

A woman with her hair in a ponytail, wearing a grey long-sleeved shirt, a black puffer vest, and black shorts, is running on a sandy beach. The ocean is in the background under a clear sky. The text 'HALF MARATHON TRAINING GUIDE' is overlaid in a white box.

HALF MARATHON TRAINING GUIDE

12 WEEKS • BEGINNER

I can do this

12 week beginner half marathon training guide



You've set yourself the challenge of your first half marathon. Congratulations! This training program will build on your running endurance, speed and strength and get you ready to race in 12 weeks.

Remember, everyone is an individual and your base level of fitness may vary. If you are newer to running and find some of the early runs in this guide a little challenging, consider completing the 10 km training guide first to give yourself a strong base to work from.

This **12 week** training guide is just that – a guide – so feel free to be a little flexible with it to make it work for you. If you want to swap some of the days, go ahead. If you miss a run, you can make it up. The real aim is to be consistent with your training, and the overall details won't matter as much.

If you have the time and don't feel the 12 week program is enough to get you ready, you can add extra weeks throughout to make it 16 or 20 weeks.

Here is an explanation of the terms used in this training guide:

→ **Run:** The pace you run at should be comfortable. If you're training with a friend, the two of you should be able to hold a conversation. If you measure your heart rate, your target zone should be between 65 and 75% of your maximum heart rate.

→ **Distance:** This training guide includes runs that vary from 5 km to 16 km. Use these distances as your guide, not as your prescription. Review the distances in the guide and pick courses through your local area that roughly measure up to the training guide distances. You can use Google maps to measure courses or a GPS based app.

→ **Rest:** Your muscles need time to recover and rebuild, so rest days are just as important as running days. In particular, it's important to rest before and after your long run to help reduce your risk of injury.

→ **Long runs:** Important sessions in the guide are the long runs, which progressively increase in distance each weekend. You will jump from your longest training run of 16 km to the half marathon – a big leap, but your training and inspiration on the day will see you over the line.

→ **Cross-training:** You can choose your preferred form of cross-training, be it swimming, cycling, walking, rowing or a combination. Cross-training days should be considered easy days that allow you to recover from the running you do during the week.


→ **Stretch + strengthen:** Stretching is key to a strong, supple body and should be done daily. Strength training, particularly for your core muscles, is an important focus of this training guide. Try bodyweight exercises like push-ups, chin-ups or dips, or light weights with high reps at your local gym.

→ **Test:** The idea with the test runs is to measure your time, progress and fitness, if it suits you. Another option is to find local fun-runs at these distances to allow you to time your race and get used to running with other competitors.



Don't forget to stretch! It's important to start each training session with some stretches and gentle movement to prepare your body for your workout. After your session, cool down with more stretches to help with recovery.

12 week beginner half marathon training guide

| Week | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday | Sunday |
|------|---|---|---|--|--------|--|---|
| 1 | Stretch + strength Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 km run Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> | You choose: 3 km run or cross-training Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 km run + strength Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> | Rest | 30 min cross-training Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> | 6 km run Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 | Stretch + strength Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 km run Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> | You choose: 3 km run or cross-training Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 km run + strength Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> | Rest | 30 min cross-training Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> | 6 km run Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 | Stretch + strength Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 km run Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> | You choose: 3 km run or cross-training Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 km run + strength Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> | Rest | 40 min cross-training Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 km test Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 | Stretch + strength Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> | 6 km run Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> | You choose: 3 km run or cross-training Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> | 6 km run + strength Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> | Rest | 40 min cross-training Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> | 8 km run Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5 | Stretch + strength Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> | 6 km run Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> | You choose: 3 km run or cross-training Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> | 6 km run + strength Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> | Rest | 40 min cross-training Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> | 10 km run Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6 | Stretch + strength Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> | 6 km run Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> | You choose: 3 km run or cross-training Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> | 6 km run + strength Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> | Rest | Rest | 8 km test Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7 | Stretch + strength Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> | 7 km run Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> | You choose: 5 km run or cross-training Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> | 7 km run + strength Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> | Rest | 50 min cross-training Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> | 12 km run Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8 | Stretch + strength Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> | 7 km run Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> | You choose: 5 km run or cross-training Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> | 7 km run + strength Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> | Rest | 50 min cross-training Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> | 14 km run Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9 | Stretch + strength Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> | 8 km run Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> | You choose: 5 km run or cross-training Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> | 8 km run + strength Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> | Rest | Rest | 10 km test Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10 | Stretch + strength Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> | 8 km run Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> | You choose: 5 km run or cross-training Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> | 8 km run + strength Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> | Rest | 60 min cross-training Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> | 15 km run Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11 | Stretch + strength Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> | 8 km run Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> | You choose: 5 km run or cross-training Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> | 8 km run + strength Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> | Rest | 60 min cross-training Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> | 16 km run Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12 | Stretch + strength Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> | 8 km run Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> | You choose: 5 km run or cross-training Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 km run Notes: <input type="checkbox"/> | Rest | Rest |  Race day |

Fact: If you follow this guide to the letter you will have completed nearly **315 km** of running – pat on the back! **Exercise safely:** Talk to your GP before starting a new exercise program, especially if you have any existing health conditions.

The training guide is just that, a guide – it's important to make it work for you. If you want to do long runs on Saturday rather than Sunday, simply change the days. Or if you miss a run you can make it up on one of your rest days.

Check off your training each day to keep track of your achievements. Each step gets you closer to your goal!