

## Hal Higdon's Novice 1 Marathon Training

Types of workouts you will do during the 18 weeks of Novice 1. This program consists of several different increments:

**Long Runs:** The key to the program is the long run on weekends, which builds from 6 miles in Week 1 to 20 miles in the climactic Week 15. (After that, you taper to get ready for the marathon.) You can skip an occasional workout, or juggle the schedule depending on other commitments, but do *not* cheat on the long runs. Notice that although the weekly long runs get progressively longer, every third week is a "stepback" week, where we reduce mileage to allow you to gather strength for the next push upward. Rest is an important component of any training program.

**Run Slow:** Normally I recommend that runners do their long runs anywhere from 45 to 90 seconds per mile **slower** than their marathon pace. The problem with offering this advice to first-time novice runners, however, is that you probably don't know what your marathon pace is, because you've never run a marathon before! Don't worry. Simply do your long runs at a comfortable pace, one that allows you to converse with your training partners, at least during the beginning of the run. Toward the end, you may need to abandon conversation and concentrate on the act of putting one foot in front of the other to finish. However, if you find yourself finishing at a pace significantly slower than your pace in the first few miles, you probably need to start much slower, or include regular walking breaks. It's better to run too slow during these long runs, than too fast. The important point is that you cover the prescribed distance; how fast you cover it doesn't matter.

**Walking Breaks:** Walking is a perfectly acceptable strategy in trying to finish a marathon. It works during training runs too. While some coaches recommend walking 1 minute out of every 10, or walking 30 seconds then running 30 seconds before walking again, I suggest that runners walk when they come to an aid station. This serves a double function: 1) you can drink more easily while walking as opposed to running, and 2) since many other runners slow or walk through aid stations, you'll be less likely to block those behind. It's a good idea to follow this strategy in training as well. Walking gives your body a chance to rest, and you'll be able to continue running more comfortably. It's best to walk when you want to, not when your (fatigued) body forces you to.

**Cross-Training:** Sundays in the Novice 1 training program are devoted to cross-training. What is cross-training? It is any other form of aerobic exercise that allows you to use slightly different muscles while resting (usually) after your long run. In the Novice 1 program, we run long on Saturdays and cross-train on Sundays, although it certainly is possible to reverse that order. The best cross-training exercises are swimming, cycling or even walking. What about sports such as tennis or basketball? Activities requiring sideways movements are not always a good choice. Particularly as the mileage builds up toward the end of the program, you raise your risk of injury if you choose to play a sport that requires sudden stopping and starting. One tip: You don't have to cross-train the same each weekend. And you could even combine two or more exercises: walking and easy jogging or swimming and riding an exercise bike in a health club. Cross-training for an hour on Sunday will help you recover after your Saturday long runs.

**Midweek Training:** Training during the week also should be done at a comparatively easy pace. As the weekend mileage builds, the weekday mileage also builds. Add up the numbers, and you'll see that you run roughly the same mileage during the week as you do during long runs on the weekends. Midweek workouts on Wednesdays build from 3 to 10 miles. (I call these my Sorta-Long Runs.) There are similar slight advances on Tuesdays and Thursdays although these are planned as "easy" days. Novice 1 is built on the concept that you do more toward the end than at the start.

**Races:** Normally, I don't prescribe races--or at least too many races--for first-time marathoners. Races can get in the way, particularly if you decide to take extra tapering rest before a race and extra recovery rest afterwards. But some racing is convenient, because it introduces newcomers to the

racing experience: where to pin your number (on the front), how often to drink (neither too little nor too much), and what it feels like to run in a crowd of several thousand runners. I suggest you consider doing a half marathon in Week 8, a week when in the normal progression you might do 13 miles as your long run. No half marathon in your neighborhood that week? You can juggle the training schedule to match the local racing calendar. One advantage of doing a half is that afterwards, you can use one of the pace calculators available on the Internet (best is by Greg McMillan) to predict your marathon time.

**Rest:** Despite my listing it at the end, rest is an important component of this or any training program. Scientists will tell you that it is during the rest period (the 24 to 72 hours between hard bouts of exercise) that the muscles actually regenerate and get stronger. Coaches also will tell you that you can't run hard unless you are well rested. And it is hard running (such as the long runs) that allows you to improve. If you're constantly fatigued, you will fail to reach your potential. This is why I include two days of rest each week for novice runners. If you need to take more rest days--because of a cold or a late night at the office or a sick child--do so. The secret to success in any training program is consistency, so as long as you are consistent with your training during the full 18 weeks of the program, you can afford--and may benefit from--extra rest.

## Marathon Training Schedule: *Novice 1*

1	Rest	3 m run	3 m run	3 m run	Rest	6	cross
2	Rest	3 m run	3 m run	3 m run	Rest	7	cross
3	Rest	3 m run	4 m run	3 m run	Rest	5	cross
4	Rest	3 m run	4 m run	3 m run	Rest	9	cross
5	Rest	3 m run	5 m run	3 m run	Rest	10	cross
6	Rest	3 m run	5 m run	3 m run	Rest	7	cross
7	Rest	3 m run	6 m run	3 m run	Rest	12	cross
8	Rest	3 m run	6 m run	3 m run	Rest	Rest	<b>Half Marathon</b>
9	Rest	3 m run	7 m run	4 m run	Rest	10	cross
10	Rest	3 m run	7 m run	4 m run	Rest	15	cross
11	Rest	4 m run	8 m run	4 m run	Rest	16	cross
12	Rest	4 m run	8 m run	5 m run	Rest	12	cross
13	Rest	4 m run	9 m run	5 m run	Rest	18	cross
14	Rest	5 m run	9 m run	5 m run	Rest	14	cross
15	Rest	5 m run	10 m run	5 m run	Rest	20	cross
16	Rest	5 m run	8 m run	4 m run	Rest	12	cross
17	Rest	4 m run	6 m run	3 m run	Rest	8	cross
18	Rest	3 m run	4 m run	2 m run	Rest	Rest	<b>Marathon</b>