



Generic Half Marathon Training Program

The 13.1 mile half marathon is one of the most respected races in endurance athletics. The physiology of the half marathon is straightforward - it is a test of stamina. The keys to a successful half marathon are (1) to begin with a well-structured training plan that properly incorporates your capabilities and goals and (2) to follow that plan with unwavering consistency.

We have developed a 12-week training plan for novice runners/walkers to use in training for the half marathon (13.1 miles). This program is appropriate for those who wish to walk, run, or walk/run the half marathon. Do not fear! Twelve weeks is plenty enough time for novice endurance athletes to prepare their minds and bodies to complete a half marathon. Remember, endurance athletes aren't made overnight. People become half marathoners with intelligent and consistent training.

Good luck! Feel free to email me with any questions.

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Half Marathon Training Program

Week #	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
1	2 easy	Rest	2 easy	2 easy	Rest	3 long	Rest
2	2 easy	Rest	2 easy	2 easy	Rest	Rest	4 long
3	2 easy	Rest	2 easy	2 easy	Rest	5 long	Rest
4	2 easy	Rest	3 easy	2 easy	Rest	Rest	6 long
5	3 easy	Rest	3 easy	2 easy	Rest	7 long	Rest
6	3 easy	Rest	3 easy	2 easy	Rest	Rest	8 long
7	3 easy	Rest	4 easy	3 easy	Rest	9 long	Rest
8	3 easy	Rest	4 easy	3 easy	Rest	Rest	10 long
9	4 easy	Rest	4 easy	3 easy	Rest	Rest	11 long
10	4 easy	Rest	5 easy	3 easy	Rest	12 long	Rest
11	4 easy	Rest	5 easy	3 easy	Rest	Rest	10 long
12	4 easy	Rest	3 easy	3 easy	Rest	Rest	13.1 Race

Training Definitions

- Easy Days** Easy workouts should be just that – easy. You should run and/or walk at a pace that allows you to hold a conversation. The number is the number of *miles* that you need to run and/or walk.
- Rest Days** Rest is a very important part of the training program. You will *not* improve faster by substituting additional runs in place of rest days.
- Long Days** A long workout is scheduled once each week. Run and/or walk at the pace at which you hope to complete the half marathon. Just cover the distance. Don't worry about the time. Like the easy workouts, stay conversational. The number is the number of *miles* that you need to run and/or walk.

A Note to Rookies – The Benefits of Running AND Walking

Believe it or not, it is easier to run/walk a half marathon than it is to walk the entire distance. Alternating walking and running: (1) “mixes up” the muscles that you will be using, reducing the chance of overusing (and exhausting or injuring) a particular muscle and (2) simply gets you to the finish line faster, allowing you to go farther in training and reducing the time spent on your feet on marathon morning. Unless you have a medical condition that prevents you from running at all, you should consider a walk/run.

Walk/run training is straightforward. During the first week of your training, acclimate yourself to the program by walking each workout. During the second week, break each workout into 10 minute segments. Run the 1st minute of each segment, and walk the remaining 9 minutes. Repeat this format for the entire workout. The next week (week 3), trade another minute of walking for one of running. Therefore, each 10 minute segment will consist of 2 minutes of running followed by 8 minutes of walking. Continue to trade an additional minute of walking for a minute of running each week. Eventually, your body will tell you that enough is enough! -- “Quit adding running minutes, will you please! Last week felt great. This week is too hard.” You will know when you reach this point. At this point, trade walking minutes for running minutes only every 2 weeks. At some point, you will no longer adapt to the increased running time. – You’ve found the ratio that you’ll use for the half marathon! Most novice endurance athletes build up to equal amounts of running and walking for the race. Athletes with some running background can build to 100% running over a typical 12-week training schedule.

Here is an example of how it may go for you:

Week #1	0 run/10 walk	This feels too easy.
Week #2	1 run/9 walk	Running feels strange, but it doesn't fatigue me too terribly.
Week #3	2 run/8 walk	I'm running smooth this week, but 2 minutes is a long time.
Week #4	3 run/7 walk	Too much! I can't run more than this. I'll hold this ratio.
Week #4	3 run/7 walk	Much easier this week. I think I can run 4 minutes!
Week #5	4 run/6 walk	I can do it, but I think I'd better stop here.
Week #6	4 run/6 walk	This is great. I'll complete the training schedule using 4/6!

The benefit of this program is that it follows "the 10% rule," which states that you are more likely to get injured if you increase your overall running mileage by more than 10% each week. Beginners who increase their mileage more than 10% during any given week get injured at a rate much higher than those who follow a slow, steady growth pattern. By trading 10% of the workout time from running to walking each week, this program ensures that your mileage increase will remain at 10% (even if you walk very, very slow).

Don't fall into the trap of thinking that you must continually increase your running to walking ratio. Progress to a level where you feel strong and healthy and maintain that level.