

RUNNER'S WORLD

TRAINING PLAN

Half Marathon · Beginners

This 14-week plan was designed for beginners who have at least a year of experience running on a regular basis and log an average of 15 to 20 miles per week. Each week includes three days of rest, three days of shorter runs, and one long run, which starts at six miles, builds gradually, and peaks at 12 miles to give you the endurance you need to get comfortable running for two hours at a time.

WEEK	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
1	Day 1 Rest	Day 2 4 Miles Easy	Day 3 4 Miles Easy	Day 4 Rest	Day 5 4 Miles Easy	Day 6 Rest	Day 7 5 Miles LSD
2	Day 8 Rest	Day 9 4 Miles Easy	Day 10 4 Miles Easy	Day 11 Rest	Day 12 4 Miles Easy	Day 13 Rest	Day 14 7 Miles LSD
3	Day 15 Rest	Day 16 4 Miles Easy	Day 17 4 Miles Easy	Day 18 Rest	Day 19 4 Miles Easy	Day 20 Rest	Day 21 6 Miles LSD
4	Day 22 Rest	Day 23 4 Miles Easy	Day 24 5 Miles Easy	Day 25 Rest	Day 26 4 Miles Easy	Day 27 Rest	Day 28 8 Miles LSD
5	Day 29 Rest	Day 30 4 Miles Easy	Day 31 5 Miles Easy	Day 32 Rest	Day 33 4 Miles Easy	Day 34 Rest	Day 35 6 Miles LSD
6	Day 36 Rest	Day 37 4 Miles Easy	Day 38 6 Miles Easy	Day 39 Rest	Day 40 4 Miles Easy	Day 41 Rest	Day 42 8 Miles LSD
7	Day 43 Rest	Day 44 4 Miles Easy	Day 45 6 Miles Easy	Day 46 Rest	Day 47 4 Miles Easy	Day 48 Rest	Day 49 10 Miles LSD

WEEK	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
8	Day 50 Rest	Day 51 4 Miles Easy	Day 52 6 Miles Easy	Day 53 Rest	Day 54 5 Miles Easy	Day 55 Rest	Day 56 8 Miles LSD
9	Day 57 Rest	Day 58 3 Miles Easy	Day 59 6 Miles Easy	Day 60 Rest	Day 61 4 Miles Easy	Day 62 Rest	Day 63 10–12 Miles LSD
10	Day 64 Rest	Day 65 4 Miles Easy	Day 66 6 Miles Easy	Day 67 Rest	Day 68 6 Miles Easy	Day 69 Rest	Day 70 8 Miles LSD
11	Day 71 Rest	Day 72 4 Miles Easy	Day 73 6 Miles Easy	Day 74 Rest	Day 75 4 Miles Easy	Day 76 Rest	Day 77 12 Miles LSD
12	Day 78 Rest	Day 79 4 Miles Easy	Day 80 6 Miles Easy	Day 81 Rest	Day 82 4 Miles Easy	Day 83 Rest	Day 84 6 Miles or 5K Race
13	Day 85 Rest	Day 86 3 Miles Easy	Day 87 5 Miles Easy	Day 88 Rest	Day 89 5 Miles Easy	Day 90 Rest	Day 91 8 Miles Easy
14	Day 92 Rest	Day 93 Rest	Day 94 3 Miles Easy	Day 95 3 Miles Easy	Day 96 Rest	Day 97 2 Miles Easy	Day 98 Race Day

WEEK 1

Day 1, Monday · Rest

Welcome to week one of the Runner's World's Half Marathon Training Plan for Beginners. Whether you're just trying to cover 13.1 miles for the first time, or you consider this a stepping stone to bigger things, this 14-week plan will help get you to the start and finish lines fit and injury-free.

As you train, tap into our online community at runnersworld.com, where you'll find tips on training, nutrition, and injury prevention, and you can connect with other runners and the editors of Runner's World.

Each week you'll have three short runs during the week, three rest days, and one long run on the weekend.

Your training program kicks off with a rest day. Mondays are always reserved for rest so you can recover from your long run and save your energy for the week ahead. Ideally, you won't exercise at all on these days. But if you can't just kick back, it's okay to do a no-impact activity like yoga, stretching, or swimming. Whatever you do, just take it easy. Your first long run, on Sunday, is six miles.

Day 2, Tuesday · 4 Miles Easy

Run at a relaxed pace today, or cross-train on a bike or an elliptical trainer for the same amount of time that you'd run. Just don't go so hard that you're sore tomorrow.

Here's a guide to this plan's workouts:

REST DAYS: Ideally, on rest days you should do no exercise at all. But it's okay to cross-train with a no-impact activity like stretching, yoga, or swimming.

EASY DAYS: Keep a comfortable, conversational pace, about one to two minutes slower than your 5K pace. Or you can cross-train on a bike or an elliptical trainer.

CROSS-TRAINING: Cross-training should be limited to rest days and easy days. Easy-day cross-training should involve sustained aerobic activity, like cycling or using an elliptical trainer, for the same amount of time you'd spend on the day's mileage. Rest-day cross-training should be a no-impact activity like stretching, yoga, or swimming.

LSD: This is a long, slow distance run to build endurance. These should be done at an easy, conversational pace, one to two minutes slower than your goal half marathon pace.

Day 3, Wednesday · 4 Miles Easy

Keep a comfortable, conversational pace, about one to two minutes slower than your 5K pace. Or you can cross-train on a bike or an elliptical trainer.

Day 4, Thursday · Rest

Ideally, on rest days you should do no exercise at all. But it's okay to cross-train with a no-impact activity like stretching, yoga, or swimming.

Day 5, Friday · 4 Miles Easy

Keep a comfortable conversational pace, about one to two minutes slower than your 5K pace. Or you can cross-train on a bike or an elliptical trainer.

Day 6, Saturday · Rest

Ideally, on rest days you should do no exercise at all. But it's okay to cross-train with a no-impact activity like stretching, yoga, or swimming.

Day 7, Sunday · 5 Miles LSD

Today is your first long run. Since you'll be running farther, you can go out even slower than you usually do. On your long runs, your goal is just to complete the distance.

If you have to walk, that's fine. As long as you cover the distance, today's workout is a success.

WEEK 2

Day 8, Monday · Rest

This is week two of training. This week you'll follow the same pattern: three shorter runs and three rest days. Your long run will be seven miles.

Focus on establishing a running routine that blends well into the rhythm of your daily life. Figure out what times of day are most convenient to run, and find a variety of safe, traffic-free, and convenient routes that you can take on a regular basis.

Day 9, Tuesday · 4 Miles Easy

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 tempo runs and long runs. In order to do that, it's a good idea to learn the best target pace for all your runs on the schedule. If you have run a race within the past six months, plug that time into our training calculator at runnersworld.com/tools. Look at the "training paces" to find your pace for each of the runs on the schedule.

If you don't have a recent race time, do a one-mile time trial. Here's how: Go to a 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.

Day 10, Wednesday · 4 Miles Easy

Training logs can be great tools to track your progress and help prevent injuries. Write down details about the mileage you ran, how you felt while you were on the run, what the weather was like, and how you felt afterward. Be sure to include your race goals and the reasons you're training for a marathon. When you feel the urge to call it quits, pull out that log. Seeing all your plans—and all that you've already accomplished—can help get you out the door.

Day 11, Thursday · Rest

The first few weeks of training are about building a base, establishing a routine, and getting accustomed to following a plan. If you want to integrate cross-training into your race preparation, it's best to start now, while the mileage is still very low, so that it can be a part of your regular regimen from now until race day. It's a good idea to incorporate strength training into your routine; it can help boost your endurance and stave off midrun fatigue. Just don't lift the day before key running workouts. It will sap the strength you need to run long or hard.

Day 12, Friday · 4 Miles Easy

Run at a relaxed pace today, or cross-train on a bike or an elliptical trainer for the same amount of time that you'd run. Just don't go so hard that you're sore tomorrow.

Day 13, Saturday · Rest

Ideally, on rest days you should do no exercise at all. But it's okay to cross-train with a no-impact activity like stretching, yoga, or swimming.

Day 14, Sunday · 7 Miles LSD

This long, slow distance run is meant to build endurance. These should be done at an easy pace, slower than you usually go on shorter runs during the week. If you're a beginner, go as slowly as your body dictates. Walk if you want to. Your goal is to cover the distance for the day without feeling utterly exhausted.

WEEK 3

Day 15, Monday · Rest

This is week three of training. You'll have three rest days and three shorter runs and your long run will be six miles.

Day 16, Tuesday · 4 Miles Easy

As your training gets underway, invest in shirts, shorts, underwear, jog bras, and socks that are made of technical, lightweight fabrics that wick away moisture. These fabrics, which go by names like Dri-Fit and CoolMax, help prevent blisters and chafing.

Day 17, Wednesday · 4 Miles Easy

Don't let boredom derail your training. Map out a new route or find a scenic trail so you feel refreshed. You can find a new route, or map your own, by going to our routefinder at runnersworld.com/routes.

Day 18, Thursday · Rest

It may be tempting to run on rest days, but it's best not to. Give your body a chance to recover from the miles you've logged and get energized for the long run.

Day 19, Friday · 4 Miles Easy

If possible, get into the habit of heading out at the same time each day. If it's built into your schedule, you're less likely to skip a run, and more likely to look forward to the next day's workout if you do miss a day.

Day 20, Saturday · Rest

Have new aches and pains? It may be time to replace your shoes. Worn-out and ill-fitting shoes are often the cause of injury. Be sure to go to a specialty running shop to get a pair that offers the fit and support that your feet need.

Day 21, Sunday · 6 Miles LSD

Hook up with a buddy or a running club for long runs—you'll be surprised how easily the miles roll by when you're in good company. Don't know other runners? Log into our online community at runnersworld.com, where you'll find regional groups and forums. Or contact a running shop in your area. Many shops organize group long runs in the spring and fall.

WEEK 4

Day 22, Monday · Rest

This is week four of training. After this week, race day will be 10 weeks away.

You will do two short runs, increase your Wednesday run to five miles, and have three days of rest. Your long run will increase to eight miles.

Day 23, Tuesday · 4 Miles Easy

All running workouts require an intelligent warmup. If you're doing an easy or long run, you can simply start slow. But if you're doing some form of faster running workout, you should include a few gradually accelerating strides in your warmup.

Day 24, Wednesday · 5 Miles Easy

If you notice that you start feeling really tight in your shoulders and upper back during a run, try flexibility and yoga poses that focus on your shoulders, arms, and neck. These areas get tense from working a desk job or driving a long commute. Loosening up those areas will make your running feel more fluid. You can find lots of good yoga poses just for runners at runnersworld.com/yoga.

Day 25, Thursday · Rest

Take painkillers infrequently, only after a run to reduce inflammation, and then only for a few days. If pain persists, see a doctor.

Day 26, Friday · 4 Miles Easy

Shin splints are common among beginners and seasoned runners alike, and that soreness and pain along the shinbone tends to come on after ramping up mileage or intensity too much without enough rest. Running on uneven road surfaces or wearing worn-out shoes can also bring them on. If you feel shin splints coming on, take it easy and check your log. You may need to back off a bit.

Day 27, Saturday · Rest

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 28, Sunday · 8 Miles LSD

If you miss a workout, try not to worry about it. Just stay on the training schedule. Missing a few miles won't make or break your race. But trying to cram missed miles into a week can set you up for injury and derail your racing plans.

WEEK 5

Day 29, Monday · Rest

This is week five of training. You'll have three days of rest and three easy runs. This will be much like last week. Your long run will bump back to six miles.

Day 30, Tuesday · 4 Miles Easy

It's okay to listen to music on the run. Studies have shown that on top of helping athletes work harder, music also reduces perceived exertion and gives your mood a boost. Put on your running tunes before you go out, and you'll be more likely to lace up and get out the door. Runner's World has collected playlists from the nation's top runners, along with songs that scientists have proven will help you pick up the tempo. You can find the perfect sound track for your next run on the [playlists page on runnersworld.com/music](http://runnersworld.com/music).

Day 31, Wednesday · 5 Miles Easy

Icing an injury or a sore area can reduce inflammation and speed recovery. To maximize the benefits, ice for 10 to 20 minutes at a time, five times a day. This keeps tissue temperature low to minimize inflammation.

Day 32, Thursday · Rest

Ideally, on rest days you should do no exercise at all. But it's okay to cross-train with a no-impact activity like stretching, yoga, or swimming.

Day 33, Friday · 4 Miles Easy

During runs or races of 75 minutes or longer, consume carbs 30 to 60 minutes into the run. Continue fueling in small doses, aiming for 100 to 250 calories (or 25 to 60 grams of carbs) per hour—equal to one to 2 1/2 sports gels or 16 to 40 ounces of sports drink. Try different brands and flavors of sports drinks, energy gels, and chews to find out which ones sit well in your stomach. Find out what will be served at the aid stations on the course so that you can test it out during training and figure out whether it works for you.

Day 34, Saturday · Rest

It's best to rest today and let your body recover.

Day 35, Sunday · 6 Miles LSD

Many runners suffer from stomach problems while running, because the gut receives less blood midrun, causing poor GI function. The longer your run, the more likely you'll experience this. To prevent digestive problems, avoid high-fiber foods 24 hours before big workouts. Dehydration and too many midrun carbs worsen stomach issues; be sure to drink plenty of fluids, and don't exceed 30 to 60 grams of carbs per hour on long runs.

WEEK 6

Day 36, Monday · Rest

This is week six of training. At the end of this week, race day will be two months away. This week, one of your weekly runs will get a little longer and your long run will increase to eight miles. You'll have three days of rest.

It's best not to exercise at all your rest days this week, even if you usually cross-train. Save your energy for your runs.

Day 37, Tuesday · 4 Miles Easy

Don't avoid the hills, run for them. Running hills develops efficiency, endurance, and power. Ascending an incline uses more muscle fibers than running on level terrain, and climbing longer hills makes the body recruit muscles when they're fatigued, which helps develop your finishing speed. If you have no hills nearby, run on highway overpasses, bridges, or in parking structures. As you approach an incline, shorten your stride while maintaining the same cadence. Small, quick steps will help reduce the effort.

Day 38, Wednesday · 6 Miles Easy

If at all possible, do some of your training on the racecourse. Previewing the hills, turns, and narrow spaces will help you feel more confident and relaxed going into your big goal event. If you're not able to run on the course, look at the course map and elevation chart, which the race should have posted on its website. Try to do some runs that simulate the same pattern of elevation change that you'll face in the race.

Day 39, Thursday · Rest

To a lot of runners, "rest" is a four-letter word; they stress about sitting still for just one day. But detraining—a significant falloff in fitness and performance—doesn't occur until you stop working out for at least two weeks. One day of rest following a tough workout helps your body adapt to training stress, get stronger, and avoid overuse injuries like IT-band syndrome, which can sideline you for weeks.

Day 40, Friday · 4 Miles Easy

If it's windy outside, your workout could get an extra boost. Pushing against strong winds requires you to pump your arms more vigorously to maintain your forward momentum and exert more force with each push-off, which will help strengthen your upper body, quadriceps, and hip flexors. Over time the energy required by all those muscles in keeping you upright will strengthen your heart and lungs.

Day 41, Saturday · Rest

It's best to get your feet measured each time you buy new shoes because your feet change over time. It's also crucial to try on the shoe you're considering, since one model's fit can be drastically different from another's. Even better, make sure you actually run around the shop, on a treadmill, or around the block in each shoe you're considering. Bring your usual running socks and orthotics to the store. And buy your running shoes later in the day, when your feet are at their biggest. All of these factors will affect the way a shoe fits.

Day 42, Sunday · 8 Miles LSD

Don't underestimate the impact that the stress of work, deadlines, chores, bills, kids, and lack of sleep can have on your runs. All those factors can impact your ability to recover properly. If you don't take time for proper R & R, your body won't adapt to the stress of training, and you won't get stronger or faster. Be sure to take the rest days that are on the schedule, and don't hesitate to add rest days if you're feeling sore, worn-out, or injured.

WEEK 7

Day 43, Monday · Rest

At the end of this week, you'll be halfway through training. This week you'll have three rest days and two shorter runs. Your long run will inch up to 10 miles.

Day 44, Tuesday · 4 Miles Easy

How you hold your head affects your posture, which determines how efficiently you run. Keep your gaze straight ahead, looking slightly down from time to time to watch for obstacles. To release tension, shrug your shoulders and shake out your arms. Stop to lower your left ear toward your left shoulder; repeat that on your right side.

Day 45, Wednesday · 6 Miles Easy

Even if your race has lots of downhill, that doesn't mean it's easy. Steep descents can sap the power you need for flat stretches and climbs. To prepare, start on a gentle surface such as grass with a short, gradual slope (about a two to three percent grade) before moving on to steeper and longer descents on the roads.

Day 46, Thursday · Rest

Have a black toenail? It's caused by pooling of blood under the nail, which is caused by the toe rubbing or hitting the top of your shoe. It's best to leave it alone; the black nail will grow out in a few weeks or months. If it hurts, best to see a doctor.

Day 47, Friday · 4 Miles Easy

If there's a chance that it could be hot on race day, gradually get your body used to the heat during training. Start with a 15- to 20-minute easy run and add five to 10 minutes over the course of two weeks. Allow even more time to adjust to humid environments, and replace fluids lost through sweating with sports drinks. When you gradually expose yourself to warm environments, your body responds by being able to more efficiently distribute bloodflow, which helps you maintain an even effort without overheating.

Day 48, Saturday · Rest

If you want to know how much to drink during a hard run, take a sweat-rate test. Weigh yourself naked before and after a one-hour run. Each pound lost translates to 16 ounces of fluid that you sweated away—and about how much you need to drink per hour.

Day 49, Sunday · 10 Miles LSD

If you're using energy gels or chews, be sure to wash them down with water, not sports drink. Overloading your system with carbs could send you running to the bathroom.

WEEK 8

Day 50, Monday · Rest

This is week eight of training. This week your long run will drop back to eight miles. You'll also have three shorter runs and three rest days. You may feel strong enough to go longer, but it's best to just do the miles prescribed. Save your energy for next week when you'll be adding miles again.

Day 51, Tuesday · 4 Miles Easy

Be sure to run on a variety of surfaces, like soft trails, not just concrete. Varying the surfaces will help you prevent injuries by giving certain muscles and joints a rest while strengthening other muscles and joints.

Day 52, Wednesday · 6 Miles Easy

Let this training schedule be your guide but never your prison guard. Avoid training hard on a day when you're fatigued or feeling the soreness of an injury about to happen. If you feel overly sluggish or notice twinges, aches, or pains, ease up. If you have speedwork planned, run easy instead, or take a day off altogether. You will not lose fitness over a day, or even a few days, of rest.

Day 53, Thursday · Rest

Make your half marathon plans public. Tell your friends and family exactly what you plan to do. You'll think twice about skimping on your training if it's not a secret.

Day 54, Friday · 5 Miles Easy

Be sure to watch out for cars, and don't expect drivers to watch out for you. Always run facing traffic, so you can see cars approaching. When crossing an intersection, make sure you establish eye contact with the driver before proceeding. If it's dark out, wear reflective clothing.

Day 55, Saturday · Rest

Leaning too far forward when you run can cause lower-back pain, neck and shoulder fatigue, and side stitches—all of which cause you to slow down or increase your effort unnecessarily. To avoid a forward lean, take a deep breath, which will encourage your upper body to straighten. Maintain the upright position and imagine that you're a puppet on a string suspended from above.

Day 56, Sunday · 8 Miles LSD

Normally, runners should make sure to eat lots of fiber from beans, vegetables, and whole grains. But the night before a hard workout or a race, high-fiber foods can cause uncomfortable gas. Cut back on fiber three days before a major workout or race.

WEEK 9

Day 57, Monday · Rest

This is week nine of training. You'll have three short runs and three rest days. The big event is your long run: It goes up to 10 to 12 miles.

Early in the week, make sure you have the gels and sports drinks you'll need for your long run. Check the weather forecast; if it's looking bad on the day you usually run long, do it early in the morning or on another day. Plan to hook up with other runners for part of the run. Or download an audio book to your music player—you'll get two things done at once!

Day 58, Tuesday · 3 Miles Easy

Be sure not to skip breakfast. Even if you don't feel hungry in the morning, eating early kicks your metabolism into gear so you start to burn calories. It also curbs your appetite and sets the tone for a structured commitment to healthy eating. Try to eat between 150 and 300 calories for that first meal, and get a mix of carbs and protein for a quick energy boost and long-lasting fullness.

Day 59, Wednesday · 6 Miles Easy

Treadmills allow you to keep up your mileage when it's cold or dark outside. But too much time on the belt could lead to injury when you hit the road. Because treadmills absorb shock and lighten the load on your legs, if you stay inside for weeks on end then log a 10-miler outside, your body may struggle to support the force of your footfalls. The best solution is to mix your training up as much as possible between the indoors and the outdoors. Stay inside for quality workouts like speedwork, to hit your target pace. Go outside for easy recovery runs, when slowing down is good for you.

Day 60, Thursday · Rest

Sports massage can be beneficial during training. The more miles you log, the more stress your body endures, and massage can stop the damage from building up. Having a massage 48 hours after an intense workout can soothe muscles and enhance recovery.

Day 61, Friday · 4 Miles Easy

Most experts attribute cramps in the calf or other leg muscles to dehydration or fatigue. If you get a cramp, massage the area, and resume running at a slower pace. To help prevent cramps, drink eight ounces of fluid an hour before a run and slow your pace to take more frequent walk breaks from the start of the run.

Day 62, Saturday · Rest

On a few of the long runs before a half marathon, do a dress rehearsal for your big event. Start your run at the same time as the race starts, and get up a few hours earlier to eat and drink what you'll have on race day. Use the gear and apparel that you plan to use on race day, as well as the energy gels, chews, or sports drinks you plan to consume on the road.

Day 63, Sunday · 10–12 Miles LSD

Quicken your stride to run more economically. Increasing the number of steps you take per minute helps you become a more efficient, faster runner. During an easy run, count how often your left foot touches the ground over 30 seconds. Multiply by four for your total of footstrikes over a minute. Aim for more than 170.

WEEK 10

Day 64, Monday · Rest

This is week 10 of training. After this week, race day will be one month away. This week your long run will drop back to eight miles, but your midweek runs will be slightly longer. You'll have three days of rest.

Day 65, Tuesday · 4 Miles Easy

The repetitive motion of running can strengthen some muscles more than others, which can lead to muscle pulls and pain. Strength training can help correct any imbalances and prevent injuries. You can find strength-training routines designed just for runners at runnersworld.com/video.

Day 66, Wednesday · 6 Miles Easy

Heading to the trails? Don't be surprised if you feel extra sore. Trail running works your muscles in a different way. Your muscles and tendons must continually adjust when running on uneven surfaces, so it's common to feel some soreness in your ankles, calves, or shins.

Day 67, Thursday · Rest

Some muscle soreness is to be expected as you push yourself farther and faster than you've gone before. You may feel a little achy at the start of a run. If the discomfort persists or gets worse throughout the run, then it's best to stop and see a doctor.

Day 68, Friday · 6 Miles Easy

If you're feeling fatigued during a long run or the race, throw in a few 100-meter strides. Running for long distances at the same pace fatigues your slow-twitch muscle fibers. A brief stint in a higher gear recruits fast-twitch muscle fibers that have been passively going along for the ride and are relatively fresh. Just picking up the pace for 100 meters can be enough to get you out of a slump.

Day 69, Saturday · Rest

Have trouble breaking away for a lunchtime run? Remember that midday is the ideal time for quality workouts, as your muscles are more warmed up than in the mornings, and you're not as tired as you may be heading into evening runs. Studies have shown that midday exercise improves workers' moods, productivity, work quality, and ability to meet deadlines. You can relieve stress, reduce muscle tension that builds up from sitting at a desk, and increase the oxygen in your blood.

Day 70, Sunday · 8 Miles LSD

If you have aches and pains during a run, it's best to go to a doctor who specializes in sports medicine. While a general doctor might tell you to simply stop running, a sports-medicine specialist can figure out if your injury is something you can and should work through, or whether you should take a step back and focus on another race down the road.

WEEK 11

Day 71, Monday · Rest

This is week 11 of training. You'll have three shorter runs this week and three rest days. You'll have your last long run of 12 miles. After this week, you'll focus on tapering and race-day preparations.

Day 72, Tuesday · 4 Miles Easy

Keep a comfortable, conversational pace, about one to two minutes slower than your 5K pace. Or you can cross-train on a bike or an elliptical trainer.

Day 73, Wednesday · 6 Miles Easy

It's easy to mindlessly run the same routes, at the same speed, every day. Before long, you can get stuck in a training rut and become unmotivated. You'll also increase your injury risk by taxing muscles in the same way every day and not allowing for recovery. Mix things up by changing your running routes regularly, even if it's just running the same route in the opposite direction. Run with as many different partners as you can throughout the week. Meet a slower friend on an easy run one day, a faster friend for a speed workout another, and recruit your dog to accompany you for some short accelerations on a third workout.

Day 74, Thursday · Rest

Whole grains, especially breads, are a good source of the antioxidant vitamin E, which helps stave off muscle soreness after a tough workout and offers protection against heart disease. Pairing healthy fats, like peanut butter or olive oil, with your whole grains helps the body access vitamin E.

Day 75, Friday · 4 Miles Easy

Poor quality of sleep is a common symptom of overtraining. If you keep waking up in the middle of the night restless and unable to fall back asleep, you may have overloaded your system, which can interfere with sleep. To figure out if you're overdoing it, keep tabs on your resting heart rate. Take your pulse first thing in the morning while still in bed. If you normally have a resting heart rate in the 50s or 60s, and now it's 80 to 100, your body needs a break. Take it easy or take a rest day.

Day 76, Saturday · Rest

In most cases, your body will send you signals before an injury manifests itself fully: pain in a joint, soreness in the heel. Something not quite right that doesn't go away after a day or two but instead grows worse. It's much easier to apply ice and rest a couple days than to recover from a torn muscle.

Day 77, Sunday · 12 Miles LSD

Don't hesitate to take walk breaks during a run. They will help ease fatigue, promote recovery, and help you retain muscle strength so you feel energized when you start running again. And your walking pace won't have a significant impact on your finishing time.

WEEK 12

Day 78, Monday · Rest

This is week 12 of training. After this week, race day will be just two weeks away.

This week you'll do three shorter runs during the week and three rest days. Your long run will be six miles, or you can try a 5K race instead. It's a good idea to get some racing experience lining up at the start before your big day, even if you're going a shorter distance. This will let you rehearse your race-day logistics and get more comfortable running in a pack. Plus, it gives you a chance to meet other runners and explore new routes in your area. To find a race near you, go to runnersworld.com/racefinder.

Day 79, Tuesday · 4 Miles Easy

Once the hills on your route don't seem hard anymore, tackle a course with more hills, or one where the ascents are steeper or longer. Or you could include some faster segments on the climbs on your current route.

Day 80, Wednesday · 6 Miles Easy

Are you sore postrun? Rather than popping ibuprofen, try making tart cherries, cherry juice, blueberries, and strawberries part of your diet. Studies have shown that these fruits contain antioxidant compounds that reduce muscle damage and inflammation, and speed recovery.

Day 81, Thursday · Rest

Try these five quick prerun snacks: A handful of low-fiber cereal, half a bagel with honey, graham crackers with a teaspoon of honey, one cup of fat free yogurt, and a banana with a handful of nuts.

Day 82, Friday · 4 Miles Easy

Before a race, write down all of the variables that you can control. This will remind you to hold yourself accountable for what you can affect, and not worry about what you can't.

Day 83, Saturday · Rest

No matter what the weather forecast is, it's important to throw sunscreen in your gear bag for long runs. You're going to be outside for a long stretch of time. Use a product with an SPF of 30 and apply it about 20 minutes before you head out the door.

Day 84, Sunday · 6 Miles or 5K Race

If you do enter a race, focus on maintaining your even, comfortable pace, just as you do during your shorter weekly runs. Don't get carried away when the pack darts off. Stay in your own zone. This is an important part of race preparation. You don't want to head out too fast when you have 13.1 miles to do. If you can't find a race, six miles of LSD will be fine.

WEEK 13

Day 85, Monday · Rest

This is week 13 of training. At the end of this week, race day will be one week away. You should be in tapering mode. You'll have three short runs and three rest days. Your long run will be just eight miles. You may feel strong enough to run longer, but it's best to keep it short. Save your energy for race day.

Day 86, Tuesday · 3 Miles Easy

Be sure to take these miles easy. It's tempting to ratchet up the intensity, but it's best to stick to a conversational pace.

Day 87, Wednesday · 5 Miles Easy

This is a good time to start planning what you'd like to do after your half marathon. This will help you avoid a letdown after you cross the finish line. Set that goal for eight to 10 weeks away, preferably one centered on a different distance, maybe a 10K or a trail race. And allow yourself to enjoy a break after your race. Having a little downtime to recover, go on vacation, or catch up with friends will help you fend off burnout.

Day 88, Thursday · Rest

Remember that the taper is part of training. It's just as key as the long runs you did. If you feel "off," consider it positive feedback. After months of pushing your body, it's normal to feel uncomfortable being less active. Reviewing your training log will boost your confidence that you're race ready.

Day 89, Friday · 5 Miles Easy

Run at a relaxed pace today, or cross-train on a bike or an elliptical trainer for the same amount of time that you'd run. Just don't go so hard that you're sore tomorrow.

Day 90, Saturday · Rest

Take it easy today as you head into your taper for the race.

Day 91, Sunday · 8 Miles Easy

As you head into race week, remember this: Don't try anything new. That goes for food, gear, and any activity that hasn't been part of your training routine so far. Just stick with what works for you.

Make sure today's miles stay easy. We're tapering now, and running harder on the easy days won't help you. In fact, pretty much all the hard work is done. From here until the race, the work is getting to the race well rested.

Day 92, Monday · Rest

This is your final week of training for the half marathon. Race day is this weekend! It's important that you rest, recover from training, and firm up all your race-day logistics.

Your hard-core training may be done, but there's still plenty you can do to increase your chances of being your best on race day. Take the three days of rest on the schedule, and do three short, easy runs. Be sure to eat right—about 60 percent of your daily calories should come from high-quality carbohydrates, like vegetables, whole grains, and pasta, but don't go overboard. Iron out all your race-day logistics as soon as possible, so you can enjoy your big weekend.

Day 93, Tuesday · Rest

You're close enough to race day to start checking the weather forecast and thinking about what to wear. Whatever the conditions are, you've probably run in them before. If you need help choosing proper attire, check out the "What to Wear" tool at runnersworld.com/what-to-wear.

Day 94, Wednesday · 3 Miles Easy

Plan to pick up your race bib as early as possible this weekend, and spend as much time as you can off your feet. As the excitement builds heading into race day, it can be easy to end up spending too much time on your feet. You may feel like spending lots of time checking out the expo, or if you're out of town, go sightseeing. But try to relax instead.

Day 95, Thursday · 3 Miles Easy

Keep a comfortable, conversational pace, about one to two minutes slower than your 5K pace. Or you can cross-train on a bike or an elliptical trainer.

Day 96, Friday · Rest

The night before the race, be sure to eat dinner early, so you have plenty of time to digest your food and sleep well. A high proportion of the meal should be carbohydrates; the meal should be low in fat and protein. Avoid beans, broccoli, and other gas-causing foods. Keep alcohol to a minimum or skip it all together. And you don't need to eat an entire box of pasta. Flooding your system with more carbs than it can process may lead to digestive problems that will have you running to the porta-potty every mile. Consume moderate quantities—not huge portions—of carbs for a few days prior. Most important, don't experiment with new foods. Don't consume anything that you haven't used during training.

Day 97, Saturday · 2 Miles Easy

This run is more for your mind than for your body. You may be nervous that you've rested too much, but just stay focused on burning off your nervous energy, and shaking out the muscles for tomorrow's race. Use your extra time to pin on your race bib and fasten your chip, and try to nap or just lie down. Eat light meals throughout the day, and finish your dinner relatively early. Eating a big meal late can keep you from getting to sleep.

Day 98, Sunday · Race Day

It's race day. Good luck! Be sure to walk and stretch immediately after you finish to reduce soreness and stiffness in the days to come. Afterward, ice your legs and put up your feet.

After you've recovered, consider training with Runner's World again. Check out the plans we've designed for 5Ks, 10Ks, and the postseason.