

RECOMMENDED MARATHON TRAINING

(To run a fast Marathon)

BASE

Before beginning training for a marathon it is recommended you have a weekly “base” of approximately 25 miles per week, which should include a 10-12 miler. It is also recommended that the runner have more than 12 months of running experience.

PROGRAM

I recommend a 13 week training program composed of 4 parts, plus one “rest” week.

Weeks 1 and 2

Between 25 and 30 miles

Weeks 3, 4 and 5

Between 30 and 40 miles

Weeks 6, 7, 8

Between 40 and 50 miles

Week 9 (rest week)

Between 25 and 30 miles

Week 10, 11, 12 and Marathon Week

1 week at 60

1 week at 50

Week 12 at 35

Marathon week at 10, plus 26.2

LONG RUN

Each week should have one long, slow weekend run building from 12 miles to 20 or 22 miles. The longest of the long runs should occur 3 weeks before the marathon. Frequent water stops are fine, plus some walking after water stops is not a problem. You should strive for three 20 milers, and several others between 15 and 20 miles.

MIDDLE DISTANCE RUN

Each week should have one mid-week, middle distance run. The length should be $\frac{1}{2}$ that week's long run plus 2-4 miles. For example, if the week's long run is 14, then the mid-week run should be at least $7+3$ or 10. If the week's long run is 20 then the mid-week run should be $10 + 4$ or at least 14.

SPEED

Long runs can be a minute or a minute and a half slower than marathon pace. For example if one wishes to run a 3:30 marathon that's an 8 minute pace. His/her time can be a 9 or 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ minute pace on the long run. You can find all kinds of pacing charts on the internet.

Where you can, middle distance runs should be run at close to marathon pace. Middle distance runs should be run on a track where accurate splits can be taken

and water can be easily obtained. This is where a runner learns about pacing, splits and speed. If the runner can't stand the monotony of a track, then he/she should use an accurate course where the run can be done. Remember, when timing the middle distance run, count all stops, including water stops. Of course if your marathon goal doesn't include a specific time goal then the speed training isn't necessary. But, if you are attempting to lower your times on the marathon then it is extremely important. There are several ways to do the speed portion. You may want to read up on speed training on the internet to get ideas.

You may not be able to stand up to weekly speed while building up mileage for the marathon. In that case, do speed as often as your body will allow. Speed training every other week might be sufficient for some runners. Serious speed work should be only a small portion of your total weekly mileage.

REMAINDER OF MILEAGE

Your long run and middle distance runs will take care of about 50% of your weekly mileage. The remaining mileage should be done in 3-4 days, always allowing for one or two days of rest weekly.

OTHER

As you can see, my emphasis is placed in these areas:

Long slow distance on weekend

Race-pace running (or slightly faster) on timed course (track). Work up to 10-15 miles at desired marathon pace, or faster.

Speed work on track. I like the Yasso 800s, which involve running 800s at faster-than-race pace. If you intend to run a 3:45 marathon, then run your 800s in 3:45 min. If you want to run a 3:25 marathon then run your 800s at a 3:25 min. pace. You need to have substantial time between 800s, perhaps as much time as it takes you to do the 800. You can walk or jog during the breaks. Work up to 10 of these, peaking three weeks before the marathon. You will probably need to do Yassos one week and race-paced mid distance the next. You probably should not do both in a week.

My current choice for speed training, rather than the "Yasso" method described above in #3—is what is referred to as "tempo" training. Basically, this is running long distance on an accurately measured course (read "track") at a pace faster than desired marathon pace. This pace would be as close to your 5-k pace as possible. I would suggest starting (after adequate warm-up) with maybe 7 miles and building this, through the 13 weeks, to as much as 10-15 miles. You will basically be 'racing' these miles at a pace about as fast as you can hold for that distance. An example: if you desire to run a 3:30 marathon (again, that's an 8 min. pace), then you would want to run your "tempo" run at perhaps 7:30 or so. As you can see, this would probably work out to be your mid-week run. Likely you will want to check your pace at every quarter mile (if on track). An unexpected benefit to this: when you finish and cool down, you will feel fantastic! I think this type running really releases those endorphins that we hear about so often. It does take SERIOUS concentration to hold a really fast pace steady for mile after mile, but it pays off in reduced marathon times.

Remember, your goal is to arrive at the start line well-trained, rested and in good health. Injuries frequently occur when mileage is increased too sharply. One should hold weekly mileage increases to about 10% per week. This is 3 miles at 30 miles per week and 5 miles at 50 miles per week. The same is true for distance runs. Increase gradually. 2-3 mile increase over the previous long run is the maximum one should do. Be especially careful with your speed work. Make sure you work up to your desired results over a period of 10 weeks or so.

SAMPLE SCHEDULE

Below is a sample schedule taking into account many of the principals discussed above.

Week total long med

1 27 11 5

2 29 12 7

3 32 13 7

4 35 15 8

5 37 15 8

6 40 17 9

7 44 20 10

8 50 20 12

9 30 15 6

10 58 22 14

11 48 18 12

12 33 16 9

13 35 26.2 5