Beginner marathon training plan: GH Training

## Top 10 tips for first time marathon runners

If this is your first marathon and you’re feeling a little apprehensive about what to expect during the next few months of training, here are our top 10 tips on how to approach this exciting challenge.

1. **Slow and steady:** the slower and steadier you approach training, the less chance there is that you’ll get injured and the more you’ll enjoy the experience.
2. **It’s your marathon:** resist the temptation to copy how other people train. Everyone is different, so stick to your training plan and no one else’s.
3. **Run happy:** training can be fun. Do whatever it takes to make your training enjoyable - so jog with a chum or listen to some great music or podcasts.
4. **Work that booty:** conditioning exercises for the core and glutes (found in the [GH Training video library](https://www.ghtraining.co.uk/the-gh-training-app)) are really important to help prevent injury - so try and do them at least twice a week.
5. **Keep up the fluids:** drinking fluids frequently is really important to keep the body hydrated. If you’re generally not very good at drinking water throughout the day, try and get into the habit of frequently sipping out of a bottle.
6. **Nip niggles in the bud:** if you have a muscle niggle that gets worse, seek professional advice from a physiotherapist. The sooner it’s treated the better.
7. **Sign up for a half marathon:** getting ‘race day’ practice in is a really good idea so that you are familiar with what it’s like on race day. Running with other people, butterflies in your stomach and the atmosphere are things you can’t replicate in training, so try and get some event experience before the big day.
8. **Vary your training:** mixing your training up by running different routes and mixing up your pace are great ways to stop training getting stale and to help keep training interesting.
9. **Remember to rest:** the importance of rest is massively underestimated by many marathon runners. If you or your legs are tired, then don’t feel guilty taking an extra day off to recover.
10. **Listen to your body:** whether it’s injury, illness or fatigue - always listen to what your body is telling you. If something isn’t right, your body will let you know and it’s really important you listen to it.

## Explanation of training session terms

### Rate of perceived exertion (RPE) scale

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| **RPE scale** | **How you feel** | **% of maximum heart rate** |
| 1 | Chilling. Sitting down, feet up, watching a movie. | 30-40% |
| 2 | A steady walking pace. | 45-55% |
| 3 | A light jog. | 60-70% |
| 4 | A perfect sociable pace. Quicker than a jog but able to have a chat. | 70-75% |
| 5 | Pretty comfortable. Got a good sweat on and you feel great. | 75-80% |
| 6 | Comfortable-ish. You feel like it’s a good paced run. | 80-85% |
| 7 | Talking getting difficult – possible but not very easy. | 85-90% |
| 8 | Only short answers to important questions possible. | 90-95% |
| 9 | Talking all but impossible. | 95%+ |
| 10 | Talking is impossible. You can only keep this intensity up for 10-15 seconds or so. | N/A |

* **Easy run:** this is a really gentle jog that is not taxing at all. It’s a really gentle pace and one which should be done with a very relaxed mindset. RPE scale: 3-4
* **Steady run:** this is the pace the majority of your runs should be run at. It’s a ‘comfortable pace’ and a pace which you feel you can run for a long period of time. You should just about be able to count to 10 in one breath whilst running at this pace and you should certainly be able to hold a conversation. RPE scale: 4-5
* **Tempo run:** this pace is a notch up from a steady pace and should feel much more of an effort. Initially, you will only be able to hold this pace for a mile or two, but this will increase to 8-10 miles over time. RPE scale: 6-7
* **Fartlek:** predominantly an easy or steady run, but with randomised fast intervals thrown in every now and again. Include as many intervals as you like - as often, as far and as fast as you wish. Replace these sessions with ‘Intervals’ if you like. RPE scale: 3-8 (8 being maximum intensity of ‘fartlek’ segment).
* **Cross train:** any other cardiovascular activity that is not running. Common forms of cross training include cycling, rowing and swimming.
* **Intervals:** structured and high intensity running intervals with a set period of rest. RPE scale: 2-9 (9 being maximum intensity of ‘interval’). Popular intervals include:
	+ 4 x 1 mile or 1km intervals - with 4-5 mins rest in-between intervals (it’s okay to just walk during your rest period)
	+ 8 x 800m intervals - with 3 mins rest in-between intervals

## Conditioning exercises

As you’ll see in the following plan, twice a week - on Days 4 and 6 - it is suggested that you either rest or do some conditioning exercises. Of course, it doesn’t matter if you jig around the sessions and would prefer to do them on Days 3 and 5 or Days 2 and 4, it’s just a guide - so do them whenever it suits you.

These sessions are included in the plan to remind you of the importance of how performing regular exercises can help you prevent picking up injuries. Such sessions might include:

* Foam rolling
* Stretching
* Strengthening exercises
* Stability exercises

### Check out the GH Training video library

For ideas of what conditioning exercises you can do for these days, head over to the GH Training video library available on the [GH Training app](https://www.ghtraining.co.uk/the-gh-training-app).

There, you’ll be able to find a wide range of foam rolling, stretching, strengthening and stability exercises, which will complement your running and make sure that tight muscle tissue is released and stretched - and weak muscles are strengthened.

These exercises need not take long and the majority can be done in front the TV and in the comfort of your own home.



**Login and learn!** The GH Training video and tutorial library is the perfect complement to this plan. Featuring a wide range of nutrition, training and injury prevention videos and vlogs, the library is there to help you get the most out of training.

Access is free - so if you don’t know your login code, ask the Shelter Events team.

## Training timetable

Remember – this plan is just a guide. Feel free to adapt it to suit you and your lifestyle.

### Week 1

* **Day 1:** rest or 3-4 miles (easy run)
* **Day 2:** rest
* **Day 3:** 3-4 miles (steady run)
* **Day 4:** rest or conditioning exercises
* **Day 5:** 40 minute walk or easy jog
* **Day 6:** rest or conditioning exercises
* **Day 7:** 4-5 miles (steady run)

### Week 2

* **Day 1:** rest or 3-4 miles (easy run)
* **Day 2:** rest
* **Day 3:** 3-4 miles (steady run)
* **Day 4:** rest or conditioning exercises
* **Day 5:** 40-minute jog or easy jog
* **Day 6:** rest or conditioning exercises
* **Day 7:** 5-6 miles (steady run)

### Week 3

* **Day 1:** rest or 3-4 miles (easy run)
* **Day 2:** rest
* **Day 3:** 4-5 miles (steady run)
* **Day 4:** rest or conditioning exercises
* **Day 5:** 3-4 miles (fartlek)
* **Day 6:** rest or conditioning exercises
* **Day 7:** 6-7 miles (steady run)

### Week 4

* **Day 1:** rest or 3-4 miles (easy run)
* **Day 2:** rest
* **Day 3:** 4-5 miles (steady run)
* **Day 4:** rest or conditioning exercises
* **Day 5:** 3-4 miles (fartlek)
* **Day 6:** rest or conditioning exercises
* **Day 7:** 7-8 miles (steady run)

### Week 5

* **Day 1:** rest or 45-minute cross train (easy)
* **Day 2:** rest
* **Day 3:** 3-4 miles (tempo run)
* **Day 4:** rest or conditioning exercises
* **Day 5:** 3-4 miles (Fartlek)
* **Day 6:** rest or conditioning exercises
* **Day 7:** 4-5 miles (steady run)

### Week 6

* **Day 1:** rest or 60-90 minute cross train (easy)
* **Day 2:** rest
* **Day 3:** 4-5 miles (tempo run or intervals)
* **Day 4:** rest or conditioning exercises
* **Day 5:** 4-5 miles (Fartlek)
* **Day 6:** rest or conditioning exercises
* **Day 7:** 8-9 miles (steady run)

### Week 7

* **Day 1:** rest or 60-minute cross train (easy)
* **Day 2:** rest
* **Day 3:** 4-5 miles (tempo run or intervals)
* **Day 4:** rest or conditioning exercises
* **Day 5:** 4-5 miles (Fartlek)
* **Day 6:** rest or conditioning exercises
* **Day 7:** 9-10 miles (steady run)

### Week 8

* **Day 1:** rest or 60-minute cross train (easy)
* **Day 2:** rest
* **Day 3:** 5-6 miles (tempo run or intervals)
* **Day 4:** rest or conditioning exercises
* **Day 5:** 4-5 miles (Fartlek)
* **Day 6:** rest or conditioning exercises
* **Day 7:** 11-12 miles (steady run)

### Week 9

* **Day 1:** rest or 60-minute cross train (easy)
* **Day 2:** rest
* **Day 3:** 5-6 miles (tempo run or intervals)
* **Day 4:** rest or conditioning exercises
* **Day 5:** 5-6 miles (Fartlek)
* **Day 6:** rest or conditioning exercises
* **Day 7:** 13-14 miles (steady run)

### Week 10

* **Day 1:** rest or 45-minute cross train (easy)
* **Day 2:** rest
* **Day 3:** 3-4 miles (steady run)
* **Day 4:** rest or conditioning exercises
* **Day 5:** 40-minute jog or easy jog
* **Day 6:** rest or conditioning exercises
* **Day 7:** 6-8 miles (steady run)

### Week 11

* **Day 1:** rest or 60-90 minute cross train (easy)
* **Day 2:** rest
* **Day 3:** 5-6 miles (tempo run or intervals)
* **Day 4:** rest or conditioning exercises
* **Day 5:** 6-7 miles (Fartlek)
* **Day 6:** rest or conditioning exercises
* **Day 7:** 15-16 miles (steady run)

### Week 12

* **Day 1:** rest or 60-90 minute cross train (easy)
* **Day 2:** rest
* **Day 3:** 5-6 miles (tempo run or intervals)
* **Day 4:** rest or conditioning exercises
* **Day 5:** 6-7 miles (Fartlek)
* **Day 6:** rest or conditioning exercises
* **Day 7:** 17-19 miles (steady run)

### Week 13

* **Day 1:** rest or 60-90 minute cross train (easy)
* **Day 2:** rest
* **Day 3:** 5-6 miles (tempo run or intervals)
* **Day 4:** rest or conditioning exercises
* **Day 5:** 5-6 miles (Fartlek)
* **Day 6:** rest or conditioning exercises
* **Day 7:** 19-21 miles (steady run)

### Week 14

* **Day 1:** rest or 45-minute cross train (easy)
* **Day 2:** rest
* **Day 3:** 4-5 miles (steady run)
* **Day 4:** rest or conditioning exercises
* **Day 5:** 4-5 miles (steady run)
* **Day 6:** rest or conditioning exercises
* **Day 7:** 8-10 miles (steady run)

### Week 15

* **Day 1:** rest or 45-minute cross train (easy)
* **Day 2:** rest
* **Day 3:** 3-4 miles (tempo run or intervals)
* **Day 4:** rest or conditioning exercises
* **Day 5:** 4-5 miles (steady run)
* **Day 6:** rest or conditioning exercises
* **Day 7:** 5-6 miles (steady run)

### Week 16

* **Day 1:** rest or 45-minute cross train (easy)
* **Day 2:** rest
* **Day 3:** 3-4 miles (tempo run)
* **Day 4:** rest or conditioning exercises
* **Day 5:** 2-3 miles (steady run)
* **Day 6:** rest or conditioning exercises
* **Day 7: race day**