



# The **bigHalf**


## **13-WEEK BEGINNER HALF MARATHON TRAINING PLAN**

### **WELCOME TO THE BIG HALF**

A half marathon is a physical and mental challenge and the better prepared you are, the better your experience will be on Event Day! This training plan will guide you to the Finish Line of your 13.1-mile adventure, whether you are a novice or experienced runner. If this is your first Big Half, it's completely natural to feel daunted and experience self-doubt about if you've got what it takes, especially if you're not a regular runner. That's why we're here to help you every step of the way and boost your confidence as you make your amazing journey to Event Day!



Looking for a personalised training plan? Sign up to our official training partner **Coopah** today.



# TRAINING ADVICE AND TIPS

There isn't one right or perfect way to complete your training and each runner should personalise their training plan, but here are some tips and advice to make sure your training runs as smoothly as possible.

## 1. What you need to run

- Your running shoes are your most important piece of kit so choose them carefully.
- Invest in a stopwatch, GPS device or fitness tracker to help you time your walks/runs and understand your effort level and pace. You can also track your distance via a fitness app on your smart phone.

## 2. Run regularly

Consistent running develops stamina and strength and gives your body the time it needs to adapt. Whether you are completely new to running or not, the aim is to build up the amount of walking, jogging and running you undertake from your individual starting point. Identify the times in your week when you can go for a run and stick to them. Missing a few runs here and there is okay, but a stop-start running routine won't see your fitness improve.

## 3. Get the training right

A common problem with novice runners is that they leave their front door and sprint as fast as they can and by the time they reach the end of the road, they're red in the face, doubled over and thinking, 'It's no good, I can't do this running'. Instead, spend the first few weeks of your new regime regularly walking until you feel confident enough to break into short periods of jogging with regular walk breaks. Gradually lengthen the time you spend jogging and shorten the time you spend walking.

## 4. Form and posture

- When you run, concentrate on relaxing 'from the eyebrows down'. Tension in your face, neck and shoulders can bring about fatigue and inefficient running form.
- Keep your head relaxed and steady; let your shoulders hang naturally; bend your arms to 90 degrees by your sides and allow them to swing freely backwards and forwards close to your body like a pendulum; keep your body upright and your knees, hips and lower legs in a forward line.
- Most of all – feel relaxed, balanced and in control.

## 5. Longer runs

- Plan the route for longer runs. Think about routes where you'll feel safe and relaxed, or which are exciting or different.
- On longer runs, vary your pace so you can understand what kind of pace you can maintain and for how long. This will help you understand what kind of finish time to aim for. Sometimes you'll feel out of breath, especially as the duration of your runs increase. That's okay. Slow down, gain control, and focus on your breathing rate and running at a manageable pace.

# HOW TO STAY MOTIVATED

- **Get your friends, family and local community involved. If you share your journey, you are more likely to stick to the plan and reach your half marathon goal.**
- **When you're feeling demotivated, remind yourself of the reasons you are doing the Big Half and how you are inspiring those around you to get fit.**
- **Congratulate yourself on each milestone of the plan and take a moment to feel proud of how far you've come – making it to week four, week seven (over the halfway mark) and week 13 are all huge achievements.**
- **It's normal to not want to run sometimes so don't feel guilty about missing days here and there – the rest will do you good.**
- **Be kind to yourself along the way – walk when you need to, slow down when it feels right and then gather yourself and keep moving.**

# TRAINING PLAN

Set aside three days per week, ideally spaced out, for this training plan.

How you should:

**Walk** - At any pace, simply relax and walk. Sometimes you might feel like a brisk walk and at other times a relaxing stroll.

**Easy run** - Move slightly quicker than walking, with a bit of a spring in your step. You may become a little out of breath at first, but this will improve with time.

**Steady run** - You'll be concentrating and trying to keep going. The intensity will feel like you are working harder, your breathing will go up, your heart rate will increase. But as you get fitter your body will adapt and find a rhythm.

## WEEK 1

This is your first week!

**Day 1:** 20-minute walk

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**Day 2:** 20-minute walk

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**Day 3:** 35 mins (10-minute walk; easy run for 1 min, walk for 2 min **x5**; 10 min walk)

## WEEK 2

This week is about continuing to build your exercise routine.

**Day 1:** 30 min walk

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**Day 2:** 30 min walk

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**Day 3:** 40 mins (10 min easy walk; 2 min easy run, 2 min walk **x5**; 10 min easy walk)

## WEEK 3

This week affirms your routine and includes your longest weekly workout so far.

**Day 1:** 35 mins (10 min walk; 2 min easy run, 1 min walk **x5**; 10 min walk)

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**Day 2:** 38 mins (10 min walk; 4 min easy run, 2 min walk **x3**; 10 min walk)

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**Day 3:** 50 mins (10 min walk; 8 min easy run, 2 min walk **x3**; 10 min walk)

## WEEK 4

This week is about getting into the groove of your running and when you start to run more and walk less.

**Day 1:** 40 mins (10 min walk; 4 min easy run, 1 min walk **x4**; 10 min walk)

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**Day 2:** 30 mins (5 min easy run, 5 min walk **x3**)

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**Day 3:** 48 mins (10 min easy run, 2 min walk **x4**)

## WEEK 5

It's time to play with the pace a little and increase your total time on your feet..

**Day 1:** 50 mins (10 min walk; 2 min easy run, 1 min walk **x10**; 5 min easy run; 5 min run)

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**Day 2:** 33 mins (10 min easy walk; 1 min steady run, 2 min walk **x6**; 5 min easy walk)

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**Day 3:** 53 mins (5 min walk, 20 min easy run; 3 min walk, 20 min easy run; 5 min walk)

## WEEK 6

Increase the amount of time you are able to run and break the hour for a single workout!

**Day 1:** 50 mins (10 min easy walk; 3 min steady run, 1 min easy run, 1 min walk **x6**; 10 min easy run)

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**Day 2:** 50 mins (10 min easy run; 30 min steady run; 10 min easy run)

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**Day 3:** 60 mins (20 min easy run, 2 min walk **x3**)

## WEEK 7

Progress to your longest, continuous steady run and your total time on your feet. You're over halfway there!

**Day 1:** 50 mins (10 min easy run; 4 min steady run, 1 min walk **x6**; 10 min easy run)

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**Day 2:** 40 mins steady run

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**Day 3:** 77 mins (10 min easy run, 1 min walk **x7**)

## WEEK 8

A week of easy running. Refresh your spirit, re-energise your motivation and enjoy.

**Day 1:** 30 mins easy run

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**Day 2:** 48 mins (15 min easy run, 1 min walk **x3**)

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**Day 3:** 90 mins of easy running. Walk for parts if you need to but stay on your feet for the full 90mins

## WEEK 9

Introduced some faster running. Start to understand distance in your training.

**Day 1:** 52 mins (10 min easy run; 3 min steady run, 1 min walk **x8**; 10 min easy run)

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**Day 2:** 40 mins (10 min easy run; 2 min fast run, 2 min walk **x5**; 10 min easy run)

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**Day 3:** 98 mins (1 mile run with a 2 min walk **x8**). The time taken for this run will vary depending on the pace at which you cover each mile. For example, at 10 mins per mile pace, the total time will be 1hr 38 mins.

## WEEK 10

This is probably the hardest week of your half marathon training.

**Day 1:** 40 mins (10 min walk; 4 min easy run, 1 min walk **x4**; 10 min walk)

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**Day 2:** 40 mins (5 min easy run, 5 min walk **x3**)

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**Day 3:** 10-mile run. Walk whenever you need to but aim to cover the 10-mile distance.

## WEEK 11

You are almost there. This week is about doing your final and longest run, which will give you the confidence that you can cover the distance on event day.

**Day 1:** 40 min steady run

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**Day 2:** 45 mins (10 min easy run; 3 min fast run, 2 min walk **x5**; 10 min easy run). Try to run this session more controlled and even paced.

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**Day 3:** 12-mile run. Walk whenever you need to but aim to cover the 12-mile distance. You may decide to run the whole way or break the run up into 4 x 3-mile chunks with a short break between each.

**Tip:** As you cover your 12 miles, run each of the last three miles with a different person in mind: Someone who has helped you, someone you love and someone you wish you could share your journey with.

## WEEK 12

Do a little less running as the big day draws closer. Keep your three runs light, relaxed and controlled. Do less, not more, this week.

**Day 1:** 30 min easy run

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**Day 2:** 40 min steady run

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**Day 3:** 60 min easy paced run

## WEEK 13

It's event week! Relax and enjoy the fact that you've made it this far and have a great Big Half. Nothing you do this week will make you any fitter, so run smart.

**Day 1:** 30 min easy run

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**Day 2:** 20 min easy run

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### Big Half day

When event day arrives, believe in your hard work. Never give up, always keeping moving forwards and keep focused on the Finish Line and how important it is to you. Run your own race. Pace your effort evenly and smoothly for the full half marathon distance.