

Reset...to Train Smarter

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A training plan eliminates the question of where to start from a reset, says Runner's World+ coach Jess Movold. "New things are intimidating, so making a commitment builds excitement and creates a structure where you can learn about yourself as a runner," she

says. Choose a plan that's right for you, and start a training journal, suggests Movold. "Even just jotting down your distance and pace creates a drive that carries you to the next day." We compared four popular marathon plans to help you find your best fit.

Not ready for 26.2 yet? All four training resources here have alternative plans for a 5K, 10K, and half.



FOR NEW RUNNERS RUN WITH HAL

- Basic plans are free
- Encourages rest and allows for missed workouts
- Integrates strength- and cross-training
- Fewer options for experienced runners
- Minimal hard efforts

► Hal Higdon, author of *Marathon: The Ultimate Training Guide*, offers accessible programs welcoming to first-time marathoners. His Novice 1 Marathon Training Program, used by more than a million runners, consists of four days of running per week. It's designed around long runs building from six to 20 miles (you can miss some shorter workouts, but not these long runs), with every third week reducing mileage to encourage recovery. Cross-training is built in once a week, and you can add strength-training. The Run With Hal+ app (\$7/mo.) can customize any of Higdon's 14 plans.



"After a miserable experience running a marathon with no specific training, Hal's plan became my roadmap for faster marathons. He has an intuitive grasp of what works and what doesn't. His plans are designed for regular people; he talks a lot about molding the plan to suit your other commitments, and reiterates that missing a workout or two isn't the end of the world."—Thomas Watson, UESCA-certified running coach and founder of the *Marathon Handbook* website.

FOR INJURY-PRONE RUNNERS

RUN-WALK-RUN

- Embraces conservative pacing
- Prioritizes accumulating time on feet over counting miles
- Longer than most plans at 29 weeks
- A lot of walking
- No speedwork or tempo runs

► Former Olympian Jeff Galloway's run-walk-run training method is straightforward: You run, then you walk, then you repeat. Those strategic breaks force conservative pacing that helps to manage fatigue and deliver you to a finish line smiling, not crawling. The plan is simple: You run 30 minutes every Tuesday and Thursday, walk every Friday, and then build up to 26 miles using the run-walk-run method every other Sunday (your running-to-walking ratio is predetermined by your pace; for example, 9-minute milers run for two minutes and walk for 30 seconds). Cross-training can be added on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.

REAL RUNNER REVIEW

"For my first marathon, in 2013, I racked up a ton of distance in training but still hit the wall at mile 19. Jeff Galloway's plan felt more sustainable, so I tried it at the 2017 Marine Corps Marathon with run/walk notifications preset into my phone. I finished nearly 20 minutes faster than in 2013, and I wasn't physically wrecked after the finish."—*Sharon Rosenblatt, 32, Ridgefield, Connecticut*

FOR GOAL-ORIENTED RUNNERS

RUNNER'S WORLD

- Variety of workouts (tempo, intervals)
- Detailed explanations for every day—including rest days
- Direct access to a certified coach for subscribers
- Recommends a base of at least 25 miles per week
- Six days a week of running

► The most popular of *Runner's World's* six marathon training programs is designed to conquer marathoners' most common goal: break four hours. The 16-week program starts with 26 miles a week and a 10-mile long run, and peaks three weeks before the race with 48 miles and a 22-mile long run. Most weeks feature six days of running and one rest day, with intervals, Yasso 800s, and tempo runs. The plan includes detailed workout instructions (including exact paces), plus tips on strength, cross-training, nutrition, gear, racing, staying motivated, and preventing injury, plus access to RRCA-certified Runner's World+ coach Jess Movold.

REAL RUNNER REVIEW

"I was traveling a lot while training, so it was helpful to have every single day laid out for 16 weeks. I could shift around runs if I didn't have the time or energy to knock one out. This is quite literally the most mindless plan possible—look at the chart, lace up your shoes, and go."—*Mack Baker, 32, New York City*

FOR BUSY RUNNERS

McMILLAN RUNNING

- The program's pace calculator helps you set attainable goals
- Offers prehab programs that include core, strength, and mobility
- Workouts can be moved to fit your needs
- Focuses on metrics rather than feel
- Two-week taper

► Greg McMillan—the exercise physiologist and USATF- and RRCA-certified coach who created the McMillan Running Calculator, which calculates your current and goal paces—is a big proponent of mixing up your workouts as needed. His plans are based on a 16-week periodized sequence of training blocks that each include progressive long runs, marathon workouts, and goal-pace workouts (your exact pace range for each is determined using his calculator). For most runs, McMillan recommends tracking time running instead of miles so you know how much time you need to fit a workout into your schedule.

REAL RUNNER REVIEW

"I've adapted to the McMillan plan really well as I've gotten older—I get the same workouts now as I did before, but with less miles. I loved how I was able to customize it to focus more on endurance versus speed, so I had more cross-training days instead of speed workouts. I was able to BQ my latest race using this plan."—*Linda Malarkey, 51, New Milford, Connecticut*

MY RUNNING RESET



A VACATION FROM RUNNING LED TO MY BEST YEAR OF TRAINING

Going into the 2017 IAAF World Championships in London, I was feeling extra run-down from a small calf injury, and there was a lot of scrambling to try and fix it. I felt a little unprepared and unsure—it was a stressful two weeks—and I ultimately was disappointed in how I raced.

Afterward, I wanted one more race to try and fix the year, but it wasn't happening. I was really tired. At the end of the summer, my husband and I booked a trip to Santorini, Greece. It was unusual for

me to recognize that I needed to switch off rather than keep plowing through events. I could have done that every week until December.

My husband and I didn't have an itinerary in Greece. We were lazy. We went on a winery tour, hiked the coastline, and ate delicious food. So much of my life revolves around my run—it affects how I eat, sleep, and fill my day—but in Santorini, it was good to experience everything else and not

have to worry about how my run felt.

I took three weeks off total before I started training again. The fitness came back a lot faster than I thought: By my third workout, I felt almost back to normal. Sometimes you catastrophize taking time off, but my vacation launched the best year of training of my life. It was a really good lesson to stop gripping things so tightly so I could reset, recover, and mentally rejuvenate.—*Molly Huddle, 36, Providence, Rhode Island*