



Grounded Running - Half Marathon Intermediate 1



| Week | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT | SUN | Total |
|------|-----------------|--------|-----------|--------|---------------------|-----------|------------------|-------|
| 1 | 30 min Cross | 3 mi | 4 mi | 3 mi | REST | 3 mi | 4 mi | 17 mi |
| 2 | 30 min Cross | 3 mi | 4 mi pace | 3 mi | REST | 3 mi pace | 5 mi | 18 mi |
| 3 | 40 min Cross | 3.5 mi | 5 mi | 3.5 mi | REST | Rest | 6 mi | 18 mi |
| 4 | 40 min Cross | 3.5 mi | 5 mi pace | 3.5 mi | REST | 3 mi | 7 mi | 22 mi |
| 5 | 40 min Cross | 4 mi | 6 mi | 4 mi | REST | 3 mi pace | 8 mi | 25 mi |
| 6 | 50 min Cross | 4 mi | 6 mi pace | 4 mi | REST or easy run | Rest | 5k Race | 17 mi |
| 7 | REST | 4.5 mi | 7 mi | 4.5 mi | REST | 4 mi pace | 9 mi | 29 mi |
| 8 | 50 min Cross | 4.5 mi | 7 mi pace | 4.5 mi | REST | 5 mi pace | 10 mi | 31 mi |
| 9 | 60 min Cross | 5 mi | 8 mi | 5 mi | REST or easy run | Rest | 10k Race | 24 mi |
| 10 | REST | 5 mi | 8 mi pace | 5 mi | REST | 5 mi pace | 11 mi | 34 mi |
| 11 | 60 min Cross | 5 mi | 6 mi | 4 mi | REST | 3 mi pace | 12 mi | 30 mi |
| 12 | REST | 4 mi | 4 mi pace | 2 mi | REST | REST | Half Marathon | 23 mi |

These two intermediate schedules exist in a parallel universe, the same level of difficulty, just slightly different approaches to training. They are part of the logical progression upward from Novice through Intermediate to Advanced.

Here is how to use Intermediate 1 to run your best half marathon.

Long runs: The key to the program is the long run, which builds from 4 miles in Week 1 to 12 miles in the climactic Week 11. (After that, you taper a week to arrive at the half marathon well rested.) Do *not* cheat on the long runs. Although the schedule suggests long runs on Sundays, you can switch to Saturdays or even other days of the week to suit your schedule.

Run slow: For experienced runners, I recommend that they do their long runs anywhere from 30 to 90 or more seconds per mile slower than their planned half marathon pace. Run at a comfortable pace, one that allows you to converse with your training partners. The important point is that you cover the prescribed distance; how fast you cover it doesn't matter.

Walking breaks: Walking is a perfectly acceptable strategy in trying to finish a half marathon. It works during training runs too. While some coaches recommend walking at prescribed points, I suggest that runners walk when they come to an aid station. This serves a double function: 1) you can drink more easily while walking as opposed to running, and 2) since many other runners slow or walk through aid stations, you'll be less likely to collide with someone. It's a good idea to follow this strategy in training as well.

Cross-training: Mondays in this training program are devoted to cross-training, building from 30 to 60 minutes. What is cross-training? It is any other form of aerobic exercise that allows you to use slightly different muscles the day after your long run. The best cross-training exercises are swimming, cycling or even walking. One tip: You don't have to cross-train the same each weekend. And you could even combine two or more exercises: walking and easy jogging or swimming and riding an exercise bike in a health club. Cross-training for an hour on Monday will help you recover after your Sunday long runs.

Midweek training: As the weekend mileage builds, the Tuesday and Thursday mileage also go from 3 to 5 miles. Wednesday runs increase from 4 to 8 miles. Run these miles at a comfortable, pace. Don't get trapped by numbers. Listen to your body signals as much as the signals coming from your GPS watch. If you strength train, Tuesdays and Thursdays would be the best days to combine lifting with running. Usually it's a good idea to run before you lift rather than the reverse.

Pace: Saturdays, run pace, the pace you hope to run in your goal half marathon. If you're training for a 2:00 half marathon, your average pace per mile is 9:09. So you would run that same pace when asked to run race pace. If you were training for a 5-K or 10-K, "race pace" would be the pace you planned to run in those races.

Races: I suggest running a 5-K in Week 6 and a 10-K in Week 9. Consider races as an "option." Doing at least some racing in a training program can be a valuable experience, because you can determine your level of fitness and predict how fast you might run in your goal race (using various prediction charts on the Internet). But too much racing can wear you out and distract from your training, so embrace this option cautiously. Finally, there is nothing magic about 5-K or 10-K as distances or Week 6 or Week 9 for when to race. Seek races in your area convenient to your schedule

Rest: Scientists say that it is during the rest period (the 24 to 72 hours between hard bouts of exercise) that the muscles actually regenerate and get stronger. You can't run hard unless you are well rested. If you're constantly fatigued, you will fail to reach your potential. This is why I prescribe rest on Fridays to get ready for the hard weekend—and (easy) cross-training on Sundays to recover. If you need to take more rest days--because of a cold or a late night at the office or a sick child--do so. The secret to success in any training program is consistency.

Running 13.1 miles is not easy. If it were easy, there would be little challenge to an event such as the half marathon. Whether you plan your half as a singular accomplishment or as a stepping stone to the even more challenging full marathon, crossing the finish line will give you a feeling of great accomplishment. Good luck with your training.