



Marlow Striders Half Marathon Training Plan



The programme – The weekly schedule has 4/5 days running with 3/4 rest days (Monday's recovery run is optional, if you feel too tired on Tuesday's Threshold run then you can rest instead). Each session is time and effort based rather than based on distance. **Listen to your body** and use the guide below to gauge how each session should feel. Understand what each session is trying to achieve and work at perceived effort level so that you are stimulating the right physiological system. Some workouts may mix 2 types of run (i.e. Steady + THRESHOLD, or EASY + SPEED)

Type of run	Aim of workout	Perceived effort	Heart rate	Talk test / Feel
Recovery / Easy	Restore blood-flow to muscles a day after a hard workout or get yourself loose a day before a tough session.	6-6.5	60-65%	Full sentences, you should be able to breathe solely through nostrils, the idea is to finish feeling re-energised for harder sessions, resist temptation to run too quick.
Long Run	Increase stamina and body's ability to burn fat for fuel, improve aerobic capacity	7	65-70%	Conversational level, feel relaxed and fluid and able to maintain effort for 2 plus hours.
Steady Run	General aerobic conditioning	7-8	70-80%	Short sentences, feels like your natural pace, not racing.
Threshold Run	Improve lactate threshold, build speed endurance	8-8.5	80-85%	Few words, comfortably hard running, feels like a race.
Hills	Improve muscle strength	8.5-10	85% and above	2-3 words, out of breath, feels like you're working hard.
Speedwork/ Strides	Improve V02 max, running economy strength and speed	8.5-10	85% and above	2-3 words, out of breath, feels like you're working hard.

The key workouts for the half marathon are Sunday **Long Run** to ensure you have the stamina for the distance and the **Threshold Runs** usually run on a Tuesday. A Threshold Run is a run carried out at an intensity or speed just below where your body can get rid of the acidosis that builds in the muscles. The aim is to be able to run most of the half-marathon race at just below this critical level. The Threshold runs in the programme are progressive, and as you progress your lactate threshold will improve, resulting in your ability to run at threshold longer and at faster paces, so it is essential to run on **feel** (perceived effort) rather than pre-determined paces.

The Marlow Half is a notoriously hilly course so it is vital to train on **Hill sessions**. This programme has a mix of **Kenyan Hills**, which are long efforts of up and down hill running. Focus on even efforts, which means you will be running faster downhill. **Long** and **short uphill** efforts are designed to build strength and there is also a **downhill session**, which can help alleviate DOMS (delayed onset muscle soreness) Remember to use these Hill sessions to improve technique. Uphill stay tall and relaxed, maintaining the same cadence as the flat but with a shorter stride, using your arm-swing to power up the hill. Attack the Downhill sections letting gravity aid you. Increase your cadence with a slight forward lean from the ankles, in order to keep your feet in alignment landing underneath your hips and shoulders.



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This 12 week plan (macrocycle) is broken into 3 phases (mesocycles) of 4 weeks. In the first phase we will work on **strength + stamina**. By doing a hard hill session on Saturday it should deplete glycogen stores and fatigue muscles so that the easy-paced long run on the Sunday builds a great endurance foundation. Look at building your distance each week so that by week 4 you are already able to run further than the 13.1 mile goal. In phase 2 we continue to focus on **stamina + threshold** and start to really target your goal race pace during the Tuesday and Sunday runs. The final phase is **race preparation** where you finish the long runs at goal race pace to really get your body in tune with how it will feel on the day.

Recovery weeks are scheduled in weeks 9 and 5 where we dial back the mileage and intensity slightly to allow your body to adapt to the overall training workload. At the start of each phase you can race either a **parkrun** or **10k time trial**. This allows you to calculate your training paces, track your progress and estimate what a realistic pace goal is achievable on race day.

Training tips

Be realistic – Your training plan and goal race pace should be applicable to your current fitness level and the amount of time you have available to train, taking into consideration work and family commitments. Enter a recent race time into Mcmillan running calculator to see what time you could aim for.

Be consistent – Once committed to a plan, stick to it. The plan is designed to be balanced between hard and easy sessions and progressive so the sessions get harder as your fitness improves.

Be specific – The half marathon is a speed endurance event so you need to do lots of threshold runs practicing your goal race pace. The key workout is the Long run so build your week towards this workout, using the kit and trainers you will wear on the day. Practice your pre-race nutrition both the night before and morning of the run. Try to mimic the terrain of the race course, Marlow Half is notoriously hilly so make sure you do these runs over a hilly route.

Train like an athlete – Become a more robust and resilient runner through strength training on your rest days (Mon, Fri) Increase aerobic capacity through cross-training (Wed) with activities that don't impact on running (ie swimming, cycling, yoga). **Fuel like an athlete**, periodise your meals based on your training load so eat a higher percentage of carbohydrates night before and morning of hard sessions, eat protein after session to fuel damaged muscles. **Recover like an athlete** – it's not just how well you train but how well you recover from the training to push yourself again. Sleep is vital in the process so try to get to bed 1 hour earlier each night and enjoy your rest days. Don't forget to stretch and use a foam roller.

Enjoy the process – look for progress not perfection. Running is our hobby so should be enjoyable. **Trust your training** and go out and smash it.

Happy Training!



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PHASE 1 – STRENGTH + STAMINA



WEEKS TO GOAL 12-9

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	WEEKLY DURATION
WEEK 1 RECOVERY RUN OR REST	THRESHOLD RUN 10 minute warm-up 4 x 4 minutes at threshold with 60 second recovery 10 minute warm-down	REST OR CROSS TRAIN 	STEADY RUN 40 minutes	REST	parkrun or 10k Time trial The first of 3 parkruns during your training. Use it to track progress and calculate you goal half-marathon pace with mcmillan calculator.	LONG RUN (EASY) 90 minutes Run all long-runs on undulating /hilly route as per race course. Pace should be leisurely for next 4 weeks, at least 60 seconds per mile over half-marathon goal pace	3.5 hours
WEEK 2 RECOVERY RUN OR REST	THRESHOLD RUN 10 min warm-up 4 x 5 minutes at threshold with 60 second recovery 10 minute warm-down	REST OR CROSS TRAIN 	STEADY RUN 45 minutes	REST	LONG HILLS KENYAN HILLS 3 x 6 minutes efforts with 2 mins recovery. Maintain same EFFORT both up and down hill, downhill will be faster paced.	LONG RUN (EASY) 100 minutes	4 hours
WEEK 3 RECOVERY RUN OR REST	THRESHOLD RUN 10 min warm-up 5 x 5 minutes at threshold with 60 second recovery 10 minute warm-down	REST OR CROSS TRAIN 	STEADY RUN 50 minutes	REST	SHORT HILLS 8 x 2 minutes uphill with jog down recovery	LONG RUN (EASY) 110 minutes	4 hours
WEEK 4 RECOVERY RUN OR REST	THRESHOLD RUN 10 min warm-up 4 x 4 minutes at threshold with 60 second recovery 10 minute warm-down	REST OR CROSS TRAIN 	STEADY RUN 60 minutes	REST	LONG HILLS KENYAN HILLS 3 x 8 minutes efforts with 4 mins recovery. Maintain same EFFORT both up and down hill, downhill will be faster paced	LONG RUN (EASY) 120 minutes	4.5 hours



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PHASE 2 – STAMINA + THRESHOLD



WEEKS TO GOAL 8 TO 5

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	WEEKLY DURATION
WEEK 5 RECOVERY WEEK 5	STEADY RUN 30 minutes	REST OR CROSS TRAIN 	LONG HILLS KENYAN HILLS 3 x 10 minutes efforts with 3 mins recovery.	REST	parkrun or 10k time trial 2 nd time trial, look to improve on week 1 time	LONG RUN (STEADY) 75 minutes For next 4 weeks look at increasing your long run pace to closer to your goal marathon pace (20-30 seconds slower than goal pace)	3 hours
WEEK 6 RECOVERY RUN OR REST 6	THRESHOLD RUN 10 minute warm-up 3 x 8 minutes at threshold	REST OR CROSS TRAIN 	DOWNHILL SESSION 8 x 2 minutes with full recovery walking up hill	REST	EASY RUN 45 minutes	LONG RUN (STEADY) 90 minutes	4 hours
WEEK 7 RECOVERY RUN OR REST 7	THRESHOLD RUN 10 minute warm-up 2 x 15 minutes at threshold	REST OR CROSS TRAIN 	SHORT HILLS 12 x 1 minutes with jog down recovery	REST	EASY RUN 30 minutes	LONG RUN (STEADY) 120 minutes	4.5 hours
WEEK 8 RECOVERY RUN OR REST 8	THRESHOLD RUN PROGRESSION RUN 5k Easy 5k at Half-marathon pace 5k at 10k race pace	REST OR CROSS TRAIN 	STEADY RUN 60 minutes + stretch	REST	EASY RUN 40 minutes	LONG RUN (STEADY + THRESHOLD) 120 minutes with last 20 at race pace	5 hours



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PHASE 3 – RACE PREPARATION



WEEKS TO GOAL 4 TO 1

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	WEEKLY DURATION
WEEK 9 RECOVERY WEEK	THRESHOLD RUN ALTERNATING TEMPO 6-8 miles alternating between 10k race pace and half-marathon pace +10 seconds per mile	REST OR CROSS TRAIN 	EASY RUN 45 minutes	REST	parkrun or 10k Time trial Final time trial, look to improve on week 5 time	LONG RUN (STEADY + THRESHOLD) 90 minutes with last 45 at race pace	3.5 hours
WEEK 10 RECOVERY RUN OR REST	STEADY + SPEED 45 mins + 10x strides	REST OR CROSS TRAIN 	HILLS TO TEMPO 10 x 1 min uphill jog down recovery. 3 min rest then 10k tempo run	REST	EASY RUN 40 minutes + stretch	LONG RUN (STEADY + THRESHOLD) 90 minutes with last 60 at race pace	4.5 hours
WEEK 11 RECOVERY RUN OR REST	THRESHOLD RUN 10 min warm-up 3 x 20 min threshold with 90 sec recovery	REST OR CROSS TRAIN 	STEADY + SPEED 50 min + 8x STRIDES	REST	EASY RUN 30 minutes + stretch	LONG RUN (STEADY + THRESHOLD) 70 minutes with last 30 at race pace	4.5 hours
RACE WEEK REST	THRESHOLD RUN 15 min easy 15 threshold 15 min easy	REST OR CROSS TRAIN 	STEADY + SPEED 40 min + 6x STRIDES	REST	EASY RUN 20 minutes + stretch	RACE 13.1 miles at race pace	105 minutes (not including race)