

SUB 4-HR MARATHON TRAINING PLAN

MARATHON HANDBOOK

- **Training Runs** : aim to do these at your target race pace of 8mins 46 sec per mile, which is the sub 4-hr marathon pace. If you can't hit this pace from week 1, aim for a 4 out of 10 in terms of physical exertion
- **Intervals** : An 800m interval means running hard - uncomfortably hard - for 800m, or 2 x laps of a running track. Aim for 8-9 out of 10 for effort. Recover between intervals with 400m of walking or very gentle jogging. Do a 1.5 mile warm-up and cool-down before and after every interval workout.
- **Long Runs** : Do these at a slow, comfortable pace - aim for 'conversational'. Try not to stop or break up this run. Aim for 2-3 out of 10 for effort.
- **Strength Training** : Aim for 45 mins of strength training, at least once per week. Compound exercises that involve heavy lifting is the most effective, so think Squats, Deadlifts, Lunges, etc.
- **More Guidance?** Visit MarathonHandbook.com, where we've got oodles of free marathon training advice, and you can grab a free copy of this plan (with extended guidance notes) in PDF and Google Sheets/ MS Excel formats.

MARATHON HANDBOOK

Training for a marathon is an exciting and challenging journey that requires commitment, dedication, and a well-structured plan. A one-year marathon training plan is ideal for beginners and even seasoned runners looking to improve their performance. This comprehensive guide will cover everything you need to know, from the fundamentals of marathon training to specific training phases, nutrition, injury prevention, and mental preparation.

Understanding Marathon Training

Before diving into the specifics of a one-year training plan, it's essential to understand the basics of marathon training. A marathon is a long-distance race that covers 26.2 miles (42.195 kilometers). Training for such a distance involves building endurance, strength, and speed while minimizing the risk of injury.

The Importance of a Year-Long Training Plan

A one-year training plan allows you to gradually build your mileage and stamina. It helps to:

1. **Prevent Injury:** Gradual increases in distance and intensity reduce the risk of overuse injuries.
2. **Build Endurance:** Longer training periods allow you to develop the necessary endurance for marathon running.
3. **Learn Your Body:** A year gives you time to understand your body's responses to training loads, nutrition, and recovery.
4. **Set and Achieve Goals:** Longer training allows for multiple goal-setting opportunities, such as pace improvement or completing your first marathon.

Phases of Marathon Training

A year-long marathon training plan can be divided into several distinct phases, each with specific goals and training focuses.

1. Base Phase (Months 1-3)

The base phase focuses on building a strong foundation of endurance and aerobic capacity.

- **Weekly Mileage:** Start with 15-20 miles per week and gradually increase to 30 miles.
- **Key Workouts:**
 - **Long Runs:** Begin with 8-10 miles, increasing by a mile each week.
 - **Easy Runs:** Incorporate 2-3 easy runs of 3-5 miles during the week.
 - **Cross-Training:** Engage in low-impact activities like cycling or swimming to enhance cardiovascular fitness without the strain of running.

2. Build Phase (Months 4-6)

The build phase emphasizes increasing mileage and introducing speed work.

- Weekly Mileage: Increase to 30-40 miles per week.
- Key Workouts:
- Long Runs: Increase long run distance to 12-16 miles.
- Speed Work: Introduce interval training (e.g., 400m repeats) and tempo runs.
- Hill Training: Incorporate hill workouts to build strength and improve running economy.

3. Peak Phase (Months 7-9)

During the peak phase, you will reach your highest weekly mileage and longest runs.

- Weekly Mileage: Aim for 40-50 miles per week.
- Key Workouts:
- Long Runs: Schedule runs of 18-20 miles, with some runs approaching 22 miles.
- Race Pace Runs: Include runs at your target marathon pace to familiarize yourself with the desired speed.
- Recovery Runs: Maintain easy runs to allow for recovery from harder workouts.

4. Taper Phase (Months 10-12)

The taper phase is crucial for recovery and preparing for race day.

- Weekly Mileage: Gradually decrease mileage by 20-50% in the last three weeks.
- Key Workouts:
- Long Runs: Reduce long runs to 8-10 miles in the final weeks.
- Maintaining Intensity: Keep some speed workouts but reduce their frequency and duration.
- Rest and Recovery: Prioritize rest and nutrition to ensure you are fully prepared for race day.

Nutrition for Marathon Training

Proper nutrition is vital for optimal performance and recovery during your marathon training journey.

Daily Nutrition Guidelines

- Carbohydrates: 55-65% of your total intake should come from carbohydrates to fuel your runs. Focus on whole grains, fruits, and vegetables.
- Protein: Aim for 15-20% of your total intake from protein to support muscle repair and recovery. Incorporate lean meats, fish, beans, and legumes.
- Fats: The remaining 20-30% should come from healthy fats, such as avocados, nuts, and olive oil.

Hydration Strategies

- Daily Hydration: Aim for at least 2-3 liters of water per day, adjusting for activity levels.
- During Runs: Hydrate during long runs with water and electrolyte drinks, especially on runs longer than an hour.

Race Day Nutrition

- Pre-Race Meal: Consume a carbohydrate-rich meal 2-3 hours before the race.
- During the Race: Use energy gels, chews, or sports drinks every 30-45 minutes to maintain energy levels.

Injury Prevention and Recovery

Injuries can derail your training plan, so it's essential to incorporate injury prevention and recovery strategies.

Injury Prevention Tips

1. Listen to Your Body: Pay attention to pain or discomfort and adjust your training as needed.
2. Warm-Up and Cool Down: Always warm up before runs and cool down afterward to prevent stiffness.
3. Strength Training: Include strength workouts 1-2 times per week to enhance muscle support around joints.
4. Cross-Training: Engage in low-impact exercises to reduce the risk of overuse injuries.

Recovery Techniques

- Rest Days: Schedule regular rest days to allow your body to recover.
- Sleep: Aim for 7-9 hours of quality sleep each night to support recovery.
- Active Recovery: Incorporate light activities such as walking or yoga on rest days to promote blood flow.

Mental Preparation for Marathon Running

Mental toughness is as crucial as physical training in marathon preparation. Developing a strong mindset can make a significant difference on race day.

Mental Strategies

- Visualization: Practice visualizing your race day success to build confidence.
- Positive Affirmations: Use positive self-talk to combat negative thoughts during training and on race day.
- Goal Setting: Set realistic and achievable goals for your training and race performance to stay motivated.

Race Day Strategy

- Pacing: Start at a comfortable pace, avoiding the temptation to go too fast initially.
- Stay Hydrated: Stick to your hydration plan throughout the race.
- Enjoy the Experience: Remember to soak in the atmosphere and enjoy the accomplishment of running a marathon.

Conclusion

A one-year marathon training plan is a rewarding journey that requires strategic planning, dedication, and a holistic approach to training, nutrition, and mental preparation. By following a structured training plan, focusing on injury prevention, and maintaining a positive mindset, you can successfully prepare for your marathon and achieve your running goals. Embrace the process, celebrate your progress, and look forward to crossing that finish line with pride. Happy running!

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a one-year marathon training plan?

A one-year marathon training plan is a structured schedule designed to prepare runners for completing a marathon, typically involving gradual increases in mileage, varied workouts, and rest days to build endurance and speed over a 12-month period.

How many miles should I run per week in a one-year marathon training plan?

In a one-year marathon training plan, weekly mileage can vary but generally starts at around 20-30 miles per week, gradually increasing to 40-60 miles per week as you build endurance and prepare for race day.

What types of runs are included in a one-year marathon training plan?

A one-year marathon training plan typically includes long runs, easy runs, tempo runs, speed work, and recovery runs, each serving a specific purpose to improve endurance, speed, and overall running performance.

How do I incorporate strength training into my one-year marathon training plan?

Strength training can be incorporated into your one-year marathon training plan by scheduling two to three sessions per week, focusing on exercises that strengthen the core, legs, and upper body, which can improve running efficiency and reduce injury risk.

What should I eat during a year-long marathon training program?

During a year-long marathon training program, focus on a balanced diet rich in carbohydrates for energy, proteins for muscle repair, and healthy fats, along with plenty of fruits and vegetables for vitamins and minerals to support overall health.

How do I prevent injuries during my one-year marathon training?

To prevent injuries during your one-year marathon training, incorporate rest days, listen to your body, gradually increase mileage, and include cross-training and strength workouts to promote overall fitness and flexibility.

When should I start my one-year marathon training plan?

You should start your one-year marathon training plan at least 12 months before your target marathon date, allowing ample time to build endurance,

strength, and speed while reducing the risk of injury.

What should my peak mileage be in a one-year marathon training plan?

In a one-year marathon training plan, peak mileage typically ranges from 40 to 60 miles per week, depending on your fitness level and experience, leading up to the marathon while ensuring adequate recovery.

How do I taper before the marathon after a year of training?

To taper before the marathon, gradually reduce your weekly mileage by 20-30% for the last two to three weeks before the race, while maintaining the intensity of your workouts to keep your legs fresh and ready for race day.

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