

# RUNNER'S WORLD

## TRAINING PLAN

### Intermediate Maintenance Plan

This plan is a four-week maintenance plan designed for intermediate runners. It is intended to be used when you're not actively training for a race. You can repeat it as many times as you'd like until you're ready to start a new race-training plan.

| WEEK | MONDAY                        | TUESDAY                | WEDNESDAY                             | THURSDAY                      | FRIDAY                 | SATURDAY                      | SUNDAY                             |
|------|-------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1    | Day 1<br>Rest or Cross-Train  | Day 2<br>4 Miles Easy  | Day 3<br>5 Miles with 3 Miles at HMP  | Day 4<br>Rest or Cross-Train  | Day 5<br>4 Miles Easy  | Day 6<br>Rest or Cross-Train  | Day 7<br>8 Miles LSD               |
| 2    | Day 8<br>Rest or Cross-Train  | Day 9<br>5 Miles Easy  | Day 10<br>Mile Repeats                | Day 11<br>Rest or Cross-Train | Day 12<br>4 Miles Easy | Day 13<br>Rest or Cross-Train | Day 14<br>10 Miles LSD             |
| 3    | Day 15<br>Rest or Cross-Train | Day 16<br>5 Miles Easy | Day 17<br>5 Miles with 3 Miles at HMP | Day 18<br>Rest or Cross-Train | Day 19<br>4 Miles Easy | Day 20<br>Rest or Cross-Train | Day 21<br>8 Miles LSD              |
| 4    | Day 22<br>Rest or Cross-Train | Day 23<br>4 Miles Easy | Day 24<br>6 Miles with 4 Miles at HMP | Day 25<br>Rest or Cross-Train | Day 26<br>4 Miles Easy | Day 27<br>Rest or Cross-Train | Day 28<br>12 Miles LSD or 10K Race |

#### WEEK 1

#### Day 1, Monday · Rest or Cross-Train

Welcome to week one of the Runner's World Maintenance Plan for Intermediate Runners.

Most weeks throughout the program, you'll have three short runs, two or three rest days, and one long run. As you train, tap into the online community at [runnersworld.com](http://runnersworld.com), where you'll find tips on training, nutrition, and injury prevention, and you can connect with other runners and the experts of Runner's World.

Your training program kicks off with a rest day. Your first long run, on Sunday, is eight miles. You'll gradually extend these runs by one or two miles a week.

If you want to add miles, do it on an easy day. Don't extend any run by more than one or two miles, or add miles on Saturday (the day before your long run).

## Day 2, Tuesday · 4 Miles Easy

Run at a comfortable pace, easy enough that you can hold a conversation. If you're huffing and puffing, you're going too fast. Don't worry about your speed. Just focus on covering the distance.

## Day 3, Wednesday · 5 Miles with 3 Miles at HMP

1 mile easy running  
3 miles at half marathon pace  
1 mile easy running

Today is your first run with half marathon pace (HMP) miles. Warm up with one mile of easy running, then try to settle in to your half marathon pace and hold it for three miles. Cool down with one mile of easy running.

Need help picking your pace? Check out our training calculator at [runnersworld.com/tools](https://runnersworld.com/tools).

## Day 4, Thursday · Rest or Cross-Train

Ideally, you won't exercise at all on these days. But it's okay to do a no-impact activity like yoga, stretching, or swimming. Whatever you do, just take it easy.

## Day 5, Friday · 4 Miles Easy

Be sure to sandwich each run with a warmup and cooldown of five to 10 minutes of walking and easy jogging, even on days that call for short, easy runs. Doing so will help you feel more comfortable on the run and will prevent injuries like muscle pulls.

## Day 6, Saturday · Rest or Cross-Train

As your training gets under way, invest in shirts, shorts, underwear, and socks that are made of technical, lightweight fabrics that wick away moisture. These fabrics, such as Dri-FIT and Coolmax, help prevent blisters and chafing.

## Day 7, Sunday · 8 Miles LSD

Today is your first long, slow distance (LSD) run. The long run is the backbone of any successful training program. It builds your aerobic base, increases your endurance, boosts confidence, and helps you rehearse some of the gear and fuel strategies you'll need for future races. It also helps you prepare for the psychological challenge of racing for a few hours. Since you'll be running farther, you can go out slower than you usually do. On these days your goal is just to complete the distance.

## WEEK 2

## Day 8, Monday · Rest or Cross-Train

This is week two of training.

You'll have two short runs and three days of rest. Your long run will increase to 10 miles. On Wednesday you'll have your first speed session: mile repeats.

It's best to do speedwork on a track, where the surface is flat and the distance is easy to measure. If you don't have access to a track, it's okay to do speedwork on a treadmill or a flat stretch of road where you've measured the distance.

## Day 9, Tuesday · 5 Miles Easy

Be sure to stay hydrated throughout the day, not just while you're out on the run. A good rule of thumb is to drink half your body weight in ounces of fluids. So if you weigh 150 pounds, aim for 75 ounces of water or sports drink per day. If you weigh 100 pounds, aim for 50 ounces.

### **Day 10, Wednesday · Mile Repeats**

1 mile easy running  
2 x 1 mile at 10K pace with 800-meter easy run recovery  
1 mile easy running

Today you'll do repeats of 2 x 1 mile and cover five miles total.

After a one-mile warmup, run one mile at your 10K pace, jog two laps around the track (or one-half mile) for recovery, and repeat this cycle once. Cool down with one mile of easy running.

### **Day 11, Thursday · Rest or Cross-Train**

Focus on establishing a routine that blends well into the rhythm of your daily life. Figure out what times of day are most convenient for running, and find a variety of safe, traffic-free routes that you can take on a regular basis. Need help finding a place to run? Check out [runnersworld.com/routefinder](http://runnersworld.com/routefinder).

### **Day 12, Friday · 4 Miles Easy**

Be sure to replace your shoes every 300 to 500 miles. Since it's easy to lose track of how long you've had a particular pair, record the date that you started wearing them in your log. When you're shopping for running shoes, go to a specialty running store where trained professionals will evaluate your feet, watch you run, recommend the right shoes, and let you take them for a test run. You'll leave with a comfortable pair of shoes that will have you running pain- and injury-free.

### **Day 13, Saturday · Rest or Cross-Train**

If you have to switch around your workout routine because of schedule conflicts, be patient as you make the transition. It takes a few weeks to fully adjust to a time change. Don't be surprised if you feel tired or jet-lagged when you're running at your new time. Stick with it. Your body will adjust.

### **Day 14, Sunday · 10 Miles LSD**

Refuel with healthy carbs and protein as soon as possible after your run. That's when your body most needs the nutrients in order to repair muscle tissue and replace glycogen stores. A healthy postrun snack with a carbs-to-protein ratio of 4:1 will help you bounce back quickly so you're refreshed for the days ahead.

## **WEEK 3**

### **Day 15, Monday · Rest or Cross-Train**

This is week three of training.

You'll have two easy runs, one day with tempo (half marathon pace) miles, and three days to rest or cross-train. This week's long run drops to eight miles.

Make sure you set aside enough time in your schedule for your long run, so you don't feel rushed to finish it and you have enough time to eat and rest afterward. Get your fueling strategy set ahead of time. On any run longer than 75 minutes, energy gels or sports drinks will help you maintain a steady level of energy.

### **Day 16, Tuesday · 5 Miles Easy**

Whenever possible, head for the hills to build leg and lung power. Watch your form when you're heading up; push your legs off and up, rather than into, the ground so that you feel as if you're "springing" up the hill. When you're running downhill, shorten your stride, and focus on keeping your shoulders, hips, and feet aligned. It should almost feel like controlled falling.

### **Day 17, Wednesday · 5 Miles with 3 Miles at HMP**

1 mile easy running  
3 miles at half marathon pace  
1 mile easy running

Warm up with one mile of easy running, then settle in to your goal half marathon pace. Hold that pace for three miles, then cool down with one mile of easy running.

### **Day 18, Thursday · Rest or Cross-Train**

When you're checking the weather for your long run, remember that it's not just the heat that matters—it's also the humidity. Moist air slows down your body's ability to cool itself through sweat. The heat index combines temperature with relative humidity to give you the apparent temperature—how hot it actually feels—and the National Weather Service issues a heat advisory when that number hits 105.

### **Day 19, Friday · 4 Miles Easy**

Even if you're a confirmed solo runner, it's a good idea to explore running with others. When you know someone is waiting for you, you're not as likely to skip that day's run at the last minute. Plus, you can venture farther afield and at odder hours than you'd feel comfortable doing alone. Pay close attention to your respective paces and levels of fitness, to make sure that you're compatible. You can challenge yourself with your faster friends on days when you want a harder workout, and hook up with your slower friends on your easy recovery days.

### **Day 20, Saturday · Rest or Cross-Train**

At some point during your training, you're bound to experience chafing, a red, raw rash that can bleed, sting, and be painful to the touch. To prevent chafing, wear wick-away, seamless, tagless gear. And make sure it fits right. Extra material in a baggy shirt can cause irritation; a too-snug sports bra can dig into the skin. Apply sports lube or a bandage to trouble spots before you run. Moisturize the area after you shower. To treat chafing, wash the area with soap and water, apply an antibacterial ointment, and cover it with a bandage.

### **Day 21, Sunday · 8 Miles LSD**

If you're heading out and it's pitch black, make sure to run with a headlamp or handheld light so you're visible to passing cars. If you don't feel comfortable with a light, at least run with a reflective vest or a blinking red light with a bright LED.

## **WEEK 4**

### **Day 22, Monday · Rest or Cross-Train**

This is week four of training.

This week you'll have two short runs and a tempo (half marathon pace) run. This weekend you have a choice: You can do a 12-mile long run or enter a 10K race. A race will help mix up the routine and let you try out different fuel and gear strategies for your main event. If you need help finding a 10K, check out our Race Finder at [runnersworld.com/racefinder](http://runnersworld.com/racefinder).

### **Day 23, Tuesday · 4 Miles Easy**

Balance training—using tools like stability balls—helps strengthen the innermost layer of the abs, which are the main stabilizing muscles. Strong stabilizers can make your running form more efficient, so you can run faster and avoid injury.

## **Day 24, Wednesday · 6 Miles with 4 Miles at HMP**

1-mile warmup  
4 miles at half marathon pace  
1-mile cooldown

Before charging a hill or beginning any other bout of intense work, do a shoulder check. Are they creeping up to your ears? If so, roll them forward and then backward to relieve tension, and keep them low and relaxed.

## **Day 25, Thursday · Rest or Cross-Train**

When you're in training, it's important to eat like an athlete. About half of your daily calories should come from carbs. Fruits, vegetables, whole grains, beans, and lentils are rich in complex carbs, as well as vitamins and minerals that speed recovery. About 25 percent of your daily calories should come from unsaturated fats, which will keep you feeling satisfied and full, and help your body absorb certain vitamins. Nuts, seeds, and avocados are rich in heart-healthy fats, as are olive and flaxseed oils. The remaining 25 percent of your calories should come from protein, which helps speed muscle repair and recovery. Cuts of beef and pork labeled "loin" and skinless poultry have a healthy protein-to-fat ratio. Fatty fish, tofu, eggs, and low-fat dairy such as milk and yogurt are also good sources.

## **Day 26, Friday · 4 Miles Easy**

It's best to deal with a blister before it becomes painful enough to throw off your gait. Covering it with a Band-Aid or moleskin is ideal. But if home or an aid station is miles away, adjust your laces. Tightening them could stop heel slippage (a common cause of blisters); loosening them could take pressure off a hot spot.

## **Day 27, Saturday · Rest or Cross-Train**

Even on cloudy days, be sure to use a sunscreen that has an SPF of at least 30 and protects against UVA and UVB rays, the two most damaging forms of ultraviolet light. Rub on the product at least 20 minutes before you go out, and reapply every two hours while you're out—even if it's a sweat-proof formula.

## **Day 28, Sunday · 12 Miles LSD or 10K Race**

Today you have a choice. You can do a 12-mile run at your usual LSD pace, or you can enter a 10K race.

If you're heading to a race, make sure you have a strategy. You can run at your usual long-run pace or choose certain miles in which to practice your goal half marathon pace. You might try running it hard to test your fitness. Just don't head to the starting line without a plan. It's too easy to get swept up in the excitement and go out too hard. You want to recover quickly and get right back into training. To learn more about practice races, go to [runnersworld.com/tuneup](http://runnersworld.com/tuneup).