

12-WEEK MARATHON TRAINING PLAN

THE PLAN

This following program is aimed at those who sustainably train about 10-12 hours/week, with run volumes in the 20-30 mile/week range. If starting below these volumes, or if a significant amount of time (greater than a month) has passed since they were maintained, it would be recommended to spend 2-4 weeks building up before beginning, as sudden jumps in run training load increase injury risk.

The program is intended to max at about 35-40 miles/week, supplemented with about 3-4 hours of biking and 1-2 hours of swimming per week. Run distances are presented in ranges. Less experienced, more injury prone, or time-crunched athletes should err towards the lower end of the ranges. Long runs are presented in miles, but it is not recommended that any of these runs exceed 3-3.5 hours absolute maximum in length regardless of mileage. The Thursday run workouts and Sunday long runs are considered the key workouts of the week, and should be given priority. If additional rest days are needed, opt for Mondays or Fridays; bike workouts may also be shortened if time is a consideration.

KEY

MP: Goal marathon pace. Be realistic! Earlier in the plan, it is advisable to start marathon-paced run segments 10-20 seconds/mile above eventual goal pace, and work these segments down to goal pace by the second half of the plan.

Tempo: "Comfortably hard" threshold training pace. This is the pace that can be held for about an hour if properly rested and peaked. In practice, tempo pace coincides with about 90% of maximal heart rate for well-trained athletes (slightly below that for less fit ones), and usually falls midway between marathon and 5k paces—about 20-30sec/mi slower than 5k pace, and faster than marathon pace for most athletes. A good VDOT calculator with accurate inputs is helpful in determining proper tempo pace.

5k pace: Again, be realistic. If unsure, use a VDOT table to calculate approximate 5k pace based on marathon goal pace

Easy/aerobic pace: Comfortable, "all-day aerobic" pace. Definitions of "easy" and "aerobic" vary, but should max at about 80% of maximum heart rate, or 1-1.5 min/mile slower than goal marathon pace.

Strides: Quick accelerations, focusing on fast turnover and efficient form.

FTP: Functional threshold power, or the maximum bike power that can be held for one hour under ideal circumstances.

WEEK 1 (BASE/ MILEAGE BUILD)

MONDAY

SWIM:
Recovery 2-3k

TUESDAY

RUN:
Easy/ aerobic
5-6 miles with
6x20sec strides

WEDNESDAY

BIKE:
60min aerobic
(~60-75% FTP)
with optional
10x1' high cadence
pickups to FTP

THURSDAY

FARTLEK RUN:
Warm up
2-3 miles
1-2-3-4-3-2-
1min on at 9/10
effort, with 1min
recovery

Cool down to
7-8 miles total
running

FRIDAY

SWIM:
2-4k

RUN:
2-4 miles easy

SATURDAY

BIKE:
1.5-2 hour aerobic
(~60-75% FTP)

SUNDAY

RUN:
11-12 miles
aerobic

WEEK 1 NOTES

WEEK 2 (BASE/ MILEAGE BUILD)

MONDAY

SWIM:
Recovery 2-3k

TUESDAY

RUN:
Easy/ aerobic
6mi with 6x20sec
strides

WEDNESDAY

BIKE:
60min aerobic
(~60-75% FTP)
with optional
8x2' high cadence
pickups to FTP

THURSDAY

FARTLEK RUN:
Warm up 2-3 miles

2x 3min @ 8/10
effort with 2min
jogs

3x 2min @ 9/10
effort with 2min
jogs

4x 1min hard with
1min jogs

Cool down to 8-9
miles total running

FRIDAY

SWIM:
2-4k

RUN:
2-4 miles easy

SATURDAY

BIKE:
1.5-2 hour aerobic
(~60-75% FTP)

SUNDAY

RUN:
12-14 miles aerobic

WEEK 2 NOTES

WEEK 3 (RECOVERY)

MONDAY

SWIM:
Recovery 2-3k

TUESDAY

RUN:
Easy/ aerobic
4-5 miles with
6x20sec strides

WEDNESDAY

BIKE:
60min easy
recovery ride

THURSDAY

RUN:
8 miles easy/
aerobic with
10x1min pickups
to 9/10 effort,
1 min easy in
middle

FRIDAY

DAY OFF

SATURDAY

BIKE:
1.5- 2 hours easy/
aerobic

SUNDAY

RUN:
10 miles aerobic

WEEK 3 NOTES

WEEK 4 (BUILD)

MONDAY

SWIM:
Recovery 2-3k

TUESDAY

RUN:
Easy/ aerobic
7-8mi with
6x20sec strides

WEDNESDAY

BIKE:
60-90min total
with 5min,
2x4min, 3x3min,
4x2min intervals
at 90-100% FTP,
1-2min rest

THURSDAY

RUN TEMPO:
2 mile warm up

2 mile tempo with
2min rest

2-3x 1 mile tempo
with 1min rest

2 mile cooldown

FRIDAY

SWIM:
2-4k

 RUN:
3-4 miles easy

SATURDAY

BIKE:
2-2.5 hour aerobic
(~60-75% FTP)

SUNDAY

RUN:
14-16 miles as:
4 miles easy

4 miles @ MP

1mi easy

2 miles @ MP

1 mile easy

1 mile @ MP

1-3 miles easy

WEEK 4 NOTES

WEEK 5 (BUILD)

MONDAY

SWIM:
Recovery 2-3k

TUESDAY

RUN:
Easy/ aerobic
7-8 miles with
6x20sec strides

WEDNESDAY

BIKE:
60-90min total
with 6x 5min at
90-100%FTP, 2min
rest

THURSDAY

RUN TEMPO:
2 mile warm up

3 mile tempo with
3min rest

2 mile tempo with
2min rest

1 mile tempo

2 mile cooldown

FRIDAY

SWIM:
2-4k

 RUN:
3-4 miles easy

SATURDAY

BIKE:
2-3hr aerobic
(~60-75% FTP)

SUNDAY

RUN:
15-17mi run-start
easy/ aerobic and
descend to final
5-7mi at MP

WEEK 5 NOTES

WEEK 6 (BUILD)

MONDAY

SWIM:
Recovery 2-3k

TUESDAY

RUN:
Easy/ aerobic
7-8 miles with
6x20sec strides

WEDNESDAY

BIKE:
75-90min total
with 4x8min at
90-100% FTP,
4min rest

THURSDAY

RUN:
2 mile warm up

2x1 miles tempo
with 1min rest

4x800m @ 5k
pace with 3min
rest

2x1 mile tempo
with 1min rest

2 mile cooldown

FRIDAY

SWIM:
2-4k

 RUN:
2-4 miles easy

SATURDAY

BIKE:
2-2.5hr aerobic
(~60-75% FTP)

SUNDAY

RUN:
16-18 miles as:
2 miles easy

5 miles @ MP

1 mile easy

5 miles @ MP

1 mile easy

1 mile @ tempo

1-3 miles easy

WEEK 6 NOTES

WEEK 7 (RECOVERY)

MONDAY

SWIM:
Recovery 2-3k

TUESDAY

RUN:
4-5 miles easy

WEDNESDAY

BIKE:
60min easy

THURSDAY

RUN:
Easy/aerobic
6-8 miles with
6x20sec strides

FRIDAY

DAY OFF

SATURDAY

BIKE:
1.5-2hr aerobic
(~60-75% FTP)

SUNDAY

RUN:
12-13 miles easy/
aerobic

WEEK 7 NOTES

WEEK 8 (BUILD/ RACE SPECIFIC)

MONDAY

SWIM:
Recovery 2-3k

TUESDAY

RUN:
6-8 miles aerobic
with 6x20sec
strides

WEDNESDAY

BIKE:
75-90min with 3x
10min progressing
from 80-85% FTP
to 95-100% FTP

THURSDAY

RUN:
2 mile warm up

3 mile tempo,
3min rest

3x 1000m at 5k
pace, 3min rest

8x 1min hard with
1min r

FRIDAY

SWIM:
2-4k

 RUN:
2-4 miles easy

SATURDAY

BIKE:
1.5-2.5hr aerobic
(~60-75% FTP)

SUNDAY

**PEAK
LONG RUN:**
18-20 miles with
3x3 miles @ MP,
1 mile easy in
middle

WEEK 8 NOTES

WEEK 9 (BUILD/ RACE SPECIFIC)

MONDAY

SWIM:
Recovery 2-3k

TUESDAY

RUN:
Easy/ aerobic
6-8 miles with
6x20sec strides

WEDNESDAY

BIKE:
75-90min with
2x20min at 80-
90% FTP

THURSDAY

RUN:
2 mile warm up

2x2 mile tempo
with 2min rest

4x800m @ 5k
pace with 3min
rest

2 mile cooldown

FRIDAY

SWIM:
2-4k

 RUN:
3-4 miles easy

SATURDAY

BIKE:
2-3 hour
progressive
aerobic (~60%
progressed to
90% FTP, as you
feel)

SUNDAY

RUN:
16-18 miles
aerobic

WEEK 9 NOTES

WEEK 10 (BUILD/ RACE SPECIFIC)

MONDAY

SWIM:
Recovery 2-3k

TUESDAY

RUN:
Easy/ aerobic
6-8 miles with
6x20sec strides

WEDNESDAY

BIKE:
75-90min with 2x
(10min at 80-90%
FTP, 5min easy
5min at 90-100%
FTP, 5min easy)

THURSDAY

RUN:
2 mile warm up

2mi tempo with
2min rest

2x800 @ 5k pace
with 3min rest

2mi tempo with
2min rest

2x800 @ 5k pace
with 3min rest

2mi cooldown

FRIDAY

SWIM:
2-4k

 RUN:
2-4 miles easy

OR
optional rest day

SATURDAY

BIKE:
2-2.5 hour
progressive
aerobic ride
(~60% progressed
to 90% FTP, as
you feel)

SUNDAY

RUN:
14-15 miles as:
3 mile warm up

2x4 mile @ MP
with

1 mile easy

2-3 miles easy

WEEK 10 NOTES

WEEK 11 (TAPER)


MONDAY

 **SWIM:**
Recovery 2-3k


TUESDAY

 **RUN:**
Easy/aerobic 4-6 miles +6x20 sec strides



WEDNESDAY

 **BIKE:**
60-75min with 5-6x 5min at 80-100% (not forced) FTP, 3min rest


THURSDAY

 **RUN:**
2 mile warm up
4-5x 1 mile tempo with 1min rest
1-2 mile cooldown

FRIDAY

 **SWIM:**
2-4k
 **RUN:**
2-4 miles easy

SATURDAY

 **BIKE:**
75-90min aerobic (~60-75% FTP)

SUNDAY

 **RUN:**
10-12 miles (max 1:45) with 2x2mi @MP, 1mi easy


WEEK 11 NOTES

WEEK 12 (BUILD/ RACE SPECIFIC)


MONDAY

 **SWIM:**
Recovery 2-3k

TUESDAY

 **RUN:**
Easy/ aerobic 4-6 miles

WEDNESDAY

 **RUN:**
2 miles warm up
4-6x ½ mile @ tempo pace with 1min rest
2 miles cooldown

THURSDAY

 **BIKE:**
45-60min easy

FRIDAY

DAY OFF

SATURDAY

 **RUN:**
2-4 miles easy with 4x20sec strides

SUNDAY

RACE

CELEBRATE!