



Bonus Series:

MARATHON TRAINING GUIDE





Welcome



Welcome to the Running for Real Marathon Training Guide!

What an exciting time! Whether you are getting ready to run your first marathon or your 50th, this is something to be excited about! Especially for you, as you have been smart enough to take the steps to get it right, by purchasing this series.

I am really excited about the guests we have on this series, they each are VERY knowledgeable in all things marathon, and you will learn a lot from each one, I know I did.

I don't need to tell you that the marathon is a monster to beat. It is hard to get it right, and one wrong move could spell disaster, but if you listen to the advice here, your chances of having this happen are a lot less than before. There are a lot of things that go into getting a marathon right, and this will give you a lot of the answers (or at least suggestions) to solving the mysteries that go with it.

You have a lot of hard work ahead, but the feeling at the finish line when it all comes together makes it all worthwhile. So remember, trust your instincts, be smart, and get to the start line healthy. Your body will take care of the rest.

Enjoy!

Tina Muir

Advice from Amby Burfoot



An excerpt from the “Going Farther” section of Amby Burfoot’s new book: Run Forever: Your Complete Guide to Healthy Lifetime Running, to be published March 27, 2018.

Cut-Back Weeks

The goal of all mileage-building programs is to reach a certain level on a specific date. You might simply want to increase your training base. More likely, you are aiming for an upcoming race like a half-marathon or marathon. Either way, the path is rarely straight and flat. Everyone encounters obstacles. The question is: Can you train smart enough to avoid most of the pitfalls?

Early in my marathon career, I had trouble with this. I noticed a disturbing trend. After circling my race date on a calendar, I’d count back sixteen weeks, and devise my training plan. It looked foolproof on paper, but rarely worked out that way. Time and again, I’d get sick or injured about two-thirds to three-quarters of the way through the program.

At first, I couldn’t figure out what was wrong. After all, I was following the rule of gradual progression in training. Nothing in my plan looked blatantly stupid. The slope of my weekly miles inched upward at a modest rate.

After several years of unsatisfactory marathon results, I decided to create a different kind of plan. My weekly training mileage didn’t fit a straight line. Instead, once a month, it dipped. During that week, I decreased my mileage instead of continuing the gradual increase. I called this a “cut-back week.”

I stopped short at the weekly long run, however. I figured the long run was so important I needed to do one every week, always a little longer than the previous one. So my cut-back week was six days longer. I was afraid to extend it to seven days.

My new plan proved better than my old way, but still wasn’t satisfied with the results. So I tried again. This time, I cut back my long runs once a month as well. Now my cut-back week was a full seven days long, meaning that I had 13 days of recovery between long runs.

The new approach worked great. After a full cut-back week, I felt energized to begin the next month of marathon training. I didn’t get sick or injured as frequently as in the past. Soon I began telling my friends about cut-back weeks, and writing about them in *Runner’s World*. I said that full cut-back weeks especially helped runners deal with the “monster month” of marathon training just before the taper period.

Building mileage and preparing for marathons aren’t easy. I would never claim that they are. But they are much more manageable when your plan includes regular cut-back weeks.

Once a month, run forty to fifty percent less: Let's say you're up to 16 miles a week after three weeks of your marathon training plan. Don't increase to 18 or 20 miles on week four. Instead, drop back to 8 to 12 miles. After this recovery week, you can jump up to 18 to 20 miles in week five.

Repeat the same pattern during weeks eight and twelve. By then you may be running twice as much as you were at the outset of your training. As your weekly mileage gets higher, the cut-back weeks become even more important. They give both mind and body the recharge period necessary to keep going. Don't ever underestimate the mental part.

Apply the same rule to your weekly long run: All marathon training programs focus on increasing the distance of your long run. This approach makes complete sense. Elite runners also need to consider their pace. Others don't. For ninety-nine percent of marathon runners, the key ingredient is more and more time on the road.

In some programs, you run just twice a week: a long run and an easy run. Other plans are more ambitious. Whichever you choose, I suggest you reduce the distance of your long run on weeks four, eight, and 12. A forty percent cut-back works well. The final cut-back on week twelve will leave you just one or two more long runs before you begin to taper. That's perfect.

Try other cut-back methods: While I've proposed that you cut back on your fourth, eighth, and twelfth weeks, the numbers aren't special. It's simply a system that fits neatly into a sixteen-week training plan. Feel free to experiment with other cut-back plans--every third week, for example, or even every other week. The only essential is that you give yourself a necessary recovery period when you need it most.

Find Amby Online

[Amby in Runners World](#)

Amby's Books

[First Ladies of Running](#)

[The Runners Guide to the Meaning of Life](#)

Advice from Laura Fountain



I've helped a lot of runners tackle their first marathon over the years, and I know that it can be an exciting but also a confusing journey. Here's some tips to help you on your way.

One size doesn't fit all

We're all different and there's no one set way to train for a marathon. There's a lot of rules that should be applied – for example upping your distances gradually and allowing adequate recovery – but what this looks like in practice varies from person to person. So for someone already running 30 miles per week, upping their mileage looks different to someone whose weekly mileage is closer to 15 right now.

Trust your instincts

Being informed, listening to your body and trusting your instincts are key to a successful marathon training cycle. Ultimately, the decision about whether you should run today or would benefit from an extra rest day, and how long your longest run will be is yours and yours alone.

Train your brain

The mental aspect of running a marathon is a part that we often don't prepare for as well as we could. That's not to say we don't prepare for it, because every run you do in training involves an element of mental preparation for race day, whether you're conscious of it or not. Good runs will help build your confidence, bad runs may make you question your abilities (something you're sure to do on race day) but also force you to either push on or quit. And that's a choice you'll be faced with in your marathon – push on or quit. Quitting doesn't necessarily mean dropping out, but it does mean giving up on something – a time goal, a pace, a push to run to the next mile marker.

Training isn't a competition

One mistake I see people making with their training, is to see it as a test. To think that if the plan says 10 miles at 9 min/miles, then faster than 9:00 is better and slower means failure. Training isn't a test – it's a process. If you've been given a race paced tempo run, one of the reasons for that is to learn your pace so it becomes natural to you. Going faster is going to make you go too fast on race day. (And for other types of run, going too fast is going to make you work a different energy system and mess up your session.)

Bad runs happen

You've also got to see bad training runs for what they are, just bad training runs. I ran two 16 milers a week apart during my training for Edinburgh marathon 2016. The first was awful; the wind was getting to me (though it wasn't that windy) my pace was a mess and I had to stop a couple of times. A week later I got a friend to ride his bike with me as I ran, he chatted to me and I felt relaxed and positive. I think I ran marathon pace + 15 seconds for 16 miles and sped up for the last mile. It helped build my confidence even though another 10 miles on top of that still seemed like a lot.

Resources from Laura

'How to Run a Marathon' training guide <http://www.lazygirlrunning.com/e-guide/how-to-run-a-marathon>

Find Laura Online

Laura's website: [Lazy Girl Running](#)

Laura on Twitter [@LazyGirlRunning](#)

Laura's Facebook Group [Lazy Girl Running](#)

Advice from Esther Atkins



4 pre-marathon steps to ensure a positive experience:

- 1 Check the weather report. Start imagining how you felt in similar conditions during training. Imagine running an even-paced 26.2 miles in those conditions and factor that into what pace sounds reasonable.
- 2 Look back at your log. Sure, you trained for a specific marathon pace, but now is the time to come to grips with reality and make a real plan. Determine what pace feels very doable and not scary for 26.2 miles. That's the pace you should start at!
- 3 Look at the course map. Make a general plan of attack, but don't break it down into more than 4 parts. You won't remember that much. My favorite simple plan is 2 parts: a 20mi long run followed by a 10k race.
- 4 Imagine yourself coming across the finish line with joy in your heart. Ask yourself "what will I have realistically done to achieve that feeling?" Time goals are okay, but factors less dependent on the conditions are better: i.e. a negative split, passing people in the last 10k instead of being passed.

Race Week Checklist

What will you wear?

Check the weather and make sure you have the proper attire. Have you worn this for a long run before? If not, make sure you at least know all the areas where you are likely to chafe and have some kind of lubricant (body glide, vaseline, etc.) in your race day bag!

What shoes will you wear?

For flats, I recommend that you wear shoes that you have already used for at least 18 consecutive miles at some point. However, they should have no more than 70 miles on them by race day, but no less than 20 miles. For cushioned trainers, the max mileage can be up to 120 before race day, but when in doubt, just stick to that 15-70 mile range.

Plan your nutrition.

Carb Loading - I do most of my carb loading 2-3 days out from the race - so if the race is Sunday, I'm carbing it up on Thursday and Friday and then eating normally on Saturday. If you are going to be traveling for the race or working on any of those days, make sure to pack lots of carbolicious snacks and eat small carb-heavy meals every 2-3 hours.

Advice from Esther Atkins (cont.)

Last Supper - you should know where you'll be eating your pre-race meal. My favorite meal is Pad Thai before a major target marathon, so that usually narrows down the options nicely!

Race Morning - we usually have something specific that we like to eat, so make sure you're ready to have that ready.

Race Fuel - what will you carry with you during the race, and how will you carry it? If you don't have pockets in your shorts, try pinning the tab of your gel to the waist band of your shorts and tucking the gel into your shorts.

Lay out your pre-race plan.

My most frequently recurring nightmare is that I either don't make it to the start in time, or that I forget something crucial. While I'm trying to get that last bit of sleep before the race, I find myself thinking about all the things that aren't in my race morning pile instead of resting peacefully. This can be avoided by taking time earlier in the week to sit down and think about:

- What time you'll wake up?
- What/when/how/where you will eat prior to the race?
- Where you will get your coffee/fluids and when you will drink it?
- How and when you'll travel to the start?
- Where and when you need to drop off your bag?
- What you will wear after bag-drop and before the start?
- Make a checklist of all the items you need to take to the start with you and keep adding throughout the week!
- Remember that everything can change due to weather, delays, traffic, etc. so keep your plan flexible and adaptable and be prepared for the worst!

Have fun, run with heart, and smile all the way!

Find Esther Online

Esther's blog [Athlete Biz](#)

Esther's Twitter [@ErbyAtkins](#)

Esther's Facebook Page [Esther Erb Atkins](#)

Advice from Ben Rosario



Spice up your long runs! If you're going to get up and put in all that work on a weekend morning you might as get a little more bang for your buck. Throw in surges, fast finishes or long, steady runs at marathon effort to better prepare for the demands of race day.

Slow down your workouts and add volume- While workouts like 10 x 400, 6 x 1mile and 3-4 mile Tempo Runs may make someone feel very fit they are not specific to the marathon. We need to replace those with things like 5 x 2 miles, 3 x 3 miles and Steady State runs of 10-16 miles in length. And that's for any ability level.

Run more! In my opinion the worthwhile challenge of the marathon is that it's not easy--that it does take a lot of hard work. Embrace that challenge and, within reason, add more mileage to your weekly schedule. First and foremost this will better prepare you for the marathon but second, it will make crossing that finish line all the sweeter knowing the work it took to get there.

Break up the training- 24 weeks is a long time to concentrate on one goal. Week after week having the marathon be the one thing that is supposed to drive you is a lot to ask. I prefer breaking things up where you have maybe a 10-12 week segment getting ready for a 10k or a half marathon, taking a super easy week and then training specifically for a marathon for the next 10 weeks or so.

Run smart on race day- I know everyone tells you to try and run even splits on race day but it's so true. I think people go out too fast for a ton of reasons (over-excited, not confident enough, didn't train enough at race pace, etc.) but there is no question that when you go out too fast for your ability level for the first half of the race the second half is not going to go well. Conversely if you do go out at the correct pace, assuming you've trained properly, you really should have a good day. And my belief is that you should actually go out slower than the training data would suggest you're capable of. If you have something left in the last 10k you can really make up a ton of time. My wife (cheap plug) just ran CIM with splits of 1:40:20 and 1:37:51. And most all of that was in the last 10k.

Find Ben Online

HOKA Northern Arizona Elite Twitter [@Naz_Elite](#)

HOKA Northern Arizona Elite Instagram [@Naz_elite](#)

Ben Rosario Twitter [@BenRosario1](#)

Training Plans- <http://www.finalsurge.com/TrainingPlans/NAZElite>

Advice from Roberto Mandje



So you're embarking on a Marathon journey (yup, put intended), congrats! Be it your first, fifth or thirteenth marathon, no two build ups are ever the same.

Whether you're following a 12, 16 or 20 week training plan, the approach should be the same. Running is inherently a simple sport that we can often times complicate more than is necessary.

We must also realize that regardless of ability level (professional runner vs novice), there's no such thing as a "perfect build up".

Right, now that we've got some of that out of the way, we can embark on some of my top Marathon training and racing tips:

Focus on what you can control

As I mentioned above, there isn't a perfect build up. So accept that during your training you'll have good days and bad days, there'll be days with awful weather and perfect weather. By focusing on what you can control (your outlook, mood, nutrition, wardrobe, etc) you instantly shift your energy from a potentially negative place towards a space where you're empowering yourself and moving in the right direction. Two things here that should also be practiced and fine tuned long before race day. The first, your nutrition. You can control that, so dial it in and figure out what works for you during your long runs and hard workout days. The second is your wardrobe, the time to experiment on shoes/clothing is during your training. Once you've figured out what works, stick to it for the big day.

Enjoy the journey

Here we pick up from where number one left off. It has been my experience through various Olympic Training cycles that we sometimes get so focused on the end goal (and put undue pressure on ourselves) that we forget to see the forest for the trees. During your marathon build up, you'll inevitably embark on a journey of self-discovery. You'll undoubtedly test your mettle as you run through good and bad days while ascending milestone after milestone in your tempos and long runs. You'll potentially reach new levels of fitness that you didn't think were within your grasp. Since we all inevitably train more than we race, it's quite possible to have some of your best days ever in training. So don't lose sight of your race day goal, but certainly don't overlook the path towards getting there and enjoy the journey, it's YOUR journey after all.

Train don't strain – This is quite simple and straight forward. Make your easy days easy and your hard days hard. You won't survive your training if you're always red-lining. That being said, you also won't get as much out of yourself if you're always running extremely easy. A balance must be struck but when in doubt, less is more. It's better to be 5% under-trained than 1% over trained, so remember, make your hard days hard (1 – 2 workouts per week + Long run) and easy days easy (all other non-workout and/or long run days).

Simulate the course in training

Completing a marathon is a challenge in it of itself. That being said, the best way to prepare for your specific one, is by taking a look at the elevation profile of your chosen marathon. In doing so, you'll be able to prepare yourself for the course's demands and challenges. Armed with this knowledge, you can start to mimic some of the marathon's profile into your long run and workouts. By tackling these sort of factors (for example, long hills, steep down hills, sharp turns, etc) in your training and especially while tired, you'll give yourself a leg up on the competition come race day. This also means practice grabbing and drinking water on the run. This is something we often overlook as we tend to carry our own water bottles during training. Set up a table and practice running by at race pace, grabbing the cup, pinching it (to create a sort of funnel effect) and drinking all while hopefully avoiding slowing down.

Balance/Variety

In order to be the best runner you can be, it's important to strike a balance in your training. Speaking specifically to the marathon, this means striking a balance in your training. A good build up should incorporate a myriad of workouts and (when possible) terrains and surfaces. Don't avoid hills just because they're hard. Work them into your regular/recovery runs, this way you tackle them while not worrying about your pace and slowly get more and more comfortable running them. Similarly –regardless of what your marathon course will be like- work some hills into your hard/workout and long runs. Hills will make you stronger. Don't shy away from speed work either. Work a few (3- 5) strides at the end of some of your easy runs. They should be done hard and fast but with full recovery. This will clean up your running form and help make you more economical and efficient when running at a much slower (compared to marathon) pace. The more well-rounded you can be in your training; the better runner you'll be regardless of the course you'll be racing on.

Nothing new on race day (or week)

It's easy to get excited while walking around the expo and mingling with your fellow runners. If you haven't worn it or consumed it in training (and therefor have it as a tried and trusted item) then don't gamble on race day or week. A new top could cause chafing during the race. New or a different brand of shoes could cause blisters. A foreign (as it pertains to marathon and performance) food or drink could cause cramping or GI issues. All of the aforementioned mistakes could potentially undermine all of the weeks and months of training you've put into your marathon, so... nothing new on race day or week!

Don't go out too hard

(You can't win the race in the first few miles, but you can certainly lose it there) – Race day is here and it's very easy to get excited, let the adrenaline get the best of you and go out way too fast. Formulate a race plan based on the course's profile, your fitness level and the conditions (is it cold, warm, raining, windy, etc) and stick to it. It's better to be 10, 20, 30+ seconds too slow for the first few mile splits than fast. You can always make up for going out slow whereas if you go out too fast, you'll inevitably pay for it. Remember, "Bank = bonk". If you think that you can get away with going out fast for the first half of the race or so and make up time for when you slow down, you'll surely get yourself into a tough spot later on and quite possibly bonk. An even effort or even a negative split is always preferable as far as the physiological demands go.

So there you have it, some helpful marathon tips. Be sure to enjoy the journey as running truly is a universal endeavor.

What other sport lets you line up near your Olympic heroes and champions and compete on the same arena as them (albeit a few mins/per mile slower) while also sharing the stage with 30, 40 or 50K other fellow enthusiast?

If you're fortunate enough to complete the marathon in your goal time, congratulate yourself, if not, it's okay, be taking heed of the above tips, you'll have hopefully learned a lot along the way and enjoyed the journey.

This will all make you that much better equipped to tackle your next marathon. Let the 26.20 miles be a celebration of your training, your journey and your love of running.

Congrats, you're a marathoner!

Resources from Roberto

New York Road Runners <http://www.nyrr.org/>

NYRR Virtual Trainer <http://www.nyrr.org/train-with-us/training-programs>

NYRR Group Training <http://www.nyrr.org/train-with-us/nyrr-group-training>

NYRR RunCenter + New Balance Run Hub <http://www.nyrr.org/nyrr-runcenter-featuring-the-new-balance-run-hub>

Find Roberto Online

Roberto's website RobertoMandje.com

Roberto on Instagram [@RobertoMandje](https://www.instagram.com/RobertoMandje)

Roberto on Twitter [@RobertoMandje](https://twitter.com/RobertoMandje)

Advice from Luke Humphrey



We talked about a number of items today, so let's recap some of the most important aspects. The main points I would make, regardless of training book or program you use:

- 1 Be patient and allow your bones and tendons to catch up to your cardiovascular fitness.
- 2 Be consistent. If you can take your time (number 1) and allow yourself to build up to 4-5 days, or more, you will set yourself up to be a much better runner.
- 3 Be a student of the sport. Learn why you are doing what you are doing. If following a book, make sure you read the background of the plans. If you have a coach, then ask them to explain whatever you don't understand. If they can't, then it's time for a new coach.

Resources from Luke

If you are interested in the Hanson's Marathon Method, you can purchase [Hansons Marathon Method](#).

We also discussed a little bit about nutrition, especially with race day ideas. Below are two great links that will also be with websites that are loaded with great training info:

Training the gut: <http://www.mysportscience.com/home/tag/carbohydrate>

Carbohydrate intake for all levels: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BYSJSg8Of2E>

My best piece of advice here is to learn what calorie amounts you need for the day. For instance, a long run day will obviously require more calories than an off day. If you eat to what your needs are for the day, you'll be much better off from a recovery standpoint and even a weight loss point (if that's something you are looking at). The second point I'd really stress is to practice with what you are going to use on raceday throughout your training. This is especially true for long runs and race pace work. You want to make sure that your stomach can tolerate what you are giving it.

Here's some calculators for paces, goal selection, nutrition, heat/cold adjustment that you may find handy: <https://hansonscoachingservices.com/hcs-members/miscellaneous/>



Advice from Hal Higdon (cont.)

Find Luke Online

Hansons's website [Hansons Coaching](#)

Luke's Twitter [@luke_hansons](#)

Hanson's Facebook Page [Hansons Coaching Services](#)

[Hansons Marathon Method Community](#)

For Running for Real Listeners: Hansons Coaching Online Run Club (use code HCSTRIAL30 for a free 30 day trial of the club) www.hcsrclub.com



Other Helpful Resources You Might Need

Blog recommended reads:

[Tina and Steve's Marathon Program](#)

[Why you \(yes, you!\) need to take 1-2 weeks off after a marathon](#)

[Marathon tapering advice](#)

[Marathon fueling strategy](#)

[How to practice fueling for your next marathon](#)

[Are you running too many workouts in marathon training?](#)

[Why add speed to your running before marathon training](#)

[Why you should consider stepping away from the marathon](#)

[Why you should not set a time goal for your next marathon](#)

[What is #nowatchme?](#)

[How to plan goals that set you up for success](#)

[14 ways to build your confidence as pre race anxiety kicks in](#)

[When race day is closing in and you still cant hit your pace](#)

[Visualization for runners](#)

[When you wonder why you cant run fast anymore](#)

[7 ways to recover your confidence after a bad race or run](#)

[How to use mental bottles to believe in yourself](#)

[Show those race week workouts who is boss](#)

[Doubt yourself before a race? Read this](#)



Other Resources you might need (cont.)

[Be kind to yourself. It will save your running](#)

[9 things you need to know about your next race](#)

[How to get over sickness before race day](#)

[7 ways to make sure you do not slow down in a race](#)

[Stop looking at your GPS watch to run faster](#)

[How to pace the first half of your race to run faster in the second half](#)

Podcasts to Listen to

[Cindra Kamphoff](#)

[Bhrett McCabe](#)

[Marathon Training Academy](#)

[Steve Picucci](#)

[Steve Jones](#)

[Nancy Clark](#)

[Nicole Detling](#)

Discounts to Products for Running for Real

Bodyhealth (Perfect Amino Recovery Products plus other natural supplements)

Use code TINA10 at <http://bodyhealth.com/>

Inside Tracker (Detailed blood work, if you are confused what is wrong with your body, really insightful)

Use code TINAMUIR for 10% off at <http://insidetracker.com/>

Generation UCAN (marathon fueling and pre/post run powders and bars)

Use code RUNNING4REAL for 15% off at <http://generationucan.com/running4real>

Enduropacks Electrolyte Spray (liquid electrolytes to go in any drink, I carried in my pocket for my marathons)

Use code TINAMUIR for 10% off



Other Resources you might need (cont.)

Get VI Giveaway (virtual trainer/quality earbuds for runners)

Enter to win at GetVi.com/Running4Real

Get 10% off Run Angel (safety Device for runners)

Use code running4real for 10% off at runangel.com

Health IQ (discounted health insurance for runners)

Get a free quote at healthiq.com/runningforreal

Core 360 Belt (to practice breathing correctly, especially while strength training)

Get 15% off with coupon code RUNNING4REAL at <http://core360belt.com/>