's based on a training program I put together for 12 weeks a few years back. It hasn't been modified since then, however.

Reply

Stacy February 7, 2018, 3:16 pm

The thing that worries me about very basic plans like this is that people will think they should run all of the miles at "race pace". that's a GOOD way to end up getting injured. Vary your paces, do some intervals, hill sprints, etc., and most of all make sure about 80% of you weekly miles are SLOWER than race pace.

Reply

Terrell Johnson June 16, 2018, 8:14 am

That's a great comment, and yes you're right – it's important not to try to run all your weekly runs at that pace. Great idea for a future training plan, or updates to this one.

Reply

Jennifer Rockey Januar



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a half marathon in November, I wanted to see if you could give me some pointers, cause I want to be able to finish the race.

Reply

Lily January 15, 2018, 4:56 pm

First of all, make sure you are in shape. Don't just assume you can run 13.1 miles because you ran a 5k. You need to make sure your body is prepared (that is the most important). You can look up training guides but you should be able to run 12 miles. Next, obviously make sure you eat breakfast and carb load the day before for energy. Jumping into a half-marathon could be very dangerous because you could get injured or produce a stress fracture so make sure you are prepared.

Reply

Julie April 6, 2018, 1:12 am

I did my first half marathon in 2013. I stuck to this 20 week training schedule. We only difference was I made a change in my rest days to fit my schedule. I'm getting ready to do my next one at the end of this year. Which will be my third half marathon.

Reply

McClane November 4, 2017, 11:07 am

I'm currently in high school right now and my first half marathon is in five months. I run a lot but its mainly sprinting for sports. I dont have enough time to run after school by myself, i can only run during the weekends.

Reply

christian November 4, 2019, 5:02 am

that's fine. For my first or



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terrain and routes. You don't have to go crazy during the week, but I'm sure you can fit two half hour runs in during the week.

[Reply](#)

Melinda October 15, 2017, 4:12 pm

Ran my first half in 2016 at 52 and signed up for second in Feb. 2018. Due to several things, I am behind in my training, so have to condense this schedule (which I found ideal for my first half). Since I'm 2 years older, plan to focus more on nutrition during training. Not that I'm an unhealthy eater, but want to optimize my performance and keep body in best shape. Any great nutrition tips appreciated. And, if you use any supplements during training.

[Reply](#)

Tripp September 24, 2017, 10:35 pm

What about cycling on a couple of the off days? Is that too much? Wife's training for a 1/2 in February, and has asked me to train with her. I'm doing an adventure race in late March, and really need to be incorporating in the bike somehow. Last year we did about 60 miles (15 on foot, 12 kayak, and 33 on the bike). I wasn't ready for the bike... We should have plenty of time, but I don't want to overdo it and get hurt.

31 year old. Only time I run is to prep for our annual adventure race, so a novice at best.

[Reply](#)

Michael July 11, 2017, 7:43 am

Hello

I've just recovered from 4 1/2 years of chronic fatigue syndrome. Before being diagnosed I ran marathons



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marathon next year (50 weeks) away & I need some help planning. Before being struck down I used to write programs for runners. Being a teacher & coach for more than twenty years I've researched a lot about training & nutrition, but I don't trust myself because I've always had the attitude of overcoming all before me! I've tried many times in the last 4 1/2 years to begin training again only to be smash by cfs. I know that I'm past it now but want help to plan ahead. I think that if I see myself as a beginner runner that might be the best, even though my ego says different. That's where I need to let go & allow myself to trust someone else. Any help would be much appreciated.

Thanks

Fordy

Reply

Sarah Watts June 16, 2021, 10:36 am

Well done Fordy. I hope you have been able to get back to where you want to be.

Regards,

Sarah

Reply

Steve May 13, 2022, 10:46 am

Elementary speaking, if you feel exhausted, you need to take a break. Growth and healing is taking place during rest and more important to the body than running. If you put stress on rejuvenation, you will prolong the healing process. Being a type A person like yourself, you just need to train yourself to stop. Just speaking from experience...

Reply

lynn June 15, 2017, 3:18 pm



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week?
Thanks

[Reply](#)

Karen May 15, 2017, 2:54 pm

My half falls on the Sunday at the end of week 20. How would you recommend switching it up so that I'm at my best preparedness on SUNDAY rather than Saturday of the 20th week? Thanks in advance

[Reply](#)

Melinda October 15, 2017, 4:09 pm

I ran my first and only so far half on a Sunday. I usually did a short run on Sat., and long run on Sunday. Given I was 51 at the time and very busy, I usually just ran twice during the week at the end rather than 3 times. And i finished under my goal time!

[Reply](#)

Barb Hershey June 11, 2016, 7:27 pm

Ran 10K's and more when I was thirty. Just finished my first half in April at the ripe young age of 64. (I did walk many miles, over the years!) I turn 65 this fall and plan to do the Princess Half at WDW in February 2017.

[Reply](#)

Dennis Wilson May 24, 2016, 12:27 pm

56 & male, running my first half marathon – calendar is a great help – but for the record, is the last Saturday of the last week (20th week) supposed to fall on race day ? Thanks



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Cesar January 1, 2016, 10:35 am

I ran my first half this past October, I want to run 4 half marathons in 2016, how do you trying in between races if they are just 3 to 6 weeks apart? The first one is in April, the second in May, the third in September and the fourth in October. I may run one in August, is that too much?

Reply

Harold February 24, 2016, 8:12 pm

It sounds like a lot Cesar. If you just ran your first a few months ago, five this year is quite a few. In between races you should give yourself at least a week of super low recovery, then ramp back up. I hope you don't have any time goals for these halves your running. If you do, then it's most likely too much. That said, just follow your body.

Reply

Jm March 11, 2016, 11:21 pm

Sounds ok to me. I'm 51 and ran my first half marathon last Saturday and ran my second the following Sunday with zero issues, but have been running for two years and had a decent base built up. Keep a goal of just running comfortably and finishing and remember to enjoy the journey – cheers

Reply

Kostis October 8, 2015, 3:34 pm

I run a Marathon 4 years ago, but I had an injury 2 years ago and a knee surgery. I am back to running 5Ks but I am kinda slow (6min/km). I've signed up for a Half Marathon which is in exactly 20 weeks from now. I'll give this schedul a try and see if I can do this. 2 targets... finish it in one piece and hopefully finish it in about 2hours



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Bernie W October 4, 2015, 4:51 pm

Just finished my first 1/2 marathon race. 1:48:13 Mo Cow Bell. Great 20 week program!!!! Just started running in Jan 2015 and the shorter training guides did concern me, my original goal was to complete the run around 2 hrs. As I made my way from one week to another on the 20 week guide I realized I could do this! I did on week 17 and 18 push my run out to 13.1 to gauge my time and ran around 1:52 on both runs. The only issues I had were a few black toes as I started pushing distance and that issue was due to one pair of running shoes. Shoes Shoes Shoes!!!!!! I am 55 and last year at this time I topped 300lbs and did not start running until I was in the low 200's. Now for the full marathon in the spring!

Reply

Brian McLoughlin November 14, 2015, 5:02 am

Bernie, Congratulations. I am 53 and just started running this year as well. I am going to sign up for a 1/2 marathon that is 19 weeks from now and your post has given me the encouragement.

Reply

melinda February 11, 2016, 10:45 am

I'm also 53 and running my first 1/2 on Sunday. A little worried since I live in a flat city and running in the TX Hill Country, but hope the adrenaline keeps me going!

Reply

Melinda September 20, 2015, 10:40 pm

Thanks for the plan. Just finished week one and not too bad, even in the heat! I'm early 50s and running my first half-marathon in Feb. I work out regularly – cycle class, cardio machines, weights – but don't run a lot. Any good stretching exercises would be helpful, also I saw the mention of McCombs and Paleo diet, but would like to know sc



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Salvador E. June 11, 2015, 11:12 am

I am relatively new to running and this schedule is helping me CRUSH it! I am running my first ever half in October and another in December. Let it be known that in March of this year is when I decided to start running after participating in a 5K walk and thought to myself, "I could probably run one of these things" (even at 330lbs.) I am down 40 pounds in June and the ,mile times are getting quicker everyday. Thanks for sharing this schedule.

[Reply](#)

Mike May 26, 2015, 7:53 pm

My wife and I ran our first half marathon in Oct. of 2013 using this plan. It worked very well for us. My wife was 50 and I was 56 at the time. We are running our second half marathon this Oct. and hope to better our times.

[Reply](#)

Paul May 8, 2015, 1:22 pm

Turned 60 last year and set my goal to complete the Warrior Dash, triathlon and complete my first 10K. Did it and now goal for this year again the Warrior Dash, triathlon and complete my first half marathon in September. I needed a schedule for the half so hopefully I can stay healthy enough to complete the half.

[Reply](#)

David May 7, 2015, 12:28 pm

I used this schedule to run my first half marathon back in March. I did most of my runs on a treadmill...(Chicago winters are rough to run outside) and didn't actually run outside until the day



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Nathalie A. May 5, 2015, 5:23 pm

Thanks! This is just what I need to get myself motivated for an upcoming October 10k & November half marathon.

I am an extreme beginner, having just shed 142 lbs through diet, and exercise. (I'm now 146 lbs!) Now I want to run. I ran when I was younger, and am so extremely anxious about starting a running program. I'm healthy enough, know my knees and ankles can take it, but I feel afraid for some unknown reason. I joined a running group today. I'm setting goals. This is it.

Thank you for the beginner schedule. I'll report back with my success. In the meantime, I've got a few 5k's along the way.

Reply

Hailey April 29, 2015, 2:48 pm

Hi there! I was wondering if there is an important diet component to consider when beginning to train for a half marathon. I eat pretty healthfully now but will running this often increase my appetite? Should I eat more to accomodate the increased excercise?

Additionally, do you have any recommendations for running in warm weather? I live in New York and the summer months are approaching! Thanks!

Reply

Bryce April 28, 2015, 6:02 pm

I've run many 5K's and a few 10K's but after attending the Oklahoma City Memorial Marathon and Half Marathon and watching my daughter do great in the Marathon I'm taking the plunde to do mv first Half Marathon in October. This plan



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Matthew April 21, 2015, 5:18 pm

I have my first half marathon in October. I was wondering if I could do the first three weeks not straight. So what this means is, if it says 3/4 miles. Could I do them, a mile in the morning, a mile in the evening and a mile in the night. Instead of doing all 3/4 miles straight; or does that go against the training.

Reply

Jacqueline April 23, 2015, 1:07 pm

You want to train your body to endure running long distances, so it is best to run them altogether!

Reply

Tom April 21, 2015, 10:14 am

Six years ago, I severely pulled my hamstring (my leg was purple from my rear end to ankle), now I have signed up for a half marathon on my 60th. birthday. The Des Moines marathon, on October 18th. Presently I run 3 miles, with no pain, I'll take your prayers and follow your program.

Reply

John April 7, 2015, 2:46 pm

The half I will do is on a Sunday, should I do anything different that last week?

Reply

Beth March 27, 2015, 8:37 pm

I am 45 and ran my first marathon at 31 and about six or seven after that. Ran my first and only marathon s



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using this 20 week training schedule (which resembles the one I used for my first half years ago).

Good luck everyone!

[Reply](#)

Matt April 14, 2015, 2:19 pm

This sounds almost exactly like me. Ran my first half at 35. Have ran 5 so far. Ran my first full marathon a month ago in Asheville, NC at age 38. I don't want to burn out. I likely will never desire to run another marathon, but I don't want to quit altogether. I've got to keep going. I've got several 'shorter' runs scheduled for this year. The Statue to Statue 15k, the Peavine Falls 8.2 miler, the Vulcan 10k. I need another half to do, but the pickings are slim. I figure if you're running at least a mile, you're doing more than most.

Continued good luck to everyone.

[Reply](#)

shannon March 18, 2015, 7:46 pm

Just seen this and really like the layout of the scheduled runs. I haven't ran much in the last two years, So this is something I need. I just signed up for the Tely 10 in NL and once that is done, I am planning on a half marathon in Toronto. This plan gives me confidence that I can actually meet my goals.

Thank you

[Reply](#)

Tim March 3, 2015, 9:57 am

I'm a 58 year old pack a day smoker planning to run a half in six months. Smoking cessation has already begun, but I need a training schedule to prepare for a half marathon in September.



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Brooke February 17, 2015, 7:45 pm

I've seen a couple other training schedules that include cross-training on certain days instead of running. I have 28 weeks until my first half-marathon and am a beginning runner. Is the cross training a good thing to incorporate?

[Reply](#)

Whitney January 28, 2015, 10:26 pm

I used to run 6 miles a day. Since then I have unfortunately stopped and put on quite a bit of weight. My doctor has given me to ok to start training again..... But I can barely run a mile without stopping and I burn out really quick now. Any suggestions on how to get back into this easily? I want to sign up for my first 1/2 marathon. I have almost 4 months to train. Is this pheasible for someone like me?? Any tips??

[Reply](#)

Daali February 1, 2015, 8:36 am

I've been you at 48. Find a good couch to 5k as a start. Your heart and lungs will be back into the swing of things before you know it; your legs, ankles, ligaments, and tendons will need the time to get strong again. I ran my first half yesterday, 2:16, I was happy to finish!

[Reply](#)

Janet January 8, 2015, 11:58 am

I will definitely going to follow this routine. My very first half marathon will be in July. My main issue is when i run my back get stiff after a long run. But will try this out and go hard on working out more lifting and stretching in between. Anyone else doing the San Francisco Marathon in July 26?



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christy January 1, 2015, 8:23 pm

Ok, so I ran my first mile EVER 2 weeks ago. Today, I signed up for my first half-marathon in October. I will report back 😊

Reply

paige January 5, 2015, 8:21 pm

Same here! Hopefully it will work out 😊

Reply

Kathieg December 28, 2014, 1:37 pm

I have five months to train for my second half marathon. My first was in Hawaii nearly 21 years ago and I am returning to the island for the Hibiscus Half Marathon in May. I say if you are gonna run a marathon why not do it in paradise! Good luck to all!

Reply

cpolson December 3, 2014, 4:18 pm

Are there any speed sessions with this plan? Or do I convert Wed/Thurs training?

Reply

Fabi November 16, 2014, 1:42 pm

I have my first 1/2 marathon coming up on 12/14/14. I've been using your 12week training plan. I'm up at 10 miles on my long run day. The only problem and mistake I have and keep doing is that I start off fast and then burn out by the end of my run. How can I bring my pace down to a moderate pace without burning out not slowing t



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James November 11, 2014, 5:39 pm

I used this schedule for my first half (Trenton Half, 11/8/14). I had a few extra weeks when I first started training so I repeated weeks 12, 14, and 16. Other than that I stuck to the schedule with tenacity. Result: 1:43:19. (Male, 35 yrs., beginner)

[Reply](#)

Lucretia November 11, 2014, 10:09 am

Hi,

I will be running my first half-marathon in April- do you recommend any foods that I should focus on eating to better prepare my body for the distance run?

[Reply](#)

Emberlynn December 16, 2014, 12:13 am

I would recommend sticking to something like the McCombs plan, or even Paleo (which is very similar to McCombs, but has a few more foods in it). I notice that when I am sticking strictly to the McCombs nutrition plan, I have a ton of energy and don't feel the need for coffee/caffeine. Plus you get lean but also build muscle since you're getting a lot of natural protein, and there is no need to worry about portion sizes, you just eat when you're hungry. (I obtained this knowledge from my husband, who has been a personal trainer and racecar driver, and has also recovered from candidiasis and other health issues through proper nutrition.)

[Reply](#)

Br. Peter November 9, 2014, 4:34 pm

Used the Jeff Galloway methods before. Haven't done a half in about two years. This looks like a great wa



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Naomi November 9, 2014, 4:13 am

This is great, I have 20 weeks till my first half marathon and will be trying out this schedule. I'm 23 and a regular gym goer but do not have much experience of running and didn't know where to start, so thank you very much for sharing this. Wish me luck! I shall report back in 20 weeks....

[Reply](#)

Matt October 17, 2014, 12:56 am

I followed this plan all the way through. Apart from 2 weeks off in the summer to go away.

I couldn't run half a mile when I started. Now I do a half marathon on Sunday, hoping to do it around the 2 hour mark.

Thanks for putting this up.

[Reply](#)

Rick October 26, 2014, 11:59 pm

Great schedule! How did you do, Matt? Perhaps some stats and time?

[Reply](#)

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Email *



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