Intermediate Marathon Training Plan
Sixteen Weeks - Four Runs Weekly

Introduction

Thanks for choosing this 16 week training programme to guide you through the process of building towards your upcoming marathon.

The running schedule over the coming weeks and months will steadily increase to have you ready to smash your goals on marathon day.

In formulating this programme, my aim was to consolidate over a decade's experience of working exclusively with distance runners, into an effective four run per week marathon training plan, that will help you push your body to new levels of running fitness.

As runners, we all know what a challenge it can be to remain injury-free in times of heavy training load. To hit new levels of running performance, you will need to remain uninjured so as to build consistency in your run training, week-after-week.

Helping you remain injury-free is the biggest focus of this programme, which is why I've incorporated strength and mobility routines into each week, alongside the running sessions.

Make no mistake, these strength and mobility workouts are as important as the running itself.

I look forward to guiding you through the process.

Best of luck with your training.

James

James Dunne
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Before You Get Started

This sixteen week training plan provides a structured and progressive path to prepare you for your upcoming marathon.

It is important however that you have achieved a pre-requisite degree of running fitness ahead of getting started with this marathon training plan. Otherwise you should take time to do so. This will help you transition into the programme more successfully and reduce injury risk.

In preparation for this programme, please ensure that you are able to:

✅ Run 8 miles at a slow and relaxed pace

✅ Consistently run 4 days per week for the last 4-6 weeks

✅ Run a minimum of 20-25 miles per week consistently for the last 4-6 weeks

If you have successfully achieved all three of the above pre-requisites, then you're ready to get started!

If not, please give yourself enough time to build towards these standards, before your programme begins. Hopefully you've given yourself enough time to factor this in before marathon training needs to begin.

Disclaimer

Always warm up adequately before any workout and immediately cease any exercise which results in pain or discomfort. Consult a doctor before beginning any new exercise regime. Whilst all exercises have been chosen to be appropriate and of benefit to runners, James Dunne shall not be held responsible for any loss or injury that is incurred through the use of the information or exercises within this document.
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How to Use This Plan

I've tried to keep this training plan as concise and easy to use as possible. Regardless, there are a few bits which will require a little explanation!

The following page is an "at a glance" view of how the programme develops from week-to-week, as your fitness improves, and marathon day gets closer. The next pages take you trough the days of each week, individually.

The last section of this document provides specific details of how to perform each session, as well as information on pacing, nutrition and other frequently asked questions. This is where you will find explanation of terms you may not have come across before, like "***tempo***", "***strides***" and "***intervals***".

Fitting to Your Schedule

If possible, try to keep the runs on the specified days of the week. Having said that, I'm a realist. I appreciate that we all have different commitments and weekly schedules.

If you do need to shuffle the days of the programme around, please make sure you maintain adequate non-running recovery days after the long slow run, and after the tempo / intervals sessions.

Running 3 x Weekly

While it's fair to say that this programme works best when you run **four** times weekly, with you following the plan as closely as you can, some runners will prefer to run three times weekly.

If this is the case with you, feel free to swap either the Tuesday (preferred option) or Saturday sessions for 60-90 minutes of steady state cardio on either a bike, elliptical trainer, swimming, aqua jogging, or other similar aerobic exercise.

Strength & Mobility Workouts

I have made a point of incorporating specific strength and mobility workouts into each week, to help you stay injury free through your training. **You can download details for each of these workouts here**.

Mileage Overview

Here's a handy "at a glance" guide to this marathon training programme, detailing not only the progressions in terms of mileage, but also where the strength and mobility sessions (shown by: **STR**) fit into the running schedule.

Week	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Weekly Miles
1	STR	4	STR	6 + STR	-	6 + STR	8	24
2	STR	4	STR	6 + STR	-	6 + STR	10	26
3	STR	4	STR	4 + STR	-	3 + STR	6	17
4	STR	6	STR	6 + STR	-	8 + STR	12	32
5	STR	6	STR	6 + STR	-	8 + STR	14	34
6	STR	6	STR	6 + STR	-	8 + STR	16	36
7	STR	4	STR	4 + STR	-	6 + STR	10	24
8	STR	8	STR	7 + STR	-	8 + STR	14	37
9	STR	8	STR	7 + STR	-	10 + STR	16	41
10	STR	8	STR	7 + STR	-	10 + STR	18	43
11	STR	4	STR	6 + STR	-	6 + STR	10	26
12	STR	10	STR	8 + STR	-	10 + STR	18	46
13	STR	10	STR	8 + STR	-	10 + STR	20	48
14	STR	10	STR	8 + STR	-	10 + STR	12	40
15	STR	6	STR	4 + STR	-	5 + STR	8	23
16	STR	3	STR	3 + STR	-	2	26.2	34.2

Easier Week (Week 3)

Easier Week (Week 7)

Easier Week (Week 11)

Taper Weeks (Week 14)

Race Week (Week 16)

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Week 1

Monday

Strength & Mobility
- Workout 1

Tuesday

4 mile easy paced run

Wednesday

Strength & Mobility
- Workout 2

Thursday

6 mile hilly tempo workout
- 5 minutes gradual warm-up
- 2 miles at "tempo" effort on a hilly route
- 1 mile "easy" effort recovery
- 2 miles at "tempo" effort on a hilly route
- 1 mile "easy" effort recovery
- 5 minutes cool-down

Strength & Mobility
- Workout 3

Friday

REST

Saturday

6 mile easy paced run

Strength & Mobility
- Workout 1

Sunday

8 mile long slow run
- Finish the run with 4-6 x 60m sets of "strides", accelerating from easy pace to what feels like your 5km race pace, focused on maintaining good form.

👉 **click here for strength and mobility workout details and tutorial videos** 👈

Please refer to page 23 for detailed pacing guidance

Week 2

Monday

Strength & Mobility
- Workout 1

Tuesday

4 mile easy paced run

Wednesday

Strength & Mobility
- Workout 2

Thursday

Intervals workout
- 10 minutes easy warm-up
- 12 x 400m @ "interval" pace
  (200m easy jog recovery between reps)
- 10 minutes easy cool-down

Strength & Mobility
- Workout 3

Friday

REST

Saturday

6 mile easy paced run

Strength & Mobility
- Workout 2

Sunday

10 mile long slow run
- Finish the run with 4-6 x 60m sets of "strides", accelerating from easy pace to what feels like your 5km race pace, focused on maintaining good form.

👉 **click here for strength and mobility workout details and tutorial videos** 👈

Please refer to page 23 for detailed pacing guidance

Week 3
Easier Week

Monday

Strength & Mobility
- Workout 1

Tuesday

4 mile easy paced run

Wednesday

Strength & Mobility
- Workout 2

Thursday

4 mile hilly tempo workout
- 5 minutes gradual warm-up
- 3 miles at "tempo" effort on a hilly route
- 5 minutes cool-down

Strength & Mobility
- Workout 3

Friday

REST

Saturday

3 mile easy paced run

Strength & Mobility
- Workout 3

Sunday

6 mile long slow run
- Finish the run with 4-6 x 60m sets of "strides", accelerating from easy pace to what feels like your 5km race pace, focused on maintaining good form.

OR…

10km Race / Time Trial
- This would be a great opportunity to perform a best effort 10km, as a gauge of your current fitness. Your time here can be used in the VDOT calculator mentioned on page 23 to set your training paces.

👉 **click here for strength and mobility workout details and tutorial videos** 👈

Please refer to page 23 for detailed pacing guidance

Week 4

Monday

Strength & Mobility
- Workout 1

Tuesday

6 mile easy paced run

Wednesday

Strength & Mobility
- Workout 2

Thursday

Intervals workout
- 10 minutes easy warm-up
- 6 x 800m @ "interval" pace
  (400m easy jog recovery between reps)
- 10 minutes easy cool-down

Strength & Mobility
- Workout 3

Friday

REST

Saturday

8 mile easy paced run

Strength & Mobility
- Workout 1

Sunday

12 mile long slow run (with faster blocks)
- Incorporate 2 x 2 mile blocks of target marathon pace running within this otherwise easy paced run (e.g. between miles 3 and 5, then again between miles 8 and 10).
- Finish the run with 4-6 x 60m sets of "strides", accelerating from easy pace to what feels like your 5km race pace, focused on maintaining good form.

👉 **click here for strength and mobility workout details and tutorial videos** 👈
Please refer to page 23 for detailed pacing guidance

Week 5

Monday

Strength & Mobility
- Workout 1

Tuesday

6 mile easy paced run

Wednesday

Strength & Mobility
- Workout 2

Thursday

6 mile hilly tempo workout
- 5 minutes gradual warm-up
- 3 miles at "tempo" effort on a hilly route
- 1 mile "easy" effort recovery
- 2 miles at "tempo" effort on a hilly route
- 5 minutes cool-down

Strength & Mobility
- Workout 3

Friday

REST

Saturday

8 mile easy paced run

Strength & Mobility
- Workout 2

Sunday

14 mile long slow run
- Finish the run with 4-6 x 60m sets of "strides", accelerating from easy pace to what feels like your 5km race pace, focused on maintaining good form.
-

👉 **click here for strength and mobility workout details and tutorial videos** 👈
Please refer to page 23 for detailed pacing guidance

Week 6

Monday

Strength & Mobility
- Workout 1

Tuesday

6 mile easy paced run

Wednesday

Strength & Mobility
- Workout 2

Thursday

Intervals workout
- 10 minutes easy warm-up
- 3 x 1000m @ "interval" pace
  (400m easy jog recovery between reps)
- 6 x 400m @ "interval" pace
  (200m easy jog recovery between reps)
- 10 minutes easy cool-down

Strength & Mobility
- Workout 3

Friday

REST

Saturday

8 mile easy paced run

Strength & Mobility
- Workout 3

Sunday

16 mile long slow run
- Finish the run with 4-6 x 60m sets of "strides", accelerating from easy pace to what feels like your 5km race pace, focused on maintaining good form.

👉 **click here for strength and mobility workout details and tutorial videos** 👈

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Week 7
Easier Week

Monday

Strength & Mobility
- Workout 1

Tuesday

4 mile easy paced run

Wednesday

Strength & Mobility
- Workout 2

Thursday

4 mile hilly tempo workout
- 5 minutes gradual warm-up
- 3 miles at "tempo" effort on a hilly route
- 5 minutes cool-down

Strength & Mobility
- Workout 3

Friday

REST

Saturday

6 mile easy paced run

Strength & Mobility
- Workout 1

Sunday

10 mile long slow run
- Finish the run with 4-6 x 60m sets of "strides", accelerating from easy pace to what feels like your 5km race pace, focused on maintaining good form.

👉 **click here for strength and mobility workout details and tutorial videos** 👈

Please refer to page 23 for detailed pacing guidance

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Week 8

Monday

Strength & Mobility
- Workout 1

Tuesday

8 mile easy paced run

Wednesday

Strength & Mobility
- Workout 2

Thursday

Intervals workout
- 10-20 minutes easy warm-up
- 3 x 1 mile reps @ "interval" pace
  (600m easy jog recovery between reps)
- 10 minutes easy cool-down

Strength & Mobility
- Workout 3

Friday

REST

Saturday

8 mile easy paced run

Strength & Mobility
- Workout 2

Sunday

14 mile long slow run (with a faster block)
- Incorporate 1 x 2 mile block of **target marathon pace** running within this otherwise easy paced run (e.g. between miles 6 and 8).
- Finish the run with 4-6 x 60m sets of "strides", accelerating from easy pace to what feels like your 5km race pace, focused on maintaining good form.

👉 **click here for strength and mobility workout details and tutorial videos** 👈

Please refer to page 23 for detailed pacing guidance

Week 9

Monday

Strength & Mobility
- Workout 1

Tuesday

8 mile easy paced run

Wednesday

Strength & Mobility
- Workout 2

Thursday

7 mile hilly tempo workout
- 5 minutes easy warm-up
- 2 miles at "tempo" effort on a hilly route
- 1 mile easy pace
- 3 miles at "tempo" effort on a hilly route
- 5 minutes easy cool-down

Strength & Mobility
- Workout 3

Friday

REST

Saturday

10 mile easy paced run

Strength & Mobility
- Workout 3

Sunday

16 mile long slow run (with faster blocks)
- Incorporate 2 x 2 mile blocks of **target marathon pace** running within this otherwise easy paced run (e.g. between miles 3 and 5, then again between miles 9 and 11).
- Finish the run with 4-6 x 60m sets of "strides", accelerating from easy pace to what feels like your 5km race pace, focused on maintaining good form.

👉 **click here for strength and mobility workout details and tutorial videos** 👈

Please refer to page 23 for detailed pacing guidance

Week 10

Monday

Strength & Mobility
- Workout 1

Tuesday

8 mile easy paced run

Wednesday

Strength & Mobility
- Workout 2

Thursday

Intervals workout
- 10-20 minutes easy warm-up
- 3 x 1 mile reps @ "interval" pace
  (400m easy jog recovery between reps)
- 10 minutes easy cool-down

Strength & Mobility
- Workout 3

Friday

REST

Saturday

10 mile easy paced run

Strength & Mobility
- Workout 1

Sunday

18 mile long slow run (with faster blocks)
- …or 3:20hrs, which ever comes first.
- Incorporate 2 x 3 mile blocks of **target marathon pace** running within this otherwise easy paced run (e.g. between miles 3 and 6, then again between miles 12 and 15).
- Finish the run with 4-6 x 60m sets of "strides", accelerating from easy pace to what feels like your 5km race pace, focused on maintaining good form.

OR…

Half marathon as a training race
- Run a half marathon at your planned marathon race pace. Using an even split pacing strategy (i.e: try to run each mile at the same pace, if the course profile allows).

👉 **click here for strength and mobility workout details and tutorial videos** 👈

Please refer to page 23 for detailed pacing guidance

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Week 11

Easier Week

Monday

Strength & Mobility
- Workout 1

Tuesday

4 mile easy paced run

Wednesday

Strength & Mobility
- Workout 2

Thursday

6 mile hilly tempo workout
- 5 minutes gradual warm-up
- 5 miles at "tempo" effort on a hilly route
- 5 minutes cool-down

Strength & Mobility
- Workout 3

Friday

REST

Saturday

6 mile easy paced run

Strength & Mobility
- Workout 2

Sunday

10 mile long slow run (with a fast finish)
- Run the first 6 miles at your usual easy long run pace. Then finish the last 4 miles at **target marathon pace**.
- Finish the run with 4-6 x 60m sets of "strides", accelerating from easy pace to what feels like your 5km race pace, focused on maintaining good form.

👉 **click here for strength and mobility workout details and tutorial videos** 👈

Please refer to page 23 for detailed pacing guidance

Week 12

Monday

Strength & Mobility
- Workout 1

Tuesday

10 mile easy paced run

Wednesday

Strength & Mobility
- Workout 2

Thursday

Intervals workout
- 10-20 minutes easy warm-up
- 4 x 800m @ "interval" pace
  (400m easy jog recovery between reps)
- 2 x 1 mile reps @ "interval" pace
  (400m easy jog recovery between reps)
- 10 minutes easy cool-down

Strength & Mobility
- Workout 3

Friday

REST

Saturday

10 mile easy paced run

Strength & Mobility
- Workout 3

Sunday

18 mile long slow run (with a fast finish)
- …or 3:20hrs, which ever comes first.
- Run the first 80 minutes at your usual easy long run pace. Then finish the run at **target marathon pace**.
- Finish the run with 4-6 x 60m sets of "strides", accelerating from easy pace to what feels like your 5km race pace, focused on maintaining good form.

👉 **click here for strength and mobility workout details and tutorial videos** 👈

Please refer to page 23 for detailed pacing guidance

Week 13

Monday

Strength & Mobility
- Workout 1

Tuesday

10 mile easy paced run

Wednesday

Strength & Mobility
- Workout 2

Thursday

8 mile hilly tempo workout
- 5 minutes easy warm-up
- 3 miles at "tempo" effort on a hilly route
- 1 mile easy pace
- 3 miles at "tempo" effort on a hilly route
- 5 minutes easy cool-down

Strength & Mobility
- Workout 3

Friday

REST

Saturday

10 mile easy paced run

Strength & Mobility
- Workout 1

Sunday

20 mile long slow run (with a fast finish)
- …or 3:40hrs, which ever comes first.
- Run the first 90 minutes at your usual easy long run pace. Then finish the run at **target marathon pace**.
- Finish the run with 4-6 x 60m sets of "strides", accelerating from easy pace to what feels like your 5km race pace, focused on maintaining good form.

👉 **click here for strength and mobility workout details and tutorial videos** 👈

Please refer to page 23 for detailed pacing guidance

Week 14

Taper Week

Monday

Strength & Mobility
- Workout 1

Tuesday

10 mile easy paced run

Wednesday

Strength & Mobility
- Workout 2

Thursday

Intervals workout
- 10-20 minutes easy warm-up
- 4 x 1 mile reps @ "interval" pace
  (400m easy jog recovery between reps)
- 10 minutes easy cool-down

Strength & Mobility
- Workout 3

Friday

REST

Saturday

10 mile easy paced run

Strength & Mobility
- Workout 2

Sunday

12 mile long slow run (with a fast finish)
- Run the first 5 miles at your usual easy long run pace. Then finish the last 7 miles at **target marathon pace**.
- Finish the run with 4-6 x 60m sets of "strides", accelerating from easy pace to what feels like your 5km race pace, focused on maintaining good form.

👉 **click here for strength and mobility workout details and tutorial videos** 👈

Please refer to page 23 for detailed pacing guidance

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Week 15

Taper Week

Monday

Strength & Mobility
- Workout 1

Tuesday

6 mile TARGET MARATHON PACED run

Wednesday

Strength & Mobility
- Workout 2

Thursday

4 mile hilly tempo workout
- 5 minutes gradual warm-up
- 3 miles at "tempo" effort on a hilly route
- 5 minutes cool-down

Strength & Mobility
- Workout 3

Friday

REST

Saturday

5 mile easy paced run

Strength & Mobility
- Workout 1

Sunday

8 mile long slow run (with a fast finish)
- Run the first 3 miles at your usual easy long run pace. Then finish the last 5 miles at **target marathon pace**.
- Finish the run with 4-6 x 60m sets of "strides", accelerating from easy pace to what feels like your 5km race pace, focused on maintaining good form.

👉 **click here for strength and mobility workout details and tutorial videos** 👈
Please refer to page 23 for detailed pacing guidance

Week 16

Marathon Week

Monday

Strength & Mobility
- Workout 1 (Mobility & Activation Only)

Tuesday

3 mile TARGET MARATHON PACED run

Wednesday

Strength & Mobility
- Workout 2 (Mobility & Activation Only)

Thursday

3 mile TARGET MARATHON PACED run

Strength & Mobility
- Workout 3 (Mobility & Activation Only)

Friday

REST

Saturday

2 mile easy paced run

Sunday

MARATHON DAY - GOOD LUCK!!

👉 **click here for strength and mobility workout details and tutorial videos** 👈

Please refer to page 23 for detailed pacing guidance

Goal Setting

The whole process of training effectively for a successful marathon starts with setting a realistic goal to work towards.

Finding the balance between being "realistic" and setting a goal which is challenging enough to inspire you is certainly a challenge!

By all means, have a *dream finish time* to strive towards, but your marathon goal should be based on your current fitness level and running ability.

It's also quite reasonable to expect your marathon goal at 20 weeks out from race day, to change by the time you're 8 weeks out, as your marathon specific fitness will have most likely dramatically improved.

Getting Objective

The optional 10km race or Time Trial on the Saturday of Week 3 of this programme is there to help you gauge your current fitness objectively.

This marker of current fitness as an opportunity and the subsequent finish time to extrapolate a marathon finish time prediction from the calculator on the next page…

Find Your Training Paces

Marathon training is certainly about the mileage, but just as important is the pace at which you complete the mileage.

Many runners actually run their long runs too fast. This leads to excessive fatigue and increased injury risk as the weeks of the training plan progress. The coaching adage of "run your easy easy, and your fast runs fast" holds a lot of truth!

I find the best way to get an indication of what your training paces should be is to use Jack Daniels' VDOT Calculator, others calculators like Macmillan Running's calculator are also available, but I personally have found Jack Daniels' VDOT to be most consistently accurate.

👉 **Click Here for the VDOT Calculator** 👈

Simply input a recent race finish time - preferably 10km or Half Marathon - and the calculator will give you an indication of not just predicted marathon finish time, based on current fitness, but also training paces for your long slow "easy" run, your tempo "threshold" workouts, and your intervals of different distances.

A word of caution… Avoid the temptation to input your desired marathon finish time into the calculator, and reverse engineer what training paces you'll need to be running to be hitting to reach your goal. That's a surefire way to start over-reaching.

Instead, use your current fitness levels and then update the calculator as your fitness improves over time!

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Heart Rate Training

Many runners make use of a heart rate (HR) monitor to gauge the intensity of their training sessions.

Personally I've found this to be a very effective way of making sure that each run is being performed at the correct intensity to get the desired physiological effect from the workout.

However, I don't see use of a heart rate monitor as being a prerequisite for getting maximum benefit from this programme.

Why? In my opinion, the big limitation is the guess-timation that goes into setting-up HR training zones.

There are various equations out there when it comes to estimating HR training zones, most of which will give you very different sets of training zones. Combine that with the variability in human physiology from one person to another, and trying to work out your own zones (or relying on apps etc… to do so), becomes fairly hit-and-miss.

If you're serious about training using HR, one of the best investments you can make is to visit an exercise physiologist to get some physiological testing done. This will provide you with a scientifically derived, personalised set of training zones to work to.

If you have a set of HR training zones already, feel free to use the HR training advice provided in each of the workout details pages throughout this document.

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Workout Details
Long Slow Run ± Target Marathon Pace Blocks

What: In a given marathon training week, the long slow run is arguably the most important session; the run that the whole programme is built around. Throughout the programme, these weekly long runs will get progressively longer. Be sure to use them to practice with the nutrition / hydration options you'll be using on marathon day.

Later in the programme, we also use blocks of target marathon pace (MP) running within the long run. This helps your body learn what MP feels like on fatigued legs, and is a vital part of training specifically to reach your time goal.

If you find MP a challenge during these sessions, this might be a helpful read: **Your Target Marathon Pace Feels Too Hard?**

Why: Alongside the increasing weekly mileage, these long slow runs are how you improve endurance and stamina, both in terms of building resilience to the physical demands running long, and developing aerobic fitness and running efficiency.

There's a certain strength-endurance which is developed through running mileage into your legs, which can't be achieved in the gym. These long runs, and specifically those on already tired legs that develop this.

The mental training side also can't be underestimated. While you absolutely don't need to run 26.2 miles in training ahead of your marathon, there is a lot of confidence to be found in completing an 18 mile run in training. The extra miles on race day will be fine. Just trust the process.

If you're wondering why I only have you running up to 20 miles, no further, this might be a good read: **How Long Should Your Long Run Be?**

How: Pacing is the key to these long runs. Use the pacing calculator on **Page 23** to gauge what pace your long slow ("easy" pace) run needs to be completed at. I intentionally phrase it that way, as many runners have a tendency to run their long runs too fast and miss out on the aerobic benefits that come from training at a sufficiently slow pace. Running these long runs too fast also increases your injury risk.

If you're using a heart rate (HR) monitor, and have your HR zones set correctly, you should aim to keep your effort in your aerobic Zone 2 throughout this session, apart from the specified sessions where Target Marathon Pace is asked for.

Use the first mile as an opportunity to gradually build into the run, as a gentle warm-up. Then complete the remaining distance at a pace that should feel "conversational". You should feel in total control of your breathing rate at all times, and able to talk back and forth - or sing, as I sometimes like to do if I'm on my own!

Finish this session with sets of "strides", which are effectively 60m acceleration runs from walking pace to 5km pace, focused on form. Keep your posture tall, drive your arms, and pick your feet-up. Walk for 60-90 seconds between each of these sets of strides. These are great for reinforcing good form with tired legs. If however, you're nursing a niggle, feel free to miss these strides out.

Finish with a walk to cool down, stretch and refuel.

Workout Details
Easy Saturday Run

What: There are a couple of ways you can incorporate these Saturday runs - or easy paced runs the day before your long slow run, if you're changing the days around! I'll elaborate in the 'How' section below. Either way, these runs are a great opportunity to continue building time running aerobically, and developing your endurance and well as building your weekly mileage.

Why: I'm specifically keen to get you doing these runs the day before your long slow run. Being a five runs per week programme, you are getting a reasonable amount of recovery throughout the week… which is a good thing, especially from an injury prevention point of view. However, you'll get more from those long slow runs (especially in the peak weeks) if you go into them with fairly tired legs. I know - thank me later!

How: Pacing is the key to these easy runs. Use the pacing calculator on **Page 23** to gauge how slow your "easy" run needs to be. I intentionally phrase it that way, as many runners have a tendency to run slow runs too fast and miss out on the aerobic benefits that come from training at a sufficiently slow pace. Running these easy runs too fast also increases your injury risk. So slow down!

If you're using a heart rate (HR) monitor, and have your HR zones set correctly, you should aim to keep your effort in your aerobic Zone 2 throughout this session.

Use the first mile as an opportunity to gradually build into the run, as a gentle warm-up. Then complete the remaining distance at a pace that should feel "conversational". You should feel in total control of your breathing rate at all times, and able to talk back and forth - or sing, as I sometimes like to do if I'm on my own!

- **Option 1:** You can perform this run as a 'normal' run and complete the distance stated for the day at one steady pace.
- **Option 2:** Turn this run into what I like to call a 'parkrun sandwich'. For example, if you're on Week 8 and have an 8 mile Saturday run to do, you could run 2 miles before your local parkrun (or other 5km event) and 3 miles after. Don't aim to PB the 5km in the middle, instead feel free to use it as an opportunity to increase the pace a little and experiment with target marathon pace.

Finish with a walk to cool down, stretch and refuel.

Workout Details
Midweek Easy Paced Run

What: These easy paced midweek runs are an opportunity to increase your weekly running volume (total distance) without overly stressing your body by adding another intense session.

Why: In a similar way that the weekly long slow run is a vital part of marathon training, and prepares your body to run the full distance, so is the total weekly running volume. In fact, your consistent weekly mileage is one of the biggest factors when it comes to marathon success, whether you're a new runner, or seasoned marathoner.

How: Pacing is the key to these easy runs. Use the pacing calculator on **Page 23** to gauge how slow your "easy" pace needs to be. I intentionally phrase it that way, as many runners have a tendency to run their easy runs too fast and miss out on the aerobic benefits that come from training at a sufficiently slow pace. Running these long runs too fast also increases your injury risk. So slow down!

If you're using a heart rate (HR) monitor, and have your HR zones set correctly, you should aim to keep your effort in your aerobic Zone 2 throughout this session.

Use the first mile as an opportunity to gradually build into the run, as a gentle warm-up. Then complete the remaining distance at a pace that should feel "conversational". You should feel in total control of your breathing rate at all times, and able to talk back and forth - or sing, as I sometimes like to do if I'm on my own!

Finish with a walk to cool down, stretch and refuel.

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Workout Details
Hilly Tempo Run

What: Tempo runs can be characterised as being sessions which have you running at an effort that can be described as "sustainably uncomfortable". Sometimes, you'll hear tempo effort described as being the maximum effort you can maintain for 60 minutes.

As you can probably imaging, for a lot of runners (clearly not all), this puts tempo effort in a similar realm to 10km race effort… Useful as a guide. You may notice that I'm specifically saying tempo 'effort' not tempo 'pace'. I'd like you to complete these sessions on a hilly route. The hilly nature of the route will largely dictate the pace, whereas YOU dictate the effort!

Here's a short podcast episode which further describes tempo running sessions: **Tempo Running Workouts [Podcast]**

Why: These types of session are fantastic for improving your lactate threshold, meaning that you'll be able to run harder, and faster before your body switches from using its aerobic energy system to anaerobic, and starts producing more lactic acid. Marathon running is very much an aerobic discipline. The more we can train our body to run efficiently whilst still remaining beneath its lactate threshold, the faster you'll become as a runner.

I focus on tempo 'effort' and not 'pace' because adding hills into the mix during these tempo workouts allows you to also build strength in the legs, while also revving the engine aerobically. These hilly tempo sessions really are big bang for your buck.

How: Knowing that the hills within this session will make training paces less accurate, I like to refer to the "talk test" where earlier I described easy running as "conversational". This tempo effort should have you in a state where you can only answer questions a few words at a time, before having to regather your breath. You should be in an intense but controlled breathing pattern. Not easy, but also not quite maxing-out.

In terms of just how hilly your route needs to be, you may find it interesting to look at the marathon course profile, and try to at least mimic the most hilly 10km of the race, in terms of elevation. For most city marathons this will be appropriate, although not more mountainous races!

If you're using a heart rate (HR) monitor, and have your HR zones set correctly, you should aim to keep your tempo effort at top-end Zone 3 or the bottom of Zone 4 throughout the tempo portion of the session.

Perform the initial warm-up part of the session at an easy effort. Then follow the instructions in the daily details which state how long the tempo block needs to be. Then end your run with the final block of easy effort running.

Finish with a walk to further cool down, stretch and refuel.

KINETIC REVOLUTION

Workout Details
Interval Sessions

What: Every other week doing this programme we have an "interval session", which is essentially a session where we break the session down into chunks of distance or time and run each chunk (or "interval") at a specific faster pace than your body is used to. At the end of each interval, there is an active recovery period, before you set off on the next interval of hard running.

Why: The interval sessions included in this programme are a key part helping you develop marathon specific speed-endurance. Along with the tempo workouts, these are the sessions that make us faster as runners.

How: These sessions can be done on an athletics track (useful as it provides a measured 400m distance to work with), in the park, or on any other flat surface. If you're not using a track, you may find it useful to use a GPS watch to gauge distances.

As this is the fastest and most intense running you'll be doing in your training week, be sure to perform a thorough warm-up, including dynamic mobility exercises. Here's an example of a warm-up you could use. **Warm-up for Running: Dynamic Stretches & Drills [Video]**.

For intervals of each different distance in the programme, you'll be able to set your own training paces based on the VDOT calculator described and linked to from **Page 23**.

Your goal for each interval with in a set of intervals should be to be consistent with the pace.

For example:

If the main part of the session is: 6 x 800m (with 400m easy jog recovery), and your interval pace is 3:49 for 800m, then you should be looking for splits that look like *[3:49, 3:49, 3:49, 3:49, 3:49, 3:49]* rather than *[3:38, 3:42: 3:41, 3:50, 3:58, 4:02]*. It's very common mistake to get the pacing wrong and run the first few reps too hard. Now you know what to avoid!

If you're using a heart rate (HR) monitor, and have your HR zones set correctly, you should aim to be in Zone 5 for large parts of each interval repetition. During the rest periods, your focus should be on getting your HR to drop as much as possible, while keeping moving.

The the end of the session make sure you complete the specified cool down run, as it will aide your recovery from this intense session.

Finish with a walk to further cool down, stretch and refuel.

Workout Details
Half Marathon Training Run

What: It's often a great idea to use a strategically chosen event like a half marathon to as what I like to refer to as a "long run with a number".

Why: Not only is it a welcome break from having to complete yet another long run on your own, but it allows you to practice your pre-marathon routine. Everything from race day breakfast, and what you're going to pack in your bag, to the hydration and nutrition strategy you're going to use for the day. Make sure you use the same shoes, and running kit you're going to use for the marathon. Silly as it sounds, having a "dress rehearsal" takes a number of unknown factors out of the equation. More steps closer to success!

How: Your goal for today is all about execution and pacing. By now you should have a reasonable idea what your target marathon pace should be. Today is the chance to practice the first half of your marathon. Your first goal, as it will be on marathon day, is to resist the temptation to set-off too fast.

Instead, I'd like you to set your GPS watch - if you're using one - to show you "lap pace" (and auto-lap every mile or km) and then run so as to maintain your target marathon pace mile-after-mile for the duration of the race.

The aim of the game is to see how close you can get to evenly paced mile (or km) splits from start to finish!

Finish with a walk to cool down, stretch and refuel.

Missed Runs / Workouts
What to Do When Life / Injury / Illness Gets in the Way

It's one of the realities of both marathon training and life in general, that sometimes circumstances beyond our control force the best laid plans to change. These things happen! The key to your success lies in how you react to these changes.

I recently published an article and accompanying podcast episode sharing a few marathon tips, one of which refers to the importance of not playing catch-up and avoiding panic training when things go wrong. In the podcast episode, I share a number of strategies you can use to get training back in order.

Read / listen here 👉 **Three Marathon Training Mistakes to Avoid for Race Day Success**

Injuries & Illness

If you have the misfortune of picking-up a running injury during marathon training, the most important thing is that you don't try to run through it. Inevitably a small injury that you try to ignore and run through, turns into a big injury that stops you in your tracks later in the programme.

If in doubt, make an appointment to see a physiotherapist to get the injury assessed. If caught early enough, a little bit of treatment, and some rehab exercises can be the difference between you making it to the start line on race day, versus not being able to do so.

There are a number of **helpful injury resources** on the Kinetic Revolution website to you with many of the common running injuries experienced by marathon runners.

Marathon Day & Pacing Strategy

By the time you get to marathon day, be confident to know that the hard work is done.

Yes, those miles late in the race are going to require a bit of extra grit and determination, but with the training in the bank, your legs will have the strength to maintain target pace through to the finish!

Tip #1: I find that if you've already made peace with the fact that those last few miles will require a lot of mental strength on the day, and that that your legs might be screaming at you, then you won't be surprised when a tough patch occurs in the race.

Tip #2: If and when life get tough out there, just smile! The simple act of smiling has a profound effect on the rest of your body.

The most important strategy for race day is to get your pacing right. I recorded a podcast with Jason Fitzgerald from Strength Running about pacing a while back, where we discuss the many different approached you can take to pacing different types of race.

Negative Split, Even Pacing or Go Hard and Hold On?
Run pacing strategies and much more with Jason Fitzgerald
👆 **Listen Now** 👆

Nutrition & Hydration

I'm sure if you've done any research for yourself, you'll know what a minefield the world of sports nutrition can be. Nutrition for endurance events like marathon running is no different.

There are many different schools of thought with it comes to not only what to eat to fuel your long runs, and race day, but also what we should be doing from a lifestyle perspective with our daily nutrition.

One of the most balanced and sensible conversations I've had about running nutrition in recent years was with elite runner Tina Muir (host of the Running 4 Real podcast). Luckily I managed to record the chat we had!

What to Eat Before Running: Long Run & Race Nutrition with Tina Muir

Join Our Community of Runners

I really hope you've found this training plan and descriptions of each of the component parts clear and helpful.

It would be great to help you through the process, by welcoming you into our training group over on Facebook!

👉 **Transform Your Running - Facebook Group** 👈

See you there!

James