

A man in athletic gear is running on a stone ledge in an urban setting. He is wearing a dark jacket with grey sleeves, black leggings with colorful star patterns, and black running shoes with yellow accents. The background shows a modern building with a curved roof and a stone wall in the foreground.

# HALF MARATHON TRAINING GUIDE

12 WEEKS • INTERMEDIATE

# Next level

12 week intermediate half marathon training guide

If you've got a couple of half marathons under your belt and now you want to push yourself further, this is the training guide for you. Over 12 weeks, you'll build your strength, speed and endurance to hit a new personal best.

Everyone is an individual and your base level of fitness may vary. For those who already have been doing some running, this general program should give you the extra speed and endurance to take your performance to the next level.

This **12 week** training guide is just that, a guide, so feel free to be a little flexible with it and make it work for you. Mix up days and runs when you need to, and if you miss a session you can make it up. The real aim is to be consistent with your training, and the overall details won't matter as much.

Here is an explanation of the terms used in this training guide:

→ **Easy runs:** The runs on Tuesdays and Thursdays are to be done at a comfortable pace. If you're training with a friend, the two of you should be able to hold a conversation. For those who wear heart rate monitors, your target zone should be between 65 and 75% of your maximum heart rate.

→ **Long runs:** Important sessions in the guide are the long runs, which progressively increase in distance each weekend. You will jump from your longest training run of 19 km to the half marathon – a solid leap, but your training and inspiration on the day will see you over the line.

→ **Stretch + strengthen:** Stretching is key to a strong, supple body and should be done daily. Strength training, particularly for your core muscles, is an important focus of this training guide. Try bodyweight exercises like push-ups, chin-ups or dips, or light weights with high reps at your local gym.

→ **Rest:** Your muscles need time to recover and rebuild, so ensuring adequate rest is just as important as the runs in this guide. In particular, taking the time to rest before and after your long run will help reduce your risk of injury. Be realistic about



your fatigue level, especially in the closing weeks of the program, and don't be afraid to take an extra day off now and then.

→ **Long runs:** The key to taking your running to the next level is the long run, progressively increasing in distance each weekend. Over a period of 11 weeks, your longest run will increase from 8 km to 19 km. The guide schedules long runs on Sundays however you can do them on Saturdays, if it's more convenient. Keep in mind that it's easier to do a long run the day after a pace run.

→ **Test:** The idea with the test runs is to measure your time, progress and fitness, if it suits you. Another option is to find local fun-runs at these distances so you can time your race and get used to running with other competitors.

→ **Speed sessions:** To increase your speed to take your running to the next level, you need to train at an increased pace a couple of sessions per week. This guide alternates interval running with tempo runs (described below). An interval workout usually consists of fast runs separated by walking or jogging. The guide begins with 5 x 400 m and reaches 10 x 400 m the week before your half marathon. Walk or jog between each. Run the 400s at a medium pace – around your 5 km best time pace.

→ **Tempo runs:** This is a continuous run with a buildup of pace in the middle. A tempo run of 30 to 45 minutes would begin with 10-15 minutes easy running, build to 15-20 minutes at medium

pace near the middle, then 5-10 minutes easy toward the end. The pace buildup should be gradual. A tempo run can be as hard or easy as you want to make it.

→ **Pace:** In the guide some workouts are designed as pace runs to get you used to running the pace you will run to achieve your goal. For example in week 10 you run a session of 8 km at goal race pace. Remember to do a short warm-up before starting each of these pace runs.


→ **Warm-up:** A good guide for a warm up is to jog 1-2 km, sit down and stretch for 5-10 minutes, then run some easy strides (100 m at near race pace). Cool down afterwards by doing half the warm-up distance.

→ **Cross-training:** Even though you are focused on running, cross-training is still an effective session as it helps with active recovery and injury prevention. It could be swimming, cycling, walking, rowing, or a combination that includes strength training.



**Don't forget to stretch!** It's important to start each training session with some stretches and gentle movement to prepare your body for your workout. After your session, cool down with more stretches to help with recovery.

# 12 week intermediate half marathon training guide

Week	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
1	Stretch + strength Notes: <input type="checkbox"/>	5 km run Notes: <input type="checkbox"/>	5 x 400 m medium speed Notes: <input type="checkbox"/>	6 km run + strength Notes: <input type="checkbox"/>	Rest	5 km run Notes: <input type="checkbox"/>	8 km run Notes: <input type="checkbox"/>
2	Stretch + strength Notes: <input type="checkbox"/>	5 km run Notes: <input type="checkbox"/>	30 min tempo run Notes: <input type="checkbox"/>	6 km run + strength Notes: <input type="checkbox"/>	Rest	5 km pace Notes: <input type="checkbox"/>	10 km run Notes: <input type="checkbox"/>
3	Stretch + strength Notes: <input type="checkbox"/>	5 km run Notes: <input type="checkbox"/>	6 x 400 m medium speed Notes: <input type="checkbox"/>	6 km run + strength Notes: <input type="checkbox"/>	Rest	Rest	<b>5 km test</b> Notes: <input type="checkbox"/>
4	Stretch + strength Notes: <input type="checkbox"/>	6 km run Notes: <input type="checkbox"/>	35 min tempo run Notes: <input type="checkbox"/>	6 km run + strength Notes: <input type="checkbox"/>	Rest	6 km run Notes: <input type="checkbox"/>	11 km run Notes: <input type="checkbox"/>
5	Stretch + strength Notes: <input type="checkbox"/>	6 km run Notes: <input type="checkbox"/>	7 x 400 m medium speed Notes: <input type="checkbox"/>	6 km run + strength Notes: <input type="checkbox"/>	Rest	6 km pace Notes: <input type="checkbox"/>	13 km run Notes: <input type="checkbox"/>
6	Stretch + strength Notes: <input type="checkbox"/>	6 km run Notes: <input type="checkbox"/>	40 min tempo run Notes: <input type="checkbox"/>	6 km run + strength Notes: <input type="checkbox"/>	Rest	Rest	<b>10 km test</b> Notes: <input type="checkbox"/>
7	Stretch + strength Notes: <input type="checkbox"/>	7 km run Notes: <input type="checkbox"/>	8 x 400 m medium speed Notes: <input type="checkbox"/>	6 km run + strength Notes: <input type="checkbox"/>	Rest	7 km pace Notes: <input type="checkbox"/>	14 km run Notes: <input type="checkbox"/>
8	Stretch + strength Notes: <input type="checkbox"/>	7 km run Notes: <input type="checkbox"/>	40 min tempo run Notes: <input type="checkbox"/>	6 km run + strength Notes: <input type="checkbox"/>	Rest	8 km pace Notes: <input type="checkbox"/>	16 km run Notes: <input type="checkbox"/>
9	Stretch + strength Notes: <input type="checkbox"/>	8 km run Notes: <input type="checkbox"/>	9 x 400 m medium speed Notes: <input type="checkbox"/>	6 km run + strength Notes: <input type="checkbox"/>	Rest	Rest	<b>15 km test</b> Notes: <input type="checkbox"/>
10	Stretch + strength Notes: <input type="checkbox"/>	8 km run Notes: <input type="checkbox"/>	45 min tempo run Notes: <input type="checkbox"/>	6 km run + strength Notes: <input type="checkbox"/>	Rest	8 km pace Notes: <input type="checkbox"/>	18 km run Notes: <input type="checkbox"/>
11	Stretch + strength Notes: <input type="checkbox"/>	8 km run Notes: <input type="checkbox"/>	10 x 400 m medium speed Notes: <input type="checkbox"/>	6 km run + strength Notes: <input type="checkbox"/>	Rest	5 km pace Notes: <input type="checkbox"/>	19 km run Notes: <input type="checkbox"/>
12	Stretch + strength Notes: <input type="checkbox"/>	8 km run Notes: <input type="checkbox"/>	30 min tempo run Notes: <input type="checkbox"/>	5 km run Notes: <input type="checkbox"/>	Rest	Rest	 <b>Race day</b>

**Fact:** If you do follow this guide to the letter you will have completed nearly **390 km** of running – pat on the back! **Exercise safely:** Talk to your GP before starting a new exercise program, especially if you have any existing health conditions.

The training guide is just that, a guide – it is important to make it work for you. If you want to do long runs on Saturday rather than Sunday, simply change the days. Or if you miss a run you can make it up on one of your rest days.

Check off your training each day to keep track of your achievements. Each step gets you closer to your goal!