

20 Weeks to Your Strongest Marathon

Maintaining consistency in your schedule will help achieve your goals

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Royal Victoria Marathon

If you are someone who has ran marathons before but is looking to achieve a new personal best, this is the plan for you. This 20-week plan assumes you can already comfortably run three-four times per week, and your long run is at least 15 kilometres.

In my experience, the keys to success in any marathon training plan is consistency and getting those long runs in. Keep the easy runs as they are intended to be run, easy. And save your mental and physical energy for those tough workouts on the schedule.

I recommend following the schedule as closely as possible. However, if scheduling changes need to be made, ensure you are not running hard days back-to-back and that you are not doing speed work the day following your long run.

The goal of any training plan should be to get you to the start line healthy. Marathon training is hard on the body and pulling back, every so often, is just as important as building. My intermediate plan is designed with build weeks and recovery weeks, so you make recovery intentional. Listen to your body and take care of it while you move through this training block.

LEGEND

10 km – 10-kilometre race pace

HMP – half marathon pace

MP – goal marathon pace, i.e., if you want to run a 3:30:00 marathon, your MP target for workouts is 5:00/km.

RPE – Rate of perceived exertion with 0 being no effort and 10 being max effort. Easy runs should be run at an RPE no greater than 5/10. Take them slower if you feel fatigued. The key for these runs is to build your aerobic fitness and should not be run fast. Keep the easy days easy and the hard days hard!

Strides – pickup in pace of 50-100 metres but not an all-out sprint. Jog for 60 seconds between each stride.

All runs are prescribed in minutes or kilometres.

An apostrophe indicates minutes, a “k” indicates kms and an “s” indicates seconds.

20-WEEK MARATHON TRAINING PLAN

WEEK	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
1	Rest	15 min easy, 8-10 x 1 min at RPE 9, 1 min recovery, 15 min easy	Cross train or strength	45 min easy	60 min easy + 6 strides	Rest	15 km easy
2	Rest	15 min easy, 6-8 x 1 min uphill at RPE 5-6, downhill at MP, rest 30 sec, 15 min easy	Cross train or strength	45 min easy	60 min easy + 6 strides	Rest	18 km easy
3	Rest	15 min easy, 2 x 2 km at HMP, 3 min recovery, 15 min easy	Cross train or strength	45 min easy	60 min easy + 6 strides	Rest	20 km easy
4	Rest	60 min easy + 6 strides	Cross train or strength	45 min easy	60 min easy + 6 strides	Rest	15 km easy
5	Rest	15 min easy, 4 x 1 km at 10 km pace, 2 min recovery, 15 min easy	Cross train or strength	60 min easy	60 min easy	Rest	8 km easy, 6 km MP, 4 km easy
6	Rest	15 min easy, 2-3 x (3 x 1 min uphill at RPE 6, easy downhill, 3 x 15 sec uphill at RPE 10, easy downhill), 15 min easy	Cross train or strength	60 min easy	60 min easy + 6 strides	Rest	22 km easy
7	Rest	15 min easy, 2 x 2 km at HMP, 3 min recovery, 2 x 1 km at 10 km pace, 90 sec recovery, 15 min easy	Cross train or strength	60 min easy	60 min easy + 6 strides	Rest	25 km easy
8	Rest	60 min easy + 6 strides	Cross train or strength	60 min easy	60 min easy + 6 strides	Rest	18 km easy
9	30 min easy	15 min easy, 5 x 1 km at 10 km pace, 2 min recovery, 15 min easy	Cross train or strength	60 min easy	60 min easy	Rest	10 km easy, 8 km MP, 4 km easy
10	30 min easy	15 min easy, 6 x 300 m uphill at 7-8 RPE, 30 sec rest, MP downhill, 15 min easy	Cross train or strength	60 min easy	60 min easy + 6 strides	Rest	27 km easy
11	30 min easy	15 min easy, 5 x 1.6 km at HMP, 3 min recovery, 15 min easy	Cross train or strength	60 min easy	60 min easy + 6-8 strides	Rest	30 km easy
12	Rest	60 min easy + 6 strides	Cross train or strength	60 min easy	60 min easy + 6 strides	Rest	22 km easy
13	45 min easy	15 min easy, 15 min at HMP, 3 min recovery, 5 x 1 min at RPE 9, 90 sec recovery, 15 min easy	Cross train or strength	60 min easy	60 min easy + 6-8 strides	Rest	8 km easy, 2 x 5 km MP, 1 km recovery, 6 km easy
14	45 min easy	15 min easy, 4 x 1.6 km at HMP, 2 min recovery, 2 x 1 km at 10 km pace, 90 sec recovery, 15 min easy	Cross train or strength	60 min easy	60 min easy + 6-8 strides	Rest	32 km easy
15	Rest	60 min easy + 6 strides	Cross train or strength	60 min easy	60 min easy + 6 strides	Rest	24 km easy
16	45 min easy	15 min easy, 10 x 500 m at 10 km pace, 90 sec recovery, 15 min easy	Cross train or strength	60 min easy	60 min easy + 6-8 strides	Rest	5 km easy, 8 x (1 km, 1 km) alt MP, 20 sec slower, 5 km easy
17	45 min easy	15 min easy, 3 x (3 x 20 s uphill at RPE 9, 60 sec jog downhill, 10 min at MP, 2 min recovery), 15 min easy	Cross train or strength	60 min easy	60 min easy + 6-8 strides	Rest	34-36 km easy
18	30 min easy	15 min easy, 10-12 x 1 min at RPE 9, 1 min recovery, 15 min easy	Cross train or strength	60 min easy	Rest	20 km aerobic	10 km easy, 10 km MP, 2 km easy
19	30 min easy	15 min easy, 8 x 2 min at 10 km pace, 90 sec recovery, 15 min easy	Cross train or strength	60 min easy	60 min easy + 6 strides	Rest	18 km easy
20	Rest	15 min easy, 20 min at MP, 15 min easy	60 min easy + 6 strides	Rest	30 min easy + 4-5 strides	20 min easy	RACE DAY 🏃