

10-week sub-1:25 half-marathon schedule

The schedule will take you up to over 50 miles a week, which is about as much training as is compatible with a lifestyle that involves a job and a family.

The main ingredients of the programme are repetition and interval running, but with an emphasis on continuous, fast-paced runs to build up your speed endurance. Thus, much of your steady running should be at around threshold pace, which is reckoned to be the speed of your best 10 miles; this is slightly above half-marathon pace, but it is the best pace to train at.

For a bit of variety you also need some hill running and some short, fast bursts to 'zap' the muscles' enzymes.

As the training progresses, you should have the feeling of building up strength, because of your increased mileage. However, you're allowed one low-mileage week as a recuperation phase before doing a serious race over 10 miles or 10K.

Above all, you've got to listen to your body and fit your training to its needs, rather than impose a rigid schedule. The pattern is: hard effort, followed by easy running until you're ready to run hard again. As race day approaches, the efforts become easier and the recovery periods longer, so that you're bursting with energy on race day.

Remember that what you do in the last week won't make you run any faster. Doing nothing at all would cause you to put on weight, so you do need to keep running, but anything too long or energetic may leave you tired on the big day.

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
WEEK 1	5M easy	7M steady	4 x 1200m (or 4 x 4 mins), with 3-min recoveries. Warm down	6M easy	Rest or 3M jog	6-8M steady, inc a few strides	8-10M easy
WEEK 2	5M easy	7M hilly run, working hard on the hills	5M easy	6-7M, inc 8 x 1 min fast, 1 min slow in the middle	Rest or 3M jog	Warm up, then 5M fairly fast. Warm down	8-10M steady
WEEK 3	6M easy	6M fairly fast, then 1M easy	4 x 5 mins, with 4-min recovery jogs	5M easy	Rest or 3M jog	8M, inc fast bursts	10-11M steady
WEEK 4	6M easy	6-7M hilly run, with hard bursts up hills	6M easy	6-7M, inc 10 x 1 min fast, 1 min slow, and 6 x 30 secs fast, 30 secs slow	Rest or 3M jog	1M jog, then 6M fairly fast, then 1M jog	10-12M slow
WEEK	6M	Warm up, then	6M, starting	Intervals: 12 x	3M	Warm up,	10M steady

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5	easy, off-road	6-7M, inc 6 x 2 mins fast, 2 mins slow	slow, finishing faster	400m, with 90-sec recoveries	slow jog	then 5M fairly fast. Warm down	
WEEK 6	6M easy	3 x 2M at threshold pace, with 6-min recoveries	6M easy	8M Fartlek on grass, inc 20 x 30 secs (approx)	3M jog	5M, no pressure	3M warm-up, then 5-6M race (not flat-out)
WEEK 7	5M easy, off-road	Rest	2M jog, then 5-6M at half-marathon pace, then 1M jog	5M easy, inc 8 x 200m strides	Rest or 3M jog	Rest	Warm up, then race 6-10M. Warm down
WEEK 8	6M easy, off-road	7-8M, inc bursts up hills	6M easy	6 x 1M with 3-min recoveries	3M easy jog	5-6M on grass	14-15M slow
WEEK 9	6M easy	3 x 2M at threshold pace, with 6-min recoveries	6M easy	8M Fartlek on grass, inc 20 x 30 secs (approx)	3M jog	5M, no pressure	3M warm-up, then 5-6M race (not flat-out) or 13-15M steady
WEEK 10	5M easy, off-road	6-8M at a comfortable pace	2 x (8 x 200m) fast, on grass, with 1-min recoveries	6M easy, inc 1M at race pace	Rest or 3M jog	4M easy, in race kit	Race day

Half-Marathon Race Preparation

Although nothing like as taxing as a full marathon, the 21K distance does need to be treated with respect, particularly if the weather is hot. You should finish your breakfast three hours before the start, but there is nothing wrong with drinking tea, coffee, water or squash up to an hour before the start, and if it is really hot, I suggest drinking half a pint of water five minutes before the start. Don't drink half an hour before the start, or you'll be bursting for a pee while waiting for the gun!

If you're aiming to run fast, you should go through a gentle warm-up routine during the 20 minutes leading up to the start - jogging, stretching and striding. If you're doing an event with a large field, you'll probably find yourself running very fast in the first mile, so try to keep warm and loose during the final few minutes when you are wedged in the crowd.