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Feet for FED Marathon Training

A Low-mileage, Injury-free Training Program for those who have jobs, families, and a life!

The achievement of completing a marathon-training program and finishing the marathon will be your treasure for the rest of your life. The schedule which follows are the latest evolution in a minimal mileage, low-impact training routine that has been used successfully by an estimated 100,000 marathoners since 1978.

- Don't wait to take walk breaks. By alternating walking and running from the beginning, you speed recovery without losing any of the endurance effect of the long one. Start with jogging one to two minutes and walking two to three minutes. As your training level increases you can adjust your run/walk ratio to running 5 minutes/walking one minute on your long runs.
- Be sure to do the running portion slow enough at the beginning of every run (especially the long run) so that you'll feel tired but strong at the end. The conservatism will allow you to recover faster.
- Every other day you can cross-train instead of walking. Cross country ski machines, water running, cycling, and any other mode which you find fun and interesting (but non-pounding) will improve overall fitness.
- Stay conversational on all of your exercise sessions. This means that you should be exerting yourself at a low enough level that you could talk. It's okay to take deep breaths between sentences, but you don't want to "huff and puff" between every word.
- As the runs get longer, be sure to keep your blood sugar boosted by eating an energy bar (or equivalent) about an hour before exercise. Drink water continuously before and during exercise and with all food.
- For the first few weeks, you will be doing more walking than jogging. On every "run/walk" day, walk for 2-3 minutes and jog 1-2 minutes. Every 3-4 weeks you may evaluate how you're feeling. If you want to increase the running, start by taking a 3-minute walk with a 2-minute run. Many of our beginners don't get further than this. Advanced beginners progress to a maximum of running for 2 minutes and walking for 2 minutes.

Walk Breaks?

Most runners will record significantly faster times when they take walk breaks because they don't slow down at the end of a long run. Thousands of time-goal-oriented veterans have improved by 10, 20, 30 minutes and more in marathons by taking walk breaks early and often in their goal races. You can easily spot these folks. They're the ones who are picking up speed during the last two to six miles when everyone else is slowing down.

The mental benefit: breaking 26 miles into segments, which you know you can do Even sub-three hour marathoners continue to take their walk breaks to the end. One of them explained it this way: "Instead of thinking at 20 miles I had six more gut-wrenching miles to go, I was saying to myself , 'one more mile until my break.' Even when it was tough, I always felt I could go one more mile."

Walk breaks in the marathon: how long and how often?

The following is recommended until 18 miles in the marathon. After that point, walk breaks can be reduced or eliminated as desired.



First time marathoners should follow the ratios used in training as long as they haven't slowed down significantly at the end of the long ones. If you struggled during the last few miles take walk breaks more often from the beginning. A minimum suggestion for first time marathoners would be one minute of walking for every 3-4 minutes of running.

The Earlier You Take the Walk Breaks, The More They Help You

You've got to start the walk breaks before significant fatigue sets in, at least in the first mile. If you wait until you feel the need for taking them, it's too late. They will give you little help. Even waiting until the two-mile mark to take the first one will reduce their potential effectiveness.

The Discount Rule: The earlier and the more often you walk, the bigger the fatigue discount.

To put it in shopping terms: You're getting a discount from the pounding on legs and feet when you take walk breaks on long runs. If you walk often enough, start the breaks early enough, and keep the pace slow enough, a 10-mile run only leaves six to seven miles of fatigue and pounding and a 20-miler leaves your legs feeling like you've covered only 13 to 15 miles

How Fast Should the Walk Break Be? A slow walk is fine. If you have a type A running personality and want to walk fast, make sure that you don't lengthen your walking stride too much. Monitor the tightness of your hamstring and the tendons behind the knee. If you feel tension there, walk slowly with bent knees to keep that area relaxed. Again, a slow walk is fine.

Veteran marathoners should follow the ratios below:

Time goal of more than 6 hours: 1-2 minutes of walking every 1-2 minutes running
Time goal of 5:50-6:00 hours and slower: 1 minute of walking every 4-5 minutes running
Time goal of 5:00-5:29: 1 minute of walking every 5-6 minutes of minutes running
Time goal of 4:30-4:59: 1-2 minutes of walking every 6-7 minutes running
Time goal of 4:00-4:29: 1 minute walking every 7-8 minutes running
Time goal of 3:30-3:59: 1 minute walking every mile
Time goal of 3:22-3:29: 30 seconds walking every mile
Time goal of 3:16-3:21: 20 seconds walking every mile
Time goal of 3:08-3:15: 15 seconds of walking every mile
Time goal of 2:50-3:07: 10 seconds of walking every mile

Why do walk breaks work?

By using muscles in different ways from the beginning, you legs keep their bounce as they conserve resources. When a muscle group, such as your calf, is used continuously step by step, it fatigues relatively soon. The weak areas get overused and force you to slow down later or scream at you in pain afterward. By shifting back and forth between walking and running muscles, you distribute the workload among a variety of muscles, increasing your overall performance capacity. For veteran marathoners, this is often the difference between achieving a time goal or not.

Walk breaks will significantly speed up recovery because there is less damage to repair. The early walk breaks erase fatigue, and the later walk breaks will reduce or eliminate overuse muscle breakdown.

The earlier you take the walk breaks, the more they help you!

To receive maximum benefit, you must start the walk breaks before you feel any fatigue, in the first mile. If you wait until you feel the need for a walk break, you've already reduced your potential performance.

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How fast should the walk break be?

When you walk fast for a minute, most runners will lose about 15 seconds over running at their regular pace. But if you walk slowly, you'll have lost only about 20 seconds.

Once we find the ideal ratio for a given distance, walk breaks allow us to feel strong to the end and recover fast, while bestowing the same stamina and conditioning we would have received if we had run continuously.

Don't get too rigidly locked into a specific ratio of walk breaks, adjust as needed.

Even if you run the same distance every day, you'll find that you'll need to vary the walk break frequency to adjust for speed, hills, heat, humidity, time off from training, etc. If you anticipate that your run will be more difficult or will produce a longer recovery, take more frequent walk breaks (or longer walks) and you may be surprised at how quickly you recover.

Do I need to take the walk breaks on the short runs during the week?

If you can run continuously now on shorter runs, you don't have to take the walk breaks. If you want to take them, do so. Walk breaks on midweek runs will insure that you recover from the long ones at the fastest pace.

How to Run Efficiently

The most efficient way to run is to have your head, neck and shoulders erect. When you run leaning forward, you're always fighting gravity. Note: Good form is something all runners- regardless of ability or experience-can work on. Racers are naturally interested in improving from, for it will help them run faster. But beginners and noncompetitive runners will also benefit from understanding some of these principles, for good form will make anyone's running smoother and more enjoyable.

- Feet should stay low to the ground, with no noticeable knee lift.
- Upright posture
- Stay light on your feet
- Strive to feel relaxed, comfortable and smooth.

Hot Weather Running

There's good and bad news about running in the heat. First, the bad news: when the temperature rises above 55 degrees F (10 degrees C), you're going to run slower and feel worse than you will at lower temperatures. But by gradually preparing yourself for increased temperatures and taking action from the beginning of hot weather runs, you'll get a welcome dose of the good news. You'll learn how to hydrate yourself, what to wear, and when and how much your body can take in hot weather, all of which will help you recover faster and run better than others of your ability on hot days. While even the most heat-trained runners won't run as fast on hot days as on cold ones, they won't slow down as much nor will they feel as much discomfort.

Until the temperature rises to about 65 degrees F, most runners don't notice much heat build-up, even though it is already putting extra burdens on the system. It takes most folks about 30 to 45 minutes of running (with or without walk breaks) to feel warm. But soon after that, if the temperature is above about 62 degrees F, you're suddenly hot and sweating. On runs and especially races under those conditions, most runners have to force themselves to slow down. It's just too easy to start faster than you should when it's 60 to 69 degrees F because it feels cool at first.

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As the mercury rises above 65 degrees F, your body can't get rid of the heat build-up. This causes a rise in core body temperature, leading to an early depletion of fluids through sweating. The internal temperature rise also triggers rapid dispersion of blood into the capillaries of the skin, reducing the amount of that vital fluid that is available to the exercising muscles. Just when these workhorses are being pushed to top capacity, they are receiving less oxygen and nutrients due to reduced blood flow. What used to be a river becomes a creek and can't remove the waste products of exercise (such as lactic acid). As these accumulate, your muscles slow down.

Even the most heat-conditioned athletes will record slower times in warm weather. The faster you run in hot weather, especially from the beginning, the longer it takes to recover. But it's also possible to take action from the start of the run to reduce muscle damage speed recovery and even lower your time in warm weather races.

Humidity. The higher the humidity, the quicker you'll feel the effect of the heat and the more difficult it will be to continue. Watch the weather reports and install a temperature and humidity gauge at your house. After a while, you'll learn the combination of the two which causes you discomfort so that you can avoid the times of the day when those conditions arise.

Account for Heat

The hot and sticky days of summer are here. Make sure that you are making some adjustments in your running. Most runners begin to slow down at 55 degrees and start suffering at 65 degrees. Of course, the body can adapt to heat stress and push the threshold up a bit, but you usually can't run as fast on a 75 degree day as on a 45degree one. High humidity is also a major problem. It's like a wet blanket; it doesn't allow much evaporation or perspiration and your body heat builds up.

If you try to run too hard in hot or humid conditions you'll hit "the wall" sooner than expected. Trying to maintain a goal pace in heat is like going out too fast early in the race. Temperatures generally increase hour by hour; therefore you must adjust your pace for the temperature expected at the end of the race.

Heat Alert!

The Good News:

By taking action now, you can prevent heat fatigue and enjoy your long runs even more!

The Bad News:

You don't usually notice that heat fatigue is coming on, but once incurred- it lasts for months.

Causes (compounded by hot, humid conditions)

- 1) Running continuously on long runs (or walk breaks too infrequent)
- 2) Running slightly too fast on long runs during adverse conditions

Symptoms:

Leg muscles have no bounce or life to them at some point in the run

Class syndrome:

the "no bounce" point in the run moves closer to the start of successive runs

Prevention:

1. Adjust for warm weather by running at least 2 minutes per mile slower than you could have run that distance that day. Account for heat, humidity, hills, and other adversities. If you're in doubt, run 3 minutes per mile slower, as I do. You'll get the same endurance from the long run running slowly, as you would when running faster. Slow long ones will dramatically reduce leg fatigue, and decrease the chance of heat fatigue.

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2. Take walk breaks more often when the heat and humidity are high, and as the long runs get longer. If you're walking one minute every six minutes at first, shift to 1 in 5 when the long one reaches 18. By the time you're doing your 23 miler, drop to 1 in 4. If it is extremely hot and humid on the 26 (and longer) run (s), walk 1 minute every 3 minutes at least during the first 13 miles of the run. By combining this with a pre-dawn start, you'll minimize leg/heat fatigue.

3. Don't do any hard running during the week (Mon-Fri) if the legs are still tired from the weekend run. If you're running more than 3 times a week, cut out one of those running days. 4. Racing distances longer than 5K in hot weather can add significantly to leg fatigue.

4. Racing distances longer than 5K in hot weather can add significantly to leg fatigue. Don't do a race and a long run on the same weekend (even if the race is a 5K). 5. Drink at least 6-8 oz of water every hour you are awake.

5. Drink at least 6-8 oz of water every hour you are awake. Reductions in heat fatigue buildup are realized by running during the coolest time of the day (before sunrise), drinking cold water, and pouring it over yourself throughout the long runs. Avoid salt, alcohol, and caffeine.

The consequences of running too fast:

The consequences of running too fast: You'll usually feel great during the first half of the your long ones if you're running one minute slower than you could run on that day. Unfortunately, this pace is too fast for hot and humid conditions and will dramatically increase leg fatigue and slow down your marathon performance.

How to stay cool

1. Slow down early- take those walk breaks early and often
2. Wear lighter garments and not cotton- several materials will wick the perspiration away from your skin: coolmax, polypro, etc.
3. Pour water over yourself- pour water on your head, or even on you light coolmax (or similar material) singlet.
4. Don't wear a hat- hats keep your heat from being released through one of the best vents you have- the top of your head!
5. Drink cold water- it leaves the stomach quicker and it produces a slight physiological cooling effect- and even greater psychological cooling effect.
6. Take a dip or a shower- take a break for a dip in the pool or a cold shower on hot days!
7. Don't eat a big meal- Eating too much (especially protein and fat) will put extra stress on your system when you exercise.

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Getting Used To Heat and Humidity

Stay away from heat most of the time. Most of your exercise sessions should be done in the coolest time possible, usually just before and just after dawn.

Make sure you've received a doctor's clearance for exercising in hot weather. Almost no one is excluded, but you want to make sure. Pick a doctor who thoroughly knows the effects and benefits of exercise.

Be sure to drink water often during hot and humid weather. Keep a container of water with you all day long and drink small amounts regularly - about 6-8 ounces per hour if you're indoors. If you're sweating, increase the amount of water.

To get an exercising body used to the heat and humidity, exercise during the warm part of the day once a week. At first, go only for about 4-5 minutes. Gradually increase the amount of warm exercise by 3-4 minutes each week until you can do 20-25 minutes in the heat and humidity.

Beware of heat disease. At the first sign of heat problems, ease your effort and cool off. Heat disease symptoms include but are not limited to the following: hot and cold flashes, cessation of sweating, clammy skin, loss of control over muscles, and extreme heat buildup - particularly in the area of the head, and nausea.

Are You Drinking Enough Water?

Water is a very important element in staying healthy. With the hot weather of summer's end beating down on us all, we need to remember that higher temperatures mean our bodies need more fluids. Waiting until you feel thirsty doesn't work because by the time you feel it, you're already running low. The general advice is to drink before, during and after exercise, regardless of the length of time you plan to exercise: eight to 16 ounces before you workout, five to 10 ounces every 15 to 20 minutes during, and at least 16 ounces afterward. (ARFA's Running & Fit News, July 1999, p. 2.)

There are plenty of different styles of water belts/carriers nowadays so you should be able to find one that is comfortable for you to wear on your runs. Carrying your own water allows you to drink when you need to. Plus you never know when there might be a problem with the water stop and you'll find yourself on your own.

Tips: Keep a water bottle at your desk so you can drink all day. Filling your bottle halfway the night before and freezing it gives you a nice, cool drink whenever you want it, at work or on your run, and cool water is easier for your body to absorb.

How to Choose a Training Group

Is composed of people at your level - not the level you want to achieve

- Takes walk breaks from the beginning of all long runs
- Runs at a pace that allows you to finish long ones without breathing so hard that you can't carry on a conversation
- Gives you a feeling of comfort and acceptance
- Meets at a time and place which would fit into your lifestyle

Social reinforcement makes it easier to establish the fitness habit. One good approach is to find a group that meets regularly. Or you can make a pact with a friend who drags you out on bad days and vice versa. Races and fun runs are great opportunities to meet people.

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On a long Run

On a long run: How do I know if I'm running two minutes per mile slower than I could run on that day?

You don't. Even veteran athletes have to guess when invoking the Two-Minute Rule. When you guess on the conservative side, you win. You'll recover faster, feel good that evening, and reduce the chance of aches, pains and injuries, while receiving all the endurance bestowed by the distance of that run.

The "huff and puff" rule may help: If you're huffing and puffing so much during the last two to three miles of a long run that you can't carry on a conversation, you went too fast at the beginning of that run. On the next run, significantly slow down, take walk breaks more frequently, or both.

The Long Run

The long run is your marathon-training program!

What is a long run?

The long run starts with the longest distance you've covered within the last two weeks and increases by one mile on a weekly long one up to 10 miles. At that point, you'll shift to running long every other weekend, increasing by two miles each time. Once you reach 18 miles, increase by three miles every third week.

The mental benefits

While there are significant and continuing physical benefits from running long regularly, the mental ones are greater. Each week, I hear from beginning marathoners after they have just run the longest run of their lives. This produces mental momentum, self-confidence, and a positive attitude. By slowing the pace and talking walk breaks, you can also experience a series of victories over fatigue with almost no risk of injury.

The most direct way to prepare for the marathon

As you extend the long one to 26 miles, you build the exact endurance necessary to complete the marathon (14 to 15 for the half marathon, 8 to 10 for the 10K).

Pacing of long Runs

Run all of the long ones at least 2 minutes slower than you could run that distance that day. The walk breaks will help you to slow the pace, but you must run slower as well. You get the same endurance from the long one if you run slowly as you would if you run fast. However, you'll recover much faster from a slow long run.

Adjust for heat, humidity, hills, etc.

The warmer and more humid it is, the slower you must go (two and a half to three minutes/mile slower than you could run that distance that day). The slower you go, from the beginning of the run, the less damage you'll incur from the heat, humidity, and distance covered. More frequent (or longer) walk breaks will also lower the damage without detracting from the endurance of that long run.



Signs you went too fast on a long one:

- you must hit the couch or bed and rest for an hour or more
- muscle soreness or leg fatigue which lasts more than two days, making it uncomfortable to run
- aches and/or pains that last for more than four days after a long one
- huffing and puffing so much during the last two to three miles that you can't carry on a conversation
- struggling during the last two to three miles to maintain pace or slowing down
- an increase in nausea and irritation at the end of the run

Long run facts

- Twenty miles with walk breaks equals 20 miles run continuously at any speed (but you recover faster with walk breaks).
- Forget about speed on long runs. Focus only on the component of endurance.
- You can't run too slowly on the long runs. Run at least two minutes per mile slower than you could run that distance that day, accounting for heat, humidity, etc.
- You usually won't feel bad when you're running too fast at the beginning of the run; you must force yourself to slow down.
- The day before the long run should be a no-exercise day.

Everyone Has at Least One "Bad" Long One

- Group support pulls you through the bad ones.
- By helping others through their tough times, you receive positive internal rewards.
- These tough runs teach you how to deal with tough portions of the marathon itself

Why You Need Shoe Advice

1. Even the better running companies are using gimmicks in their designs: some of the gimmicks work, some don't.
2. There's always a reason why the catalog offers a dramatic discount on a given shoe.
3. The same shoe may be made in different factories - making each significantly different in the way it fits, and in the many subtle ways it works when you run.
4. Only people who are really into running shoes can keep up with the gossip on running shoes - due to constant feedback they receive from hundreds of customers each week who really use the shoes for exercise.
5. Only experienced running staff people can look at you in a shoe and tell whether it really fits - and works with your foot in the right way.



Fitness Mistakes (for a new runner) - which cause burnout:

1. tried to run continuously for more than a half mile (should have run 1-2 minutes and walked 2 minutes)
2. Started out each run too hard - for him/her (should have started by shuffling slowly - with walks)
3. Told himself before each run that he was going to feel bad (should have forecast a fun, easy run)
4. Tried to exercise when blood sugar and motivation was low (should have eaten something first)

The Inspiration Muscle

When you're tentative about your motivation getting out the door for a run, it often helps to read (possibly out loud) the following list of benefits you receive after running:

- Your attitude is better after every run
- Stress is released, often completely dissolved
- Natural body chemicals (endorphins) relax the body, reducing or eliminating muscle aches and pains
- Your spirit is engaged, leaving you with feelings of accomplishment, confidence, and strength.
- Body and mind are connected, giving you the confidence that comes with being a more "complete" person.
- Your right brain is engaged, energizing your creative and imaginative resources.
- You're learning connections to hidden inner resources which kick in whenever you're under stress