

12-Week Half Marathon Training for Beginner Runners

Before starting any training for running the 13.1-mile half marathon distance, whether it's in an organized race or on your own, you should be regularly running approximately 10 to 15 miles per week.

If you're a beginning runner, it's always a good idea to consult your doctor before starting anything as strenuous as training for a half marathon, especially if you're over age 35 or 40. With that in mind, below is the training schedule that the publisher of this site has followed in past races, one that's worked out well.

It's based on a simple philosophy – using the mid-week runs for conditioning and feeling out your proper pace, and using the once-per-week long runs to get you mentally prepared for running 13.1 miles:

12-Week Training Plan							
Week	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
1	off	3 miles	3 miles	3 miles	off	4 miles	3 miles
2	off	3 miles	4 miles	3 miles	off	4 miles	3 miles
3	off	3 miles	4 miles	3 miles	off	5 miles	3 miles
4	off	3 miles	5 miles	3 miles	off	6 miles	4 miles
5	off	4 miles	5 miles	4 miles	off	7 miles	3 miles
6	off	4 miles	4 miles	4 miles	off	8 miles	4 miles
7	off	4 miles	6 miles	4 miles	off	9 miles	4 miles
8	off	4 miles	6 miles	4 miles	off	10 miles	4 miles
9	off	4 miles	6 miles	4 miles	off	11 miles	3 miles
10	off	4 miles	5 miles	4 miles	off	12 miles	4 miles
11	off	4 miles	5 miles	4 miles	off	6 miles	3 miles
12	off	3 miles	5 miles	3 miles	off	13.1 miles!	off

Rest Days

Especially for beginning runners or those who may be experienced at running but training for their first half marathon, it's important to take two days off from running during the week to allow your joints and muscles adequate time to rest.

I've always taken two days off during the week, on Mondays and Fridays, as that allows a day off after your long run as well as a day off after your three mid-week running days.

Injury Prevention

The most important factor in completing any half marathon training plan is staying consistent. Listen to your body. If you begin to feel aches or pain during or after runs, you may be pushing yourself too hard.

Water

On your weekend long runs, make sure to bring plenty of water to drink after your run and during your run. It's important especially when your long runs start reaching distances of seven, eight and nine miles or longer, to have water at the mid-point of your long run as well as at the end.

Sports drinks such as Gatorade or Powerade are fine as well, but you can't go wrong with water. Also, this will get your body accustomed to what your race conditions will be like, when you'll be able to have water most likely at every two miles in the race.

Walking & Taking Breaks

If you feel the need to walk or take a break in your long run or during any of your training runs, by all means don't feel guilty or hesitant about doing so. Especially for beginners, the goal is to complete the race more so than to compete, and when finishing is your goal, it's perfectly fine to take walking breaks here and there.

Listen to what your body is telling you, as it's quite possible that perhaps you're trying to maintain too fast a pace; consider slowing yours or using the run-walk method