

Marathon Training Over 50

Distances in kilometres.

Week	Phase	Long run	Key session	Week total
1	Base	15 km	Easy run with 6 × 20 s strides	34 km
2	Base	16 km	3 × 6 min threshold, 2 min jog	37 km
3	Easier week	12 km	Easy runs only	28 km
4	Build	18 km	8 km with 4 km at marathon pace	40 km
5	Build	20 km	3 × 8 min threshold, 2 min jog	43 km
6	Easier week	14 km	Easy runs + 6 × 20 s strides	32 km
7	Build	22 km	10 km with 6 km at marathon pace	46 km
8	Build	24 km	3 × 10 min threshold, 2 min jog	49 km
9	Easier week	16 km	Easy runs + 6 × 20 s strides	36 km
10	Peak	26 km	12 km with 8 km at marathon pace	52 km
11	Peak	28 km	2 × 15 min threshold, 3 min jog	55 km
12	Easier week	21 km	Half marathon tune-up race, or an easy long run	40 km
13	Peak	30 km	14 km with 10 km at marathon pace	58 km
14	Peak	26 km	16 km with 12 km at marathon pace	56 km
15	Easier week	18 km	Easy runs + 6 × 20 s strides	42 km
16	Taper	20 km	10 km with 6 km at marathon pace	44 km
17	Taper	14 km	8 km with 4 km at marathon pace	32 km
18	Race week	—	3 short easy runs + RACE	15 km

A typical week

Day	Session
Monday	Strength (20–30 min)
Tuesday	Key session
Wednesday	Easy run
Thursday	Strength (20–30 min), or rest
Friday	Easy run
Saturday	Rest
Sunday	Long run

Two short strength sessions

Exercise	Sets × reps to start
Squat or sit-to-stand from a chair	2 × 10–15
Step-ups onto a low step	2 × 10–15 each leg
Calf raises (bent and straight knee)	2 × 10–15
Hip bridge	2 × 10–15
Side plank or plank	2 × 20–30 s
Balance: stand on one leg	2 × 30 s each leg

The daily check: heart rate, sleep and recovery

A plan on paper does not know that you slept four hours or had a brutal week at work. Your body does. Before a key session or long run, take ten seconds for this check:

Marathon Training Over 50 (continued)

Check	Green	Amber	Red
Sleep	About your usual, most nights 7 hours or more	One short night	Several short nights in a row
Morning resting heart rate (or HRV)	In your normal range	Clearly outside your normal range	Outside your normal range for several days
Legs and mood	Fresh or normal	Heavy, flat, short-tempered	Sore in one spot, or pain that changes how you run
Life stress	Normal	A hard day	A hard week, travel, illness in the family

- All green: run the session as written.
- One amber: do the run, but make it easy. Move the key session to later in the week, or skip it.
- Two or more amber, or any red: rest, or walk, or jog very easily for a short time. Pain that changes how you run or signs of illness mean no running until it is sorted out.
- Amber most days for a week: turn that week into an easier week, even if the plan says build.

Health first. Under ACSM's screening guidance, if you have known heart, metabolic or kidney disease, get medical clearance before you start, or before you step up to vigorous training if you already exercise regularly. If you get symptoms such as chest pain, unusual breathlessness or dizziness, stop and get cleared (Riebe et al., 2015). If that's you, talk to your doctor before week 1. This is a general plan, not medical advice.