

IMPACT MAGAZINE

Training for your First 50 km Trail Race

An effective plan for those who want to graduate from 25 km trail races

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Squamish 50

For many the 50-kilometre race is their first entry to ultra racing and even though it's the shortest ultra, it certainly shouldn't be underestimated. These races are often FAST, and elevation gain can add up quickly. This training plan is intended for someone who has a bit of a training history and is comfortable running two to three times per week with a long run distance in the 20-to-25-kilometre range. Twelve weeks is a short amount of prep time if you're starting from scratch but if you're coming from a good base and adding a structured plan, you'll be in good shape.

TRAINING GOALS:

- Our primary goal is to get sufficient running volume in. This means most of the plan has easy or long runs. We use an effort scale of 0-10 and an easy or long run should be around a 4/10. This is a conversational pace and requires an athlete to consciously go slower than often feels most pleasurable.
- Tuesdays are intensity workouts. These are higher RPE ranges from 6 which is kind of "fun hard" to 8 which is really just "hard hard." Your one-mile efforts at a RPE of 9 aren't flat out but should feel like quite fast running. Your goal should be to maintain a consistent effort through these sessions without significantly slowing down throughout the workout. All intensity sessions should start with a ~15 min warm-up and finish with a similar cool down. Recovery time between the intervals is listed in brackets with the intervals and can be very slow jogging or walking. Intensity sessions should be primarily on runnable trail terrain. These can be relatively flat or rolling.

Hill sessions should be uphill—running or power hiking (or a mix).

- Look ahead to what your race has for vertical and terrain. Your runs should be on trails that ideally match the expected terrain in your race. If you're doing a mountain race, get on trails with lots of vertical. If you're doing a flatter and faster race, get on those buff, single-track routes. Use your long runs to test your gear and your nutrition ahead of race day. This is one of your single most useful tools—make sure those foods are palatable at the end of a long run and that your shoes/vest/whatever doesn't chafe you.

MAINTAIN CONSISTENCY:


Maintaining structure and consistency is critical. Try not to stack your sessions all in one part of the week. If you miss a workout, sometimes it just makes sense to leave it behind rather than try to make it up. Monitor for excessive fatigue and small injuries that could get worse. Remember the process is supposed to be fun—enjoy your training and good luck at your race.

LEGEND:

RPE - Rate of Perceived Exertion. An effort scale of how hard you should be working. 1 being easy and 10 hard.

X-train - Cross-training sessions that are intended to be aerobic activity that isn't running to reduce mechanical load on your joints and muscles. Cycling, swimming, and rowing are all great choices. If you have nothing else, a walk will do.

12-WEEK 50 KM TRAIL TRAINING PLAN

| WEEK | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT | SUN |
|------|----------|--|---------------------|-------------------|----------------|-------------------|---|
| 1 | Rest Day | 8 min @RPE 6/10 | 30 min easy x-train | 10 km easy run | Rest Day | 20 km long run | 5 km easy run |
| 2 | Rest Day | 2x 1 mile @RPE 9/10 [5 min recovery] | 30 min easy x-train | 10 km easy run | Rest Day | 25 km long run | 5 km easy run |
| 3 | Rest Day | 14 min @RPE 6/10 | 5 km easy run | 10 km easy run | Rest Day | 28 km long run | 5 km easy run |
| 4 | Rest Day | 4x 1 mile @RPE 9/10 [5 min recovery] | 5 km easy run | 12 km easy run | Rest Day | 32 km long run | 5 km easy run |
| 5 | Rest Day | 2x 12 min @RPE 6/10 [5 min recovery] | 5 km easy run | 12 km easy run | Rest Day | 35 km long run | 8 km easy run |
| 6 | Rest Day | 5 km easy run | 30 min easy x-train | 8 km easy run | Rest Day | 10 km easy run | 10 km easy run |
| 7 | Rest Day | 3x 5 min hill @RPE 8/10 [3 min recovery] | 5 km easy run | 12 km easy run | Rest Day | 32 km long run | 8 km easy run |
| 8 | Rest Day | 2x 14 min @RPE 6/10 [5 min recovery] | 5 km easy run | 15 km easy run | Rest Day | 34 km long run | 8 km easy run |
| 9 | Rest Day | 4x 5 min hill @ RPE 8/10 [3 min recovery] | 5 km easy run | 12 km easy run | Rest Day | 36 km long run | 10 km easy run |
| 10 | Rest Day | 3x 10 min @RPE 6/10 [5 min recovery] | 5 km easy run | 12 km easy run | Rest Day | 38 km long run | Rest Day |
| 11 | Rest Day | 2x 1 mile @RPE 9/10 [5 min recovery] | 30 min easy x-train | 5 km easy run | Rest Day | 15 km long run | 5 km easy run |
| 12 | Rest Day | 3 km @RPE 6/10 | 5 km easy run | OFF | Easy 30 min | RACE | 30 min walk  |