

18 week marathon training plan intermediate

18 Week Marathon Training Plan Intermediate is designed for runners who have prior experience and are looking to improve their marathon performance. This comprehensive plan caters to those who can comfortably run 20-30 miles per week and are ready to take on the challenge of completing a marathon. An 18-week training plan offers ample time for building endurance, increasing mileage, and refining race-day strategies. This article will guide you through the essential components of an intermediate marathon training program, including weekly mileage, key workouts, and tips for success.

Understanding the 18-Week Training Plan

An 18-week training plan is structured to gradually increase your weekly mileage while incorporating various types of workouts. The goal is to enhance your endurance, speed, and overall race readiness. Typically, the plan is divided into three phases:

1. Base Building Phase (Weeks 1-6)

During the first phase, the focus is on establishing a solid foundation. You will gradually increase your weekly mileage and incorporate easy runs, long runs, and some hill workouts.

- Weekly Mileage: Aim for 20-30 miles per week.
- Key Workouts:
 - Easy Runs: 3-5 miles at a comfortable pace.
 - Long Runs: Start with 8-10 miles and gradually increase to 12-14 miles by the end of week 6.
 - Hill Workouts: Incorporate one session per week, such as 6-8 hill repeats.

2. Strength and Speed Phase (Weeks 7-12)

In this phase, you will introduce tempo runs and speed workouts to build strength and improve your race pace.

- Weekly Mileage: Increase to 30-40 miles per week.
- Key Workouts:
 - Tempo Runs: Start with 4-5 miles at a pace slightly slower than your 10K pace.
 - Speed Workouts: Include intervals of 400-800 meters at a fast pace with rest intervals.
 - Long Runs: Increase to 14-16 miles, incorporating race pace miles towards the end.

3. Tapering Phase (Weeks 13-18)

The final phase focuses on tapering, where you gradually reduce your mileage to allow your body to recover and prepare for race day.

- Weekly Mileage: Decrease to 25-30 miles per week in the last few weeks.
- Key Workouts:
- Long Runs: Peak with a 20-mile run around week 15, then taper down to 12-14 miles.
- Race Pace Runs: Include 5-8 miles at your target marathon pace during long runs.
- Rest and Recovery: Prioritize rest days, with light cross-training or easy runs.

Sample Weekly Schedule

To give you a clearer idea of how a week might look in an 18-week marathon training plan, here's a sample schedule for Weeks 7-12.

Week 7

- Monday: Rest or cross-training
- Tuesday: 5 miles easy
- Wednesday: 5 miles with hill repeats
- Thursday: Rest
- Friday: 4 miles tempo run
- Saturday: 3 miles easy
- Sunday: 14 miles long run

Week 8

- Monday: Rest or cross-training
- Tuesday: 5 miles easy
- Wednesday: 6 miles with speed intervals
- Thursday: Rest
- Friday: 5 miles tempo run
- Saturday: 3 miles easy

- Sunday: 15 miles long run

Week 9

- Monday: Rest or cross-training
- Tuesday: 6 miles easy
- Wednesday: 7 miles with hill repeats
- Thursday: Rest
- Friday: 6 miles tempo run
- Saturday: 4 miles easy
- Sunday: 16 miles long run

Key Workouts Explained

To understand how to execute the key workouts effectively, here's a deeper dive into their purposes and how to approach them.

Easy Runs

Easy runs are crucial for building your aerobic base. They should be done at a conversational pace, allowing your body to recover while still accumulating mileage.

Long Runs

Long runs are foundational for marathon training. They help increase your endurance and prepare your body for the duration of the race. Aim to run these at a steady pace, finishing strong.

Tempo Runs

Tempo runs teach your body to sustain a faster pace over longer distances. Start with a warm-up, then run at a comfortably hard pace (about 15-30 seconds slower than your 10K pace) for a set

distance before cooling down.

Speed Workouts

Incorporating speed workouts helps improve your overall pace. Include intervals where you run fast for a specified distance, followed by a recovery jog or walk. This can be done on a track or flat surface.

Nutrition and Hydration

Proper nutrition and hydration play a vital role in your training and overall performance. Here are some tips to keep in mind:

- **Balanced Diet:** Include a mix of carbohydrates, proteins, and healthy fats in your meals. Carbohydrates are especially important for fueling your runs.
- **Hydration:** Stay hydrated throughout your training, especially before and after long runs. Consider using electrolyte drinks for longer sessions.
- **Pre-Race Nutrition:** In the weeks leading up to the marathon, practice your race-day nutrition strategy during long runs.

Injury Prevention and Recovery

Training for a marathon is demanding, and it's essential to focus on injury prevention and recovery. Here are some strategies to help you stay healthy:

- **Listen to Your Body:** Pay attention to any signs of pain or discomfort. Rest or adjust your training as needed.
- **Incorporate Cross-Training:** Activities like swimming, cycling, or yoga can help maintain fitness while reducing the impact on your joints.
- **Stretch and Strengthen:** Regular stretching and strength training can improve flexibility and reduce the risk of injury.

Race Day Preparation

As you approach race day, it's crucial to have a solid plan. Here are some final tips to ensure you're ready:

- **Know the Course:** Familiarize yourself with the marathon course, including elevation changes and aid station locations.
- **Plan Your Gear:** Choose your race-day outfit and gear well in advance. Make sure to have tested everything during training.
- **Stay Calm and Focused:** On race day, stick to your routine, and remember to enjoy the experience.

Trust your training and have confidence in your preparation.

In conclusion, an **18 week marathon training plan intermediate** can help you reach your marathon goals by providing structure and guidance. By following the principles outlined in this article, you'll enhance your endurance, speed, and overall readiness for race day. Happy running!

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the primary goal of an 18-week marathon training plan for intermediate runners?

The primary goal is to build endurance, improve speed, and prepare the body for the physical and mental demands of running a marathon while minimizing the risk of injury.

How many miles per week should an intermediate runner expect to run on an 18-week marathon training plan?

An intermediate runner can expect to run anywhere from 30 to 50 miles per week, depending on their current fitness level and specific goals.

What types of workouts are typically included in an 18-week intermediate marathon training plan?

Typical workouts include long runs, tempo runs, interval training, easy runs, and rest days to allow for recovery.

How should one approach nutrition during an 18-week marathon training program?

Nutrition should focus on a balanced intake of carbohydrates, proteins, and fats, with an emphasis on carbs for energy, especially before long runs, and adequate hydration throughout.

What is the importance of cross-training in an 18-week marathon training plan?

Cross-training helps to improve overall fitness, reduces the risk of injury, and offers a break from running while still enhancing cardiovascular endurance and strengthening muscles.

How can an intermediate runner prevent injuries during the 18-week training period?

Injury prevention can be achieved by incorporating rest days, listening to your body, gradually increasing mileage, and including strength training and flexibility exercises.

What is the recommended pace for long runs in an intermediate marathon training plan?

Long runs should generally be done at a conversational pace, which is typically 30 to 90 seconds slower than race pace, allowing for endurance building without excessive fatigue.

Should an intermediate runner incorporate race pace runs into their training plan?

Yes, incorporating race pace runs is essential as it helps the runner familiarize themselves with their target pace and develop the necessary mental and physical adaptations.

What is a taper, and why is it important in an 18-week marathon training plan?

A taper is a reduction in training volume leading up to the marathon, aimed at allowing the body to recover and recharge, ensuring peak performance on race day.

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