

RUNNER'S WORLD

Hal Higdon's Half-marathon Training Guide: Novice

Halfway between the 10-K and the marathon is the friendlier and more accessible distance, the half-marathon

by: **Hal Higdon**

Once runners have finished their first 5-K and 10-K races, they often ask themselves, what's the next challenge? The same for experienced runners, looking to some variation in their training and racing.

For many, that next challenge is often the marathon, the lure of being able to finish 26 miles 385 yards. But that can be a big (and intimidating) jump and pose a commitment that not everybody wants to make.

Halfway between the 10-K and the marathon is the (friendlier and more accessible) half-marathon: 13.1 miles. The "half" offers a good staging area for novice runners--and advanced runners like the distance too, because they can race the half more often with less stress during the race and less time recovering after the race.

After completing your first 5-K, or your first 10-K, and after becoming comfortable racing those distances, simply step up your mileage to run the half-marathon. If you're approaching the half-marathon without a training base, you might want to begin at one of those levels and move into the below program after you're used to the mileage.

Don't push too fast too soon. The below schedule suggests a six-week build-up to the half-marathon. If you have more time to prepare, you can repeat any of the weeks along the way. If the schedule seems too strenuous, back up and repeat the week before the one you just completed. A gentler training build-up, covering a period of 13 weeks, would follow the following pattern. (Each number represents the week being run or repeated.)

1-2-1-2-3-2-3-4-3-4-5-4-6

Week	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
1	rest	4	rest or easy run	4	rest	cross train	70 min
2	rest	4.5	rest or easy run	4.5	rest	cross train	75 min
3	rest	5	rest or easy run	5	rest	cross train	80 min

st4	rest	5.5	rest or easy run	5.5	rest	cross train	85 min
5	rest	6	rest or easy run	6	rest	cross train	90 min
6	rest	4.5	rest or easy run	3	rest or easy run	rest	13.1 m Race

One additional approach to training for the half-marathon would be to follow the first eight weeks of the full marathon program, either as an end in itself or as a staging area for your first marathon. Rest, or cut back your training, for a week after your half-marathon, then continue on to your first marathon.