



FREE TRAINING PLAN

First Marathon Training Plan

Build towards your first 26.2 miles with four running days, a gradual time-on-feet progression and room to recover.

GOAL

First finish

No finish-time target required.

DURATION

20 weeks

Count back from race day.

TRAINING WEEK

4 runs

Optional run/walk approach.

PEAK TRAINING

325 min/week

Longest session up to 180 minutes.

IS THIS PLAN RIGHT FOR YOU?

First-time marathon runners who already run regularly, are comfortable with three or four easy runs a week and a 60-minute long run, and can allow 20 weeks to prepare. This is not a couch-to-marathon plan.



YOUR COMPLETE PLAN ONLINE

Scan to view the marathon schedule

Website, PDF and email copy available.

<https://www.runningfastr.com/marathon-training-plan/first-marathon-training-plan/>

Week 1: Establish the routine

Weekly running: 150 minutes. Run slowly enough to talk and take planned walk breaks if helpful.

Monday

REST / RECOVERY

Rest day

Rest or gentle mobility. Avoid making up missed mileage.

Tuesday

EASY RUN / BREAKEVEN

30 minutes easy

Easy running or a comfortable run/walk approach. The time includes warm-up and cool-down. Optional short familiar strength work after Tuesday or Thursday. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Wednesday

REST / RECOVERY

Rest day

Rest or gentle mobility. Avoid making up missed mileage.

Thursday

EASY RUN / BREAKEVEN

35 minutes easy

Easy running or a comfortable run/walk approach. The time includes warm-up and cool-down. Optional short familiar strength work after Tuesday or Thursday. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Friday

REST / RECOVERY

Rest day

Rest or gentle mobility. Avoid making up missed mileage.

Saturday

EASY RUN / BREAKEVEN

25 minutes easy

Short easy run. In race week take this as an optional shakeout or rest instead. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Sunday

LONG RUN / BREAKEVEN

60 minutes easy long run

Keep a conversational effort. Try planned short walk breaks from the start, such as 4 minutes running / 1 minute walking, and adjust to what you can repeat comfortably. Practise fuel, drinks and the kit you will race in. The time includes all walk breaks. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Week 2: Establish the routine

Weekly running: 165 minutes. Run slowly enough to talk and take planned walk breaks if helpful.

Monday

REST / RECOVERY

Rest day

Rest or gentle mobility. Avoid making up missed mileage.

Tuesday

EASY RUN / BREAKEVEN

30 minutes easy

Easy running or a comfortable run/walk approach. The time includes warm-up and cool-down. Optional short familiar strength work after Tuesday or Thursday. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Wednesday

REST / RECOVERY

Rest day

Rest or gentle mobility. Avoid making up missed mileage.

Thursday

EASY RUN / BREAKEVEN

40 minutes easy

Easy running or a comfortable run/walk approach. The time includes warm-up and cool-down. Optional short familiar strength work after Tuesday or Thursday. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Friday

REST / RECOVERY

Rest day

Rest or gentle mobility. Avoid making up missed mileage.

Saturday

EASY RUN / BREAKEVEN

25 minutes easy

Short easy run. In race week take this as an optional shakeout or rest instead. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Sunday

LONG RUN / BREAKEVEN

70 minutes easy long run

Keep a conversational effort. Try planned short walk breaks from the start, such as 4 minutes running / 1 minute walking, and adjust to what you can repeat comfortably. Practise fuel, drinks and the kit you will race in. The time includes all walk breaks. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Week 3: Establish the routine

Weekly running: 180 minutes. Run slowly enough to talk and take planned walk breaks if helpful.

Monday

REST / RECOVERY

Rest day

Rest or gentle mobility. Avoid making up missed mileage.

Tuesday

EASY RUN / BREAKEVEN

35 minutes easy

Easy running or a comfortable run/walk approach. The time includes warm-up and cool-down. Optional short familiar strength work after Tuesday or Thursday. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Wednesday

REST / RECOVERY

Rest day

Rest or gentle mobility. Avoid making up missed mileage.

Thursday

EASY RUN / BREAKEVEN

40 minutes easy

Easy running or a comfortable run/walk approach. The time includes warm-up and cool-down. Optional short familiar strength work after Tuesday or Thursday. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Friday

REST / RECOVERY

Rest day

Rest or gentle mobility. Avoid making up missed mileage.

Saturday

EASY RUN / BREAKEVEN

25 minutes easy

Short easy run. In race week take this as an optional shakeout or rest instead. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Sunday

LONG RUN / BREAKEVEN

80 minutes easy long run

Keep a conversational effort. Try planned short walk breaks from the start, such as 4 minutes running / 1 minute walking, and adjust to what you can repeat comfortably. Practise fuel, drinks and the kit you will race in. The time includes all walk breaks. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Week 4: Recover and absorb

Weekly running: 145 minutes. Lighter week: absorb the work.

Monday

REST / RECOVERY

Rest day

Rest or gentle mobility. Avoid making up missed mileage.

Tuesday

EASY RUN / BREAKEVEN

30 minutes easy

Easy running or a comfortable run/walk approach. The time includes warm-up and cool-down. Optional short familiar strength work after Tuesday or Thursday. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Wednesday

REST / RECOVERY

Rest day

Rest or gentle mobility. Avoid making up missed mileage.

Thursday

EASY RUN / BREAKEVEN

35 minutes easy

Easy running or a comfortable run/walk approach. The time includes warm-up and cool-down. Optional short familiar strength work after Tuesday or Thursday. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Friday

REST / RECOVERY

Rest day

Rest or gentle mobility. Avoid making up missed mileage.

Saturday

EASY RUN / BREAKEVEN

25 minutes easy

Short easy run. In race week take this as an optional shakeout or rest instead. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Sunday

LONG RUN / BREAKEVEN

55 minutes easy long run

Keep a conversational effort. Try planned short walk breaks from the start, such as 4 minutes running / 1 minute walking, and adjust to what you can repeat comfortably. Practise fuel, drinks and the kit you will race in. The time includes all walk breaks. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Week 5: Build time on feet

Weekly running: 195 minutes. Run slowly enough to talk and take planned walk breaks if helpful.

Monday

REST / RECOVERY

Rest day

Rest or gentle mobility. Avoid making up missed mileage.

Tuesday

EASY RUN / BREAKEVEN

35 minutes easy

Easy running or a comfortable run/walk approach. The time includes warm-up and cool-down. Optional short familiar strength work after Tuesday or Thursday. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Wednesday

REST / RECOVERY

Rest day

Rest or gentle mobility. Avoid making up missed mileage.

Thursday

EASY RUN / BREAKEVEN

40 minutes easy

Easy running or a comfortable run/walk approach. The time includes warm-up and cool-down. Optional short familiar strength work after Tuesday or Thursday. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Friday

REST / RECOVERY

Rest day

Rest or gentle mobility. Avoid making up missed mileage.

Saturday

EASY RUN / BREAKEVEN

30 minutes easy

Short easy run. In race week take this as an optional shakeout or rest instead. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Sunday

LONG RUN / BREAKEVEN

90 minutes easy long run

Keep a conversational effort. Try planned short walk breaks from the start, such as 4 minutes running / 1 minute walking, and adjust to what you can repeat comfortably. Practise fuel, drinks and the kit you will race in. The time includes all walk breaks. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Week 6: Build time on feet

Weekly running: 210 minutes. Run slowly enough to talk and take planned walk breaks if helpful.

Monday

REST / RECOVERY

Rest day

Rest or gentle mobility. Avoid making up missed mileage.

Tuesday

EASY RUN / BREAKEVEN

35 minutes easy

Easy running or a comfortable run/walk approach. The time includes warm-up and cool-down. Optional short familiar strength work after Tuesday or Thursday. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Wednesday

REST / RECOVERY

Rest day

Rest or gentle mobility. Avoid making up missed mileage.

Thursday

EASY RUN / BREAKEVEN

45 minutes easy

Easy running or a comfortable run/walk approach. The time includes warm-up and cool-down. Optional short familiar strength work after Tuesday or Thursday. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Friday

REST / RECOVERY

Rest day

Rest or gentle mobility. Avoid making up missed mileage.

Saturday

EASY RUN / BREAKEVEN

30 minutes easy

Short easy run. In race week take this as an optional shakeout or rest instead. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Sunday

LONG RUN / BREAKEVEN

100 minutes easy long run

Keep a conversational effort. Try planned short walk breaks from the start, such as 4 minutes running / 1 minute walking, and adjust to what you can repeat comfortably. Practise fuel, drinks and the kit you will race in. The time includes all walk breaks. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Week 7: Build time on feet

Weekly running: 230 minutes. Run slowly enough to talk and take planned walk breaks if helpful.

Monday

REST / RECOVERY

Rest day

Rest or gentle mobility. Avoid making up missed mileage.

Tuesday

EASY RUN / BREAKEVEN

40 minutes easy

Easy running or a comfortable run/walk approach. The time includes warm-up and cool-down. Optional short familiar strength work after Tuesday or Thursday. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Wednesday

REST / RECOVERY

Rest day

Rest or gentle mobility. Avoid making up missed mileage.

Thursday

EASY RUN / BREAKEVEN

45 minutes easy

Easy running or a comfortable run/walk approach. The time includes warm-up and cool-down. Optional short familiar strength work after Tuesday or Thursday. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Friday

REST / RECOVERY

Rest day

Rest or gentle mobility. Avoid making up missed mileage.

Saturday

EASY RUN / BREAKEVEN

30 minutes easy

Short easy run. In race week take this as an optional shakeout or rest instead. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Sunday

LONG RUN / BREAKEVEN

115 minutes easy long run

Keep a conversational effort. Try planned short walk breaks from the start, such as 4 minutes running / 1 minute walking, and adjust to what you can repeat comfortably. Practise fuel, drinks and the kit you will race in. The time includes all walk breaks. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Week 8: Recover and absorb

Weekly running: 185 minutes. Lighter week: absorb the work.

Monday

REST / RECOVERY

Rest day

Rest or gentle mobility. Avoid making up missed mileage.

Tuesday

EASY RUN / BREAKEVEN

30 minutes easy

Easy running or a comfortable run/walk approach. The time includes warm-up and cool-down. Optional short familiar strength work after Tuesday or Thursday. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Wednesday

REST / RECOVERY

Rest day

Rest or gentle mobility. Avoid making up missed mileage.

Thursday

EASY RUN / BREAKEVEN

45 minutes easy

Easy running or a comfortable run/walk approach. The time includes warm-up and cool-down. Optional short familiar strength work after Tuesday or Thursday. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Friday

REST / RECOVERY

Rest day

Rest or gentle mobility. Avoid making up missed mileage.

Saturday

EASY RUN / BREAKEVEN

35 minutes easy

Short easy run. In race week take this as an optional shakeout or rest instead. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Sunday

LONG RUN / BREAKEVEN

75 minutes easy long run

Keep a conversational effort. Try planned short walk breaks from the start, such as 4 minutes running / 1 minute walking, and adjust to what you can repeat comfortably. Practise fuel, drinks and the kit you will race in. The time includes all walk breaks. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Week 9: Build time on feet

Weekly running: 245 minutes. Run slowly enough to talk and take planned walk breaks if helpful.

Monday

REST / RECOVERY

Rest day

Rest or gentle mobility. Avoid making up missed mileage.

Tuesday

EASY RUN / BREAKEVEN

40 minutes easy

Easy running or a comfortable run/walk approach. The time includes warm-up and cool-down. Optional short familiar strength work after Tuesday or Thursday. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Wednesday

REST / RECOVERY

Rest day

Rest or gentle mobility. Avoid making up missed mileage.

Thursday

EASY RUN / BREAKEVEN

50 minutes easy

Easy running or a comfortable run/walk approach. The time includes warm-up and cool-down. Optional short familiar strength work after Tuesday or Thursday. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Friday

REST / RECOVERY

Rest day

Rest or gentle mobility. Avoid making up missed mileage.

Saturday

EASY RUN / BREAKEVEN

30 minutes easy

Short easy run. In race week take this as an optional shakeout or rest instead. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Sunday

LONG RUN / BREAKEVEN

125 minutes easy long run

Keep a conversational effort. Try planned short walk breaks from the start, such as 4 minutes running / 1 minute walking, and adjust to what you can repeat comfortably. Practise fuel, drinks and the kit you will race in. The time includes all walk breaks. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Week 10: Build time on feet

Weekly running: 260 minutes. Run slowly enough to talk and take planned walk breaks if helpful.

Monday

REST / RECOVERY

Rest day

Rest or gentle mobility. Avoid making up missed mileage.

Tuesday

EASY RUN / BREAKEVEN

40 minutes easy

Easy running or a comfortable run/walk approach. The time includes warm-up and cool-down. Optional short familiar strength work after Tuesday or Thursday. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Wednesday

REST / RECOVERY

Rest day

Rest or gentle mobility. Avoid making up missed mileage.

Thursday

EASY RUN / BREAKEVEN

50 minutes easy

Easy running or a comfortable run/walk approach. The time includes warm-up and cool-down. Optional short familiar strength work after Tuesday or Thursday. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Friday

REST / RECOVERY

Rest day

Rest or gentle mobility. Avoid making up missed mileage.

Saturday

EASY RUN / BREAKEVEN

35 minutes easy

Short easy run. In race week take this as an optional shakeout or rest instead. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Sunday

LONG RUN / BREAKEVEN

135 minutes easy long run

Keep a conversational effort. Try planned short walk breaks from the start, such as 4 minutes running / 1 minute walking, and adjust to what you can repeat comfortably. Practise fuel, drinks and the kit you will race in. The time includes all walk breaks. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Week 11: Build time on feet

Weekly running: 280 minutes. Run slowly enough to talk and take planned walk breaks if helpful.

Monday

REST / RECOVERY

Rest day

Rest or gentle mobility. Avoid making up missed mileage.

Tuesday

EASY RUN / BREAKEVEN

45 minutes easy

Easy running or a comfortable run/walk approach. The time includes warm-up and cool-down. Optional short familiar strength work after Tuesday or Thursday. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Wednesday

REST / RECOVERY

Rest day

Rest or gentle mobility. Avoid making up missed mileage.

Thursday

EASY RUN / BREAKEVEN

50 minutes easy

Easy running or a comfortable run/walk approach. The time includes warm-up and cool-down. Optional short familiar strength work after Tuesday or Thursday. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Friday

REST / RECOVERY

Rest day

Rest or gentle mobility. Avoid making up missed mileage.

Saturday

EASY RUN / BREAKEVEN

35 minutes easy

Short easy run. In race week take this as an optional shakeout or rest instead. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Sunday

LONG RUN / BREAKEVEN

150 minutes easy long run

Keep a conversational effort. Try planned short walk breaks from the start, such as 4 minutes running / 1 minute walking, and adjust to what you can repeat comfortably. Practise fuel, drinks and the kit you will race in. The time includes all walk breaks. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Week 12: Recover and absorb

Weekly running: 220 minutes. Lighter week: absorb the work.

Monday

REST / RECOVERY

Rest day

Rest or gentle mobility. Avoid making up missed mileage.

Tuesday

EASY RUN / BREAKEVEN

35 minutes easy

Easy running or a comfortable run/walk approach. The time includes warm-up and cool-down. Optional short familiar strength work after Tuesday or Thursday. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Wednesday

REST / RECOVERY

Rest day

Rest or gentle mobility. Avoid making up missed mileage.

Thursday

EASY RUN / BREAKEVEN

50 minutes easy

Easy running or a comfortable run/walk approach. The time includes warm-up and cool-down. Optional short familiar strength work after Tuesday or Thursday. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Friday

REST / RECOVERY

Rest day

Rest or gentle mobility. Avoid making up missed mileage.

Saturday

EASY RUN / BREAKEVEN

35 minutes easy

Short easy run. In race week take this as an optional shakeout or rest instead. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Sunday

LONG RUN / BREAKEVEN

100 minutes easy long run

Keep a conversational effort. Try planned short walk breaks from the start, such as 4 minutes running / 1 minute walking, and adjust to what you can repeat comfortably. Practise fuel, drinks and the kit you will race in. The time includes all walk breaks. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Week 13: Practise race-day preparation

Weekly running: 290 minutes. Run slowly enough to talk and take planned walk breaks if helpful.

Monday

REST / RECOVERY

Rest day

Rest or gentle mobility. Avoid making up missed mileage.

Tuesday

EASY RUN / BREAKEVEN

45 minutes easy

Easy running or a comfortable run/walk approach. The time includes warm-up and cool-down. Optional short familiar strength work after Tuesday or Thursday. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Wednesday

REST / RECOVERY

Rest day

Rest or gentle mobility. Avoid making up missed mileage.

Thursday

EASY RUN / BREAKEVEN

50 minutes easy

Easy running or a comfortable run/walk approach. The time includes warm-up and cool-down. Optional short familiar strength work after Tuesday or Thursday. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Friday

REST / RECOVERY

Rest day

Rest or gentle mobility. Avoid making up missed mileage.

Saturday

EASY RUN / BREAKEVEN

35 minutes easy

Short easy run. In race week take this as an optional shakeout or rest instead. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Sunday

LONG RUN / BREAKEVEN

160 minutes easy long run

Keep a conversational effort. Try planned short walk breaks from the start, such as 4 minutes running / 1 minute walking, and adjust to what you can repeat comfortably. Practise fuel, drinks and the kit you will race in. The time includes all walk breaks. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Week 14: Practise race-day preparation

Weekly running: 305 minutes. Run slowly enough to talk and take planned walk breaks if helpful.

Monday

REST / RECOVERY

Rest day

Rest or gentle mobility. Avoid making up missed mileage.

Tuesday

EASY RUN / BREAKEVEN

45 minutes easy

Easy running or a comfortable run/walk approach. The time includes warm-up and cool-down. Optional short familiar strength work after Tuesday or Thursday. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Wednesday

REST / RECOVERY

Rest day

Rest or gentle mobility. Avoid making up missed mileage.

Thursday

EASY RUN / BREAKEVEN

55 minutes easy

Easy running or a comfortable run/walk approach. The time includes warm-up and cool-down. Optional short familiar strength work after Tuesday or Thursday. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Friday

REST / RECOVERY

Rest day

Rest or gentle mobility. Avoid making up missed mileage.

Saturday

EASY RUN / BREAKEVEN

35 minutes easy

Short easy run. In race week take this as an optional shakeout or rest instead. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Sunday

LONG RUN / BREAKEVEN

170 minutes easy long run

Keep a conversational effort. Try planned short walk breaks from the start, such as 4 minutes running / 1 minute walking, and adjust to what you can repeat comfortably. Practise fuel, drinks and the kit you will race in. The time includes all walk breaks. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Week 15: Practise race-day preparation

Weekly running: 320 minutes. Run slowly enough to talk and take planned walk breaks if helpful.

Monday

REST / RECOVERY

Rest day

Rest or gentle mobility. Avoid making up missed mileage.

Tuesday

EASY RUN / BREAKEVEN

45 minutes easy

Easy running or a comfortable run/walk approach. The time includes warm-up and cool-down. Optional short familiar strength work after Tuesday or Thursday. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Wednesday

REST / RECOVERY

Rest day

Rest or gentle mobility. Avoid making up missed mileage.

Thursday

EASY RUN / BREAKEVEN

60 minutes easy

Easy running or a comfortable run/walk approach. The time includes warm-up and cool-down. Optional short familiar strength work after Tuesday or Thursday. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Friday

REST / RECOVERY

Rest day

Rest or gentle mobility. Avoid making up missed mileage.

Saturday

EASY RUN / BREAKEVEN

35 minutes easy

Short easy run. In race week take this as an optional shakeout or rest instead. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Sunday

LONG RUN / BREAKEVEN

180 minutes easy long run

Keep a conversational effort. Try planned short walk breaks from the start, such as 4 minutes running / 1 minute walking, and adjust to what you can repeat comfortably. Practise fuel, drinks and the kit you will race in. The time includes all walk breaks. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Week 16: Recover and absorb

Weekly running: 250 minutes. Lighter week: absorb the work.

Monday

REST / RECOVERY

Rest day

Rest or gentle mobility. Avoid making up missed mileage.

Tuesday

EASY RUN / BREAKEVEN

40 minutes easy

Easy running or a comfortable run/walk approach. The time includes warm-up and cool-down. Optional short familiar strength work after Tuesday or Thursday. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Wednesday

REST / RECOVERY

Rest day

Rest or gentle mobility. Avoid making up missed mileage.

Thursday

EASY RUN / BREAKEVEN

55 minutes easy

Easy running or a comfortable run/walk approach. The time includes warm-up and cool-down. Optional short familiar strength work after Tuesday or Thursday. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Friday

REST / RECOVERY

Rest day

Rest or gentle mobility. Avoid making up missed mileage.

Saturday

EASY RUN / BREAKEVEN

35 minutes easy

Short easy run. In race week take this as an optional shakeout or rest instead. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Sunday

LONG RUN / BREAKEVEN

120 minutes easy long run

Keep a conversational effort. Try planned short walk breaks from the start, such as 4 minutes running / 1 minute walking, and adjust to what you can repeat comfortably. Practise fuel, drinks and the kit you will race in. The time includes all walk breaks. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Week 17: Practise race-day preparation

Weekly running: 325 minutes. Run slowly enough to talk and take planned walk breaks if helpful.

Monday

REST / RECOVERY

Rest day

Rest or gentle mobility. Avoid making up missed mileage.

Tuesday

EASY RUN / BREAKEVEN

50 minutes easy

Easy running or a comfortable run/walk approach. The time includes warm-up and cool-down. Optional short familiar strength work after Tuesday or Thursday. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Wednesday

REST / RECOVERY

Rest day

Rest or gentle mobility. Avoid making up missed mileage.

Thursday

EASY RUN / BREAKEVEN

60 minutes easy

Easy running or a comfortable run/walk approach. The time includes warm-up and cool-down. Optional short familiar strength work after Tuesday or Thursday. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Friday

REST / RECOVERY

Rest day

Rest or gentle mobility. Avoid making up missed mileage.

Saturday

EASY RUN / BREAKEVEN

35 minutes easy

Short easy run. In race week take this as an optional shakeout or rest instead. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Sunday

LONG RUN / BREAKEVEN

180 minutes easy long run

Keep a conversational effort. Try planned short walk breaks from the start, such as 4 minutes running / 1 minute walking, and adjust to what you can repeat comfortably. Practise fuel, drinks and the kit you will race in. The time includes all walk breaks. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Week 18: Taper and freshen up

Weekly running: 240 minutes. Taper: keep everything comfortable.

Monday	REST / RECOVERY Rest day Rest or gentle mobility. Avoid making up missed mileage.
Tuesday	EASY RUN / BREAKEVEN 35 minutes easy Easy running or a comfortable run/walk approach. The time includes warm-up and cool-down. Optional short familiar strength work after Tuesday or Thursday. Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required
Wednesday	REST / RECOVERY Rest day Rest or gentle mobility. Avoid making up missed mileage.
Thursday	EASY RUN / BREAKEVEN 50 minutes easy Easy running or a comfortable run/walk approach. The time includes warm-up and cool-down. Optional short familiar strength work after Tuesday or Thursday. Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required
Friday	REST / RECOVERY Rest day Rest or gentle mobility. Avoid making up missed mileage.
Saturday	EASY RUN / BREAKEVEN 35 minutes easy Short easy run. In race week take this as an optional shakeout or rest instead. Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required
Sunday	LONG RUN / BREAKEVEN 120 minutes easy long run Keep a conversational effort. Try planned short walk breaks from the start, such as 4 minutes running / 1 minute walking, and adjust to what you can repeat comfortably. Practise fuel, drinks and the kit you will race in. The time includes all walk breaks. Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Week 19: Taper and freshen up

Weekly running: 175 minutes. Taper: keep everything comfortable.

Monday

REST / RECOVERY

Rest day

Rest or gentle mobility. Avoid making up missed mileage.

Tuesday

EASY RUN / BREAKEVEN

30 minutes easy

Easy running or a comfortable run/walk approach. The time includes warm-up and cool-down. Optional short familiar strength work after Tuesday or Thursday. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Wednesday

REST / RECOVERY

Rest day

Rest or gentle mobility. Avoid making up missed mileage.

Thursday

EASY RUN / BREAKEVEN

45 minutes easy

Easy running or a comfortable run/walk approach. The time includes warm-up and cool-down. Optional short familiar strength work after Tuesday or Thursday. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Friday

REST / RECOVERY

Rest day

Rest or gentle mobility. Avoid making up missed mileage.

Saturday

EASY RUN / BREAKEVEN

25 minutes easy

Short easy run. In race week take this as an optional shakeout or rest instead. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Sunday

LONG RUN / BREAKEVEN

75 minutes easy long run

Keep a conversational effort. Try planned short walk breaks from the start, such as 4 minutes running / 1 minute walking, and adjust to what you can repeat comfortably. Practise fuel, drinks and the kit you will race in. The time includes all walk breaks. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Week 20: Race week

Weekly running: 100 minutes before the marathon; race time is additional. Taper: keep everything comfortable.

Monday

REST / RECOVERY

Rest day

Rest or gentle mobility. Avoid making up missed mileage.

Tuesday

EASY RUN / BREAKEVEN

30 minutes easy

Easy running or a comfortable run/walk approach. The time includes warm-up and cool-down. Optional short familiar strength work after Tuesday or Thursday. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Wednesday

REST / RECOVERY

Rest day

Rest or gentle mobility. Avoid making up missed mileage.

Thursday

EASY RUN / BREAKEVEN

45 minutes easy

Easy running or a comfortable run/walk approach. The time includes warm-up and cool-down. Optional short familiar strength work after Tuesday or Thursday. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Friday

REST / RECOVERY

Rest day

Rest or gentle mobility. Avoid making up missed mileage.

Saturday

EASY RUN / BREAKEVEN

25 minutes easy

Short easy run. In race week take this as an optional shakeout or rest instead. | Pace: Conversational effort; no finish-time pace required

Sunday

RACE / BREAKTHROUGH

Your first marathon: 26.2 miles / 42.195 km

Start at a sustainable effort. Use the run/walk rhythm and fuelling you practised. Check your race time limit and walking rules beforehand; finishing well is the goal. | Pace: Comfortable starting effort; practised run/walk rhythm if using one

Paces and session guide

EASY EFFORT

Comfortable conversation

Slow down or take walk breaks if you cannot talk comfortably. Time on feet matters more than distance.

RUN/WALK OPTION

Practise a repeatable rhythm

For example, 4 minutes easy running / 1 minute walking. Adjust the ratio to your fitness and use it consistently from the start.

RACE APPROACH

Finish with control

Start conservatively. Use practised fuel and walking breaks; check the race cut-off and walking rules before entering.

Build time on feet

This plan prescribes minutes so a slower runner does not need an excessively long outing to meet a mileage target.

Easy sessions

Four runs a week, all conversational. Walk breaks are part of the session time. Start with a running base and repeat or reduce a week if recovery requires it.

Long sessions

Build from 60 minutes towards up to 180 minutes, with lighter recovery weeks. There is no requirement to run 26.2 miles before race day.

Rest and strength

Monday, Wednesday and Friday are rest days. Optional short familiar strength work can follow Tuesday or Thursday; reduce it during the taper.

Prepare for race day

Consistency, fuel and sustainable pacing are your main sessions.

Run/walk practice

Choose a rhythm you can repeat easily. Use planned breaks before you are exhausted and keep the running sections relaxed.

Fuelling rehearsal

Practise breakfast, drinks and regular fuel during long runs. Check carbohydrate per serving and test the actual products available at your race. Race day is not the time to try something new.

Taper and pacing

Reduce volume over the final three weeks. Start the race controlled, check official course markers and adjust for conditions. A small pace margin does not mean banking time early.

How to use this plan

1. Count back 20 weeks from a Sunday marathon. Start only with regular running and a comfortable 60-minute long run.
2. All running times include warm-up, cool-down and planned walking. Weekly totals are training minutes, not estimated distance. Race-week training minutes exclude the marathon itself.
3. Keep the four sessions conversational. Move days if needed while retaining recovery around the long run.
4. Use long sessions to practise fuel, drinks, breakfast and kit. Check the event time limit and walking policy; this plan does not promise a particular finishing time.
5. Recovery weeks are 4, 8, 12 and 16. Reduce training over the final three weeks. Do not make up missed sessions.
6. If a week is too demanding, repeat or reduce it. After a longer interruption, reassess the race date. Stop if pain worsens or changes your stride.

YOUR NEXT PB

Sub 5 Hour Marathon Training Plan

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Training guidance is general information, not personalised medical advice. Reduce or stop training if pain changes your stride or worsens.