

INTERMEDIATE TRAINING PLAN

Your guide to running a
half marathon in 16 weeks

RUNNING A HALF MARATHON IS NO SMALL FEAT.

This intermediate training plan is designed for someone who has completed at least one half marathon and is ready to push themselves.

In this training programme, you'll find tips, tricks, and a 16 week running plan to get you half marathon ready. We combine speed, endurance, and recovery runs with mobility and strength training to give you the best chance at smashing your goals.



YOUR COACH

Ian Scarrott



This plan has been written by Ian Scarrott, qualified England Athletics Running Coach and PureGym Personal Trainer.

Ian has over 20 years' experience in running at club level, and over 10 years' experience in run coaching, and is now the owner of Your Run Coach.

"Taking on longer distances like the half and full marathon can seem like a mountain to climb, but know this, all things are definitely possible.

Be prepared to take responsibility for your own training, and put in the consistent work required. If you can hit at least 80% of the runs in the plan, I would say you've given yourself the best chance to be successful whatever that means for you. Whether it's to finish your first race, or hit a personal best.

Outside of this it's quite simple, to Find Your Victory, get enough sleep, eat healthily, maintain hydration levels, be kind to yourself, and above all remember it is simply 'just a race' so relax and above all enjoy the process."

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HALF MARATHON TRAINING TOP TIPS

- 1 ENJOY THE PROCESS**

This training programme is 16 weeks of training, for 1 race day. The race is such a small part of the total time spent, so make sure to enjoy the process and celebrate your progress.
- 2 PRIORITISE REST**

Rest is the most important part of any training programme – it's when your body repairs itself and gets stronger. Aim for 7-8 hours sleep every night, and keep your bed and waking times consistent where possible.
- 3 IT'S OKAY TO MISS A RUN**

Running is one part of your everyday life. There may be times during your training when other aspects of your life need to take priority, and that's okay. Take a break and move on to the next session when you can. If you miss more than one week or two, you may need to adapt your plan to hit your goal within the 16 weeks.
- 4 OPTIMISE YOUR DIET**

A healthy diet can maximise your physical performance. Make sure you get enough calories and carbohydrates to fuel your training, protein to help repair and recover, and vitamins and minerals to support your overall health.
- 5 ADAPTATION IS KEY**

This plan is designed to get you half marathon ready in 20 weeks, but it can be adapted to suit your current running level. You may want to modify the plan to be completed in less time, or do it over a longer period.



HALF MARATHON TRAINING REQUIRES A MIX OF VOLUME AND INTENSITY

When training for a half marathon, there are two components which must be progressed to help you run faster and strong:

VOLUME

The number of miles you do on a given day, week, month and even over the whole training plan. It's important to increase volume at a rate which does not cause injury.

INTENSITY

How hard a session is likely to be on the muscles. Speedwork, tempo sessions, short slow runs, and long slow runs all affect the muscles differently, and may have different recovery times. Take note which types of runs you need more recovery from and use this to adapt your plan if needed.

This intermediate training plan is designed for someone who has completed at least one half marathon and is ready to push themselves. It is important to remember that if the volume is too high for you, or the intensity is too much then you may need to tweak the plan yourself as you go.



RUNNING TERMS / RUNNING GLOSSARY

WARM UP

Warming up before a run is extremely important. It allows your muscles, tendons, and joints to become more pliable and ready for exercise. This helps to improve performance and prevent injuries.

COOL DOWN

It's tempting after a run to sit down and relax, but cooling down properly helps your muscles, tendons, and joints help to prevent injuries by allowing the muscles to be stretched. It also helps to slowly lower your heart rate post workout, which can prevent you from experiencing dizziness.

BUILD

In faster sessions, you will normally build the pace before you complete the main set. The idea behind this is to elevate the heart rate, and prepare the muscles for faster or more intense efforts. Ideally you will be doing this gradually over the time period/ mileage allocated.

MAIN SET

This is the main portion of the session which follows the warm up and build portion of the run.

FARTLEK

Fartlek means 'speedplay' in Swedish and is a session that is used to quite literally play with different speeds to stimulate different energy systems: aerobic, lactate, and creatine.

HILLS

Hills help you to work on your form and build strength. Reduce your stride length but try and keep up the same intensity as you had on flat ground. When you run down hills, lean into it to maintain your reduced stride length.

INTERVALS

Intervals are similar to fartleks. The main difference is intervals have more structured sessions, for example 4 x 1•mile repeats/ repetitions with 2 minutes break where the speed in each repetition may stay the same. It depends on the types of intervals session included.

PROGRESSION RUN

This is where you progressively build the pace through a run to tire the body out. This prepares you to deal with the final miles in the half marathon, where your body is extremely fatigued. They often say the last 10k is the real second half of the race.

S&C

S&C stands for strength and conditioning, an area of training which is often neglected until it's too late. S&C helps to improve endurance and speed, and protect your muscles, joints, and tendons against injuries. We cover this later in the guide.

RPE

Rate of Perceived Exertion. We cover this later in the guide.



STRETCHES

Stretching helps your muscles to prepare for, and recover from, running. There are two types of stretches:

DYNAMIC

Dynamic stretches involve moving your muscles and joints through their full range of motion to create a stretch. Incorporating dynamic stretches after warm up and build sets helps to loosen tight muscles and prepare your body for harder efforts.

Common areas of tightness and appropriate stretches that you might want to focus on are:

- Adductors – side to side leg swings
- Quads and hamstrings – forward to back leg swings, hamstring sweeps
- Hip flexors – lunges combined with a rocking forward and back motion in the hips
- Lower back – child's pose walkouts, walk backs

STATIC

Static stretches involve holding your muscles in a stretch for a period of time, and can help to reduce and prevent muscle stiffness. These stretches must only be done at the end of a workout when the muscles are warm and pliable.

After a workout, start at the bottom of your body and work your way up to the top to make sure no muscles get missed:

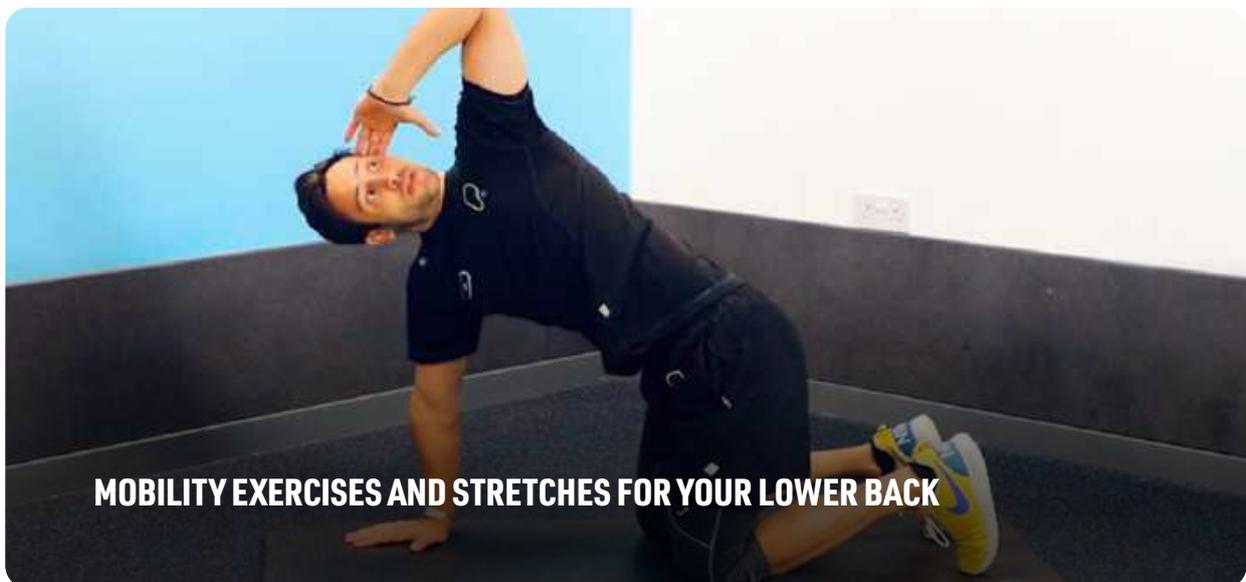
- Calves
- Quads
- Hamstrings
- Hip flexors
- Adductors
- Glutes
- Lower back
- Upper back

Check out the [PureGym blog](#) and social channels for static stretching ideas.





6 OF THE BEST STRETCHES FOR TIGHT HAMSTRINGS



MOBILITY EXERCISES AND STRETCHES FOR YOUR LOWER BACK



10 OF THE BEST STRETCHING EXERCISES FOR BEGINNERS



RPE

Your training plan includes target RPEs (Rate of Perceived Exhaustion) to aim for in each run.

EASY - 3/10 EFFORT

At this level, you should be able to carry out a conversation the whole time you are running.

STEADY - 5/10 EFFORT

You're able to speak comfortably but will feel a slight pinch on the lungs and legs. This may also be a beginner's half marathon pace.

HALF MARATHON PACE - 6/10

You're able to speak in sentences but not carry out a full conversation. After running for a long period of time at this level, you'll feel a significant pinch on the lungs and legs but are able to continue.

TEMPO - 7/10 EFFORT

You're able to say the odd word here and there while running at this level. These runs teach you how to be uncomfortable and stay in this place without giving up. For experienced runners, this is likely to be your half marathon pace.

HARD - 8/10 EFFORT

At this level, it's unlikely you're able to speak and your run will feel uncomfortable. This is likely around or just below your 5km pace.



S&C

Strength and conditioning are an important part of a half marathon training plan as it helps to increase muscle strength and endurance which can help with performance, as well as prevent injuries.

However, you need to be careful not to overdo this, as you'll already be placing your body under a significant amount of stress through the running element of your programme.

As you increase your mileage, you'll want to taper down your strength and conditioning. If you are following this marathon guide for the full 20 weeks, drop to bodyweight exercises or lower weights and higher reps from week 10 onwards, depending on your fitness levels.

We've included 4 sample strength sessions to follow, or you can access workouts on the free PureGym App. Depending on your level of confidence and experience, you may find it helpful to work with a Personal Trainer.

Many PureGym group fitness classes also offer S&C training, including:

- Body Pump – full body strength workout
- Legs, Bums, & Tums – lower body strength workout
- Strength 30/45 – functional strength workout
- Abs – core stability



SAMPLE S&C PROGRAMME

Schedule

WEEKS 1-4

For experienced runners/ lifters:
3-4 strength sessions a week (max 1 hour)
For new runners/ lifters: lower body strength
workout (40 mins) + 10 mins core exercises

WEEKS 5-9

2-3 strength sessions a week
Effort level: 5-7/10

WEEKS 10-14

Transition to bodyweight exercises or lower
weights and higher reps depending on your
fitness level

WEEK 15-20

Drop strength sessions and focus on running,
recovery, and stretches

Core

CORE SESSION 1

Perform 3 sets of 30 seconds for each exercise,
with 30 seconds recovery between each set.

- Crunch
- Reverse Crunch
- Dead Bugs
- Russian Twists
- Ankle Taps

CORE SESSION 2

This is a circuit style session. Perform each
exercise for 15 seconds, taking a 15 second rest
before moving to the next exercise. Repeat for
5-15 minutes.

- Plank
- Side Plank Left
- Side Plank Right
- Pendulums
- Standing Oblique Crunch



Lower Body

CARDIO WARM UP

Stationary bike

- 5 minutes at 3/10 effort
- 3 minutes build through 5-7/10 effort
- 2 minutes at 3/10 effort

ACTIVATION

Perform 3 sets x 12, at effort level 5-6/10

- Glute Bridges
- Side Clams

STRENGTH

Perform 3 sets x 12 with 60 second rest, effort level 5-7/10

- Leg Press
- Leg Extensions
- Prone Hamstring Curl
- Hip Adductor
- Hip Abductor
- Calf Raises, effort level 6
- Soleus Raises

COOL DOWN

- 5 minutes easy cycle (effort level 3/10)

Upper Body

CARDIO WARM UP

cross trainer

- 5 minutes at 3/10 effort
- 3 minutes build through 5-7/10 effort
- 2 minutes at 3/10 effort

ACTIVATION

- Scapula pinches
- Shoulder rolls & swings

STRENGTH

Perform 3 sets x 12 with 60 second rest, effort level 6/10

- Face Pulls
- Lat Pull Downs
- Chest Press
- Back Extensions with or without Plate (not FRM)
- Reverse Flys Pec-Dec
- Bicep Curls
- Tricep Extensions



FINDING YOUR PACE

If you're aiming to run the half marathon under a certain time, you'll need to know what pace to run. There are plenty of pace charts available online to help with this. We like Strava's pace calculator which estimates your finish time based on your ideal pace.

It's unlikely that your 6/10 effort half marathon pace at the beginning of the training plan will be the same as your target half marathon pace. As you progress through the training plan and build your endurance and speed, your 6/10 effort pace will increase.

TRACKING YOUR RUNS

There are plenty of apps and smart devices that can be used to plan and track your runs. We've included a few to check out below, but there are lots of options to choose from!

- SportsTracks
- Map My Run
- Runkeeper
- Garmin Connect
- RUN interval

 **Strava pace calculator**



16 WEEK HALF MARATHON TRAINING PLAN

WEEK 1

Monday 30 Minute Easy Run

Tuesday Interval Set: 200m Run, 60 Second Recovery, 400m Run, 90 Second Recovery (x5)

Wednesday Rest Day

Thursday Strength Session: Lower Body

Friday Tempo Set: 400m @ Tempo, 400m @ Easy (X4)

Saturday Rest Day

Sunday 5 Mile Easy Run **Sunday 2** Optional Strength Session: Upper Body

WEEK 2

Monday 30 Minute Easy Run

Tuesday Interval Set: 200m-300m-400m-600m (90 Second Recovery Between Runs), 600m-400m-300m-200m (2 Minute Recovery Between Runs)

Wednesday Rest Day

Thursday Strength Session: Lower Body

Friday Tempo Set: 800m Tempo, 800m Easy (x3)

Saturday Rest Day

Sunday 6 Mile Easy Run **Sunday 2** Optional Strength Session: Upper Body



WEEK 3

Monday 30 Minute Easy Run

Tuesday Interval Set: 400m, 90 Second Recovery, 800m, 2 Minute Recovery (x3)

Wednesday Rest Day

Thursday Strength Session: Lower Body

Friday Tempo Set: 1km Tempo, 1km Easy (x3)

Saturday Rest Day

Sunday 7 Mile Easy Run **Sunday 2** Optional Strength Session: Upper Body

WEEK 4

RECOVERY WEEK

Monday 30 Minutes Easy

Tuesday Interval Set: Fartlek 2.5M

Wednesday Rest Day

Thursday Leg Strength

Friday Strength Session: Lower Body

Saturday Rest Day

Sunday 5 Mile Easy Run **Sunday 2** Optional Strength Session: Upper Body

WEEK 5

Monday 30-45 Minute Easy Run

Tuesday Interval Set: 800m, 2 Minute Recovery (x6)

Wednesday Rest Day

Thursday Strength Session: Lower Body

Friday Tempo Set: 800m Tempo, 800m Steady (x3)

Saturday Rest Day

Sunday 8 Mile Easy Run **Sunday 2** Optional Strength Session: Upper Body



WEEK 6

Monday 30-45 Minute Easy Run

Tuesday Interval Set: 1km Run, 2-3 Minute Recovery (x6)

Wednesday Rest Day

Thursday Strength Session: Lower Body

Friday Tempo Set: 1km Tempo, 800m Easy Run (x3)

Saturday Rest Day

Sunday 9 Mile Easy Run

Sunday 2 Optional Strength Session: Upper Body

WEEK 7

Monday 30-45 Minutes Easy Run

Tuesday Interval Set: 1200m, 3 Minute Recovery (x6)

Wednesday Rest Day

Thursday Strength Session: Lower Body

Friday Tempo Set: 2km Tempo, 800 Mile Easy (x2)

Saturday Rest Day

Sunday 10 Mile Easy Run

Sunday 2 Optional Strength Session: Upper Body



WEEK 8

RECOVERY WEEK

Monday Rest Day

Tuesday 30-45 Minute Easy Run

Wednesday Interval Set: Fartlek 5km

Thursday Strength Session: Lower Body

Friday Rest Day

Saturday ParkRun Tempo/ 5km Tempo

Sunday 6 Mile Easy Run

Sunday 2 Optional Strength Session: Upper Body

WEEK 9

Monday 30 Minute Easy Run

Tuesday Interval Set: 1 Mile, 3 Minute Recovery (x5)

Wednesday Rest Day

Thursday Strength Session: Lower Body

Friday 45 minute Easy Run

Saturday Optional Strength Session: (Bodyweight)

Sunday Progression Run 10m As:
3 Mile Easy, 3 Mile Steady, 3 Mile Half Marathon Pace, 1 Mile Easy



WEEK 10

RACE WEEK

Monday Rest Day

Tuesday 50 Minute Easy Run **Tuesday 2** Strength Session: (Bodyweight)

Wednesday Interval Set: 400m, 90s Recovery (x8)

Thursday Rest Day

Friday Rest Day

Saturday 30 Min Easy Run With 5 X 10 Seconds Worth Of Strides Towards The End Of The Run Above 10km Pace

Sunday 10km Race

WEEK 11

RECOVERY WEEK

Monday 30 Minute Easy Run

Tuesday Optional Strength Strength (Bodyweight)

Wednesday Interval Set:
1 Mile, 3 Minute Recovery (x4), Then 400m, 90s Recovery (x5)

Thursday 30 Minute Easy Run

Friday Optional Strength Session: (Bodyweight)

Saturday Rest Day

Sunday Progression Run 7 Mile As:
1 Mile Easy, 1 Mile Steady, 4 Mile Half Marathon Pace, 1 Mile Easy



WEEK 12

Monday 30 Minute Easy Run

Tuesday Interval Set:
1 Mile, 3 Minute Recovery (x3), 800m, 2 Minute Recovery (x5)

Wednesday Rest Day

Thursday Rest Day

Friday 55 Minute Easy Run

Saturday Rest Day

Sunday Progression Run 11 Mile As:
2 Mile Easy, 2 Mile Steady, 5 Mile Half Marathon Pace, 10k Pace, 1 Mile Easy

WEEK 13

Monday Rest Day

Tuesday 40 Minute Easy Run

Wednesday Interval Set: 1 Mile, 3 Minute Recovery, 800m, 2 Minute Recovery,
400m, 90 Second Recovery, 200m, 1 Minute Recovery (x3)

Thursday Rest Day

Friday 1 Hour Easy Run

Saturday Rest Day

Sunday Progression Run 12M as
1 Mile Easy, 2 Mile Steady, 6 Mile Half Marathon Pace, 2 Mile 10k Pace, 1 Mile Easy



WEEK 14

RECOVERY WEEK

Monday 30-45 Minute Easy Run

Tuesday Interval Set: 2 Mile Reps, 5 Minute Recovery (x3)

Wednesday Rest Day

Thursday Rest Day

Friday 30-45 Minute Easy Run

Saturday Rest Day

Sunday 13.1 Mile Easy Run

WEEK 15

STARTING TO TAPER INTO THE RACE

Monday Rest Day

Tuesday 30 Minute Easy Run

Wednesday Interval Set: 2 Mile, 4 Minute Recovery (x3)

Thursday Rest Day

Friday 45 Minute Easy Day

Saturday Progression 6.1M as:
1 Mile Easy, 1m Steady, Parkrun/ 5km @ Half Marathon Pace, 1 Mile Easy

Sunday Rest Day



WEEK 16

RACE WEEK

Monday 30 Minute Easy Run With The Final 5 Minutes As 30s Tempo/30s Easy

Tuesday Interval Set: 1 Minute Hard, 1 Minute Easy (x8)

Wednesday Rest Day

Thursday 30 Minute Easy Run

Friday Rest Day

Saturday 30 Min Easy Run With 5 X 10 Seconds Strides Towards The End Of The Run Above Half Marathon Pace

Sunday Half Marathon Race

Monday After 20 Minutes Easy Cycle

