

How To Run Your First Marathon

by Paul Sims

If you have entertained the idea of running your first marathon, this article will be of help toward your success.

The most important thing by far is going to seem so obvious. Do you really want to run the marathon? Are you sure? 26.2 miles? Three to six months of training? This I want you to decide beforehand. Yes, that is step one and when you decide this is what you want never forget until you cross the finish line.

The second step is” the long run.” Your total weekly mileage is not as important as these long runs. The long run is done once a week, and the progressive part is distance – add one mile per run, but the pace is always the same. SLOW ! I can’t emphasize this enough. I want you to recover from this run as quickly as possible, so go slow and no hard or long running the next day. For example, if you are a 5K runner and your longest runs are 3 to 5 miles, then once a week you will have to add one mile to that: 6,7,8,9,10, all the way up to 20 miles. That’s why we are planning at least three months of training. For some of you a running partner or joining a running club would be a big help to get you through the long runs.

Step three is the two to four runs I want you to do during the week. These would be between four and eight miles each. This is where you will pick up the pace and do intervals and tempo runs. As you approach race day your last long run (20 miles) will be two weeks before the race. Ease up with the total mileage at this point. Don’t change your diet; you can carbo load on the next marathon.

On race day don’t wear brand new running shoes; wear the comfortable ones you have been using. Put Vaseline between your toes. Pace yourself. Be confident of your ability, but respect the distance. If you have been doing your homework, the first 20 miles will almost seem easy, but you have that long 6.2 to go. Get tough. Remember, you really want this and decided to do it. I did it 41 times from 1978 to 1994. Good luck, and see you at the finish line.

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