MARATHON BEGINNER TRAINING PLAN

By Phil Roberton - Fitness Aspirations

Welcome to the team

Thank you so much for signing up to run a marathon for Pancreatic Cancer UK.

This plan has been designed by Fitness Aspirations Limited. It is for a beginner or novice runner who is looking to complete their first marathon, while also making sure the day is as enjoyable as possible.

Before starting the plan, you should be able to run or run/walk for 45 minutes. An example of a run/walk ratio would be running for 4 minutes and walking for 1 minute. Early on in the training, walk any hills if you need to. The plan includes a 4 week lead-in plan to get you ready for 16 weeks of progressive training.

Your training needs to fit in with your availability to train each week. Think carefully about your work, family and social commitments. The goal is to:

> **"Structure your training into a busy lifestyle, maximizing its benefits while reducing your chances of injury."**

Fitness Aspirations is led by Phil Roberton.

Phil has worked closely with a large number of charities over the past 10 years, helping charity runners achieve their aims, educating them around his concept of PreFormance®.

Phil has a Sports Science Degree and has numerous qualifications including NLP and Biomechanics Coaching. Phil juggles a young family and the business whilst maintaining a fit and healthy lifestyle.

@PhilRoberton

Sports Science BSc / Level 5 Biomechanics Coach / NLP Practitioner / Clinical Hypnotherapist

Understanding the plan

How long should my first run be?

As long you want it to be, there is no "one size fits all". In the early stages, it's a lot easier to use time as a measurement rather than distance. Going out for a 20, 30 or 50 minute run is easier to build into your schedule when you're just finding your feet.

Long runs

Combine long runs with some quality speed work. A slight acceleration at the end of the long run can help create the feeling you will experience on the day of the marathon. This is not a sprint, but the pace you think you might be able to maintain. A long run for a marathon is relative to your goals and training history. If your run is going to be longer than 90 minutes, then you should take some water and fuel with you to have around the 60 minute mark.

Intervals

Whether they're short or long, interval sessions are designed to be tough. They are designed to push you out of your comfort zone in a controlled manner. There are many forms of interval training, but the goal is to repeatedly raise the heart rate up and down. If you've never done intervals before, then you can start by doing 4 or 5 sets of 3 minute blocks. Each block would be made up of a 2 minute run and 1 minute walk. Just build up a block per session.

Steady runs

Steady runs should be low effort and you should be able to hold a conversation during them. These runs make up the bulk of your workouts.

Why are my long runs on the weekend?

The brain has this amazing ability to become accustomed to patterns. Most marathons happen on the weekend, therefore you may want to replicate this in your training.

Why is strength training so important?

Strength training has many benefits. Getting into a routine of strength training 1-2 times a week with basic movements can really help with injury prevention and running fitness.

Squatting movements:
Help to strengthen the legs (squats, deadlifts, lunges etc.)

Pulling movements:
Help to strengthen the back (chin-ups, rows, reverse fly etc.)

Pushing movements:
Help to strengthen the front (press-ups, bench press, pec fly etc.).

The calves are going to work hard when we run and so it is worth adding some strength exercises for these muscles. This will help to build a strong base and may help to prevent some injuries along the way.

The importance of sleep

Sleep is the only time your body can recharge and repair. It's important to listen to your body, and potentially adapt your running plan to accommodate for sleep. If you had a bad night's sleep or just didn't get much then it may not be the best time to tackle a huge workout. Bringing the intensity and duration down a little may be the smart thing to do.
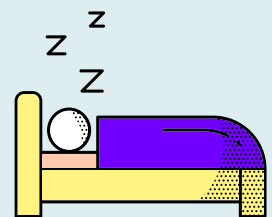
How to measure the output of my sessions

There are a number of ways to measure the intensity of our training sessions.

A great way for most of us to measure the level of our output is using an Rate of Perceived Exertion (RPE) scale. The RPE scale is a rating scale ranging from 1 to 10. The numbers on the scale correspond to descriptive statements that rate how hard or difficult you find an exercise or physical activity.

Use the table below to get an understanding of your training efforts, and make sure you keep track of your RPE for your workouts on your training plan.

RPE (1-10)	Description	Heart rate
2-4	Normal/nearly normal breathing should make up the bulk of your training. I would encourage nasal only breathing.	60-70%
4-6	Heavy breathing but can still hold a conversation. Still fairly comfortable. The pace is controlled, and can become challenging with more time.	70-80%
7-8	Short of breath, but you can still speak a sentence.	80-85%
8-9	Breathing is very challenging and you can only speak a few words at once. You won't be able to maintain this level for long.	85-90%
10	As hard as you can go, and no ability to talk. This is rarely reached in training but you will reach it as you cross the finishing line of your race.	90-100%

Please note that this is just a guide as there are a number of individual factors, such as fitness, age and stress levels which can affect heart rate and perceived exertion.

Week 1 to 4

If you want to build up a base before you start the full 16 week training plan follow this 4 week plan.

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
WEEK 1							
Session Type	Run	Rest	Run	Rest	Run	Rest	Run
Training	15 mins		15 mins		15 mins		20 mins
WEEK 2							
Session Type	Run	Rest	Run	Rest	Run	Rest	Run
Training	15 mins		15 mins		15 mins		20 mins
WEEK 3							
Session Type	Run	Rest	Run	Rest	Run	Rest	Run
Training	15 mins		20 mins		20 mins		30 mins
WEEK 4							
Session Type	Run	Rest	Run	Rest	Run	Rest	Run
Training	20 mins		20 mins		30 mins		40 mins

Week 1 to 16

Now you're ready to start your 16 week training plan.

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Friw	Sat	Sun
WEEK 1							
Session Type	Rest	Run	Gym/rest	Run	Rest	Run/rest	Run
Training		30 mins	Core, legs, glute / cross training	30 mins		25 mins	45 mins
WEEK 2							
Session Type	Rest	Run	Rest	Run	Rest	Run/rest	Run
Training		30 mins	Core, legs, glute / cross training	30 mins		25 mins	45 mins
WEEK 3							
Session Type	Rest	Run	Gym/rest	Run	Rest	Run/rest	Run
Training		40 mins	Core, legs, glute / cross training	40 mins		25 mins	60 mins
WEEK 4							
Session Type	Rest	Run	Gym/rest	Run	Rest	Run/rest	Run
Training		40 mins	Core, legs, glute / cross training	40 mins		25 mins	60 mins
WEEK 5							
Session Type	Rest	Run	Gym/rest	Run	Rest	Run/rest	Run
Training		30 mins	Core, legs, glute / cross training	30 mins		25 mins	75 mins
WEEK 6							
Session Type	Rest	Run	Gym/rest	Run	Rest	Run/rest	Run
Training		40 mins	Core, legs, glute / cross training	40 mins		25 mins	90 mins
WEEK 7							
Session Type	Rest	Run	Gym/rest	Run	Rest	Run/rest	Run
Training		40 mins	Core, legs, glute / cross training	40 mins		25 mins	75 mins
WEEK 8							
Session Type	Rest	Run	Gym/rest	Run	Rest	Run/rest	Run
Training		50 mins	Core, legs, glute / cross training	50 mins		25 mins	90 mins

Week 1 to 16 (continued)

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
WEEK 9							
Session Type	Rest	Run	Gym/rest	Rest	Rest	Run/rest	Rest
Training		50 mins	Core, legs, glute / cross training	50 mins		25 mins	105 mins
WEEK 10							
Session Type	Rest	Run	Gym/rest	Run	Rest	Run/rest	Run
Training		40 mins	Core, legs, glute / cross training	40 mins		25 mins	90 mins
WEEK 11							
Session Type	Rest	Run	Gym/rest	Run	Rest	Run	Run
Training		50 mins	Core, legs, glute / cross training	50 mins		25 mins	105 mins
WEEK 12							
Session Type	Rest	Run	Rest	Run	Rest	Run/rest	Run
Training		50 mins	Core, legs, glute / cross training	50 mins		25 mins	120 mins
WEEK 13							
Session Type	Rest	Run	Gym/rest	Run	Rest	Run/rest	Run
Training		60 mins	Core, legs, glute / cross training	60 mins		25 mins	135 mins
WEEK 14							
Session Type	Rest	Run	Gym/rest	Run	Rest	Run/rest	Run
Training		50 mins	Core, legs, glute / cross training	50 mins		25 mins	150 mins
WEEK 15							
Session Type	Rest	Run	Gym/rest	Run	Rest	Rest	Run
Training		60 mins	Core, legs, glute / cross training	60 mins		25 mins	75 mins
WEEK 16							
Session Type	Rest	Run	Rest	Run	Rest	Rest	Run
Training		30 mins		30 mins			26.2 miles

Create your own training plan

Providing you follow these steps, it is something I would recommend everyone does

1. How are you going to present this plan to yourself? What format are you going to use for your plan? Think about what format would work best for you.

2. How many hours a week do you have to dedicate to running?

3. How many hours a week can you dedicate to strength work? (max 2)

4. Mark in your diary the days and times that you can make these sessions happen. You might want to have a day in between the runs to recover or to do a strength session. For example, running Tuesday, Friday, Sunday. Strength on Wednesday and/or Saturday.

<table>
<tr><td rowspan="4">Stick to the same numbers for the week and then progress a little more the following week:</td><td>WEEK</td><td>Total minutes scheduled</td></tr>
<tr><td>WEEK 1</td><td>90</td></tr>
<tr><td>WEEK 2</td><td>100</td></tr>
<tr><td>WEEK 3</td><td>110</td></tr>
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<tr><td rowspan="5">As mentioned previously, we can't keep doing more and more so generally every 3rd or 4th week reduce how much you're doing and build up again from there.</td><td>WEEK</td><td>Total minutes scheduled</td></tr>
<tr><td>WEEK 4</td><td>95</td></tr>
<tr><td>WEEK 5</td><td>105</td></tr>
<tr><td>WEEK 6</td><td>115</td></tr>
<tr><td>WEEK 7</td><td>100</td></tr>
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<tr><td rowspan="4">The plan is not concrete, and you should be ok with changing things around if needed. Try to put the longer efforts on the Sunday so for example:</td><td>Days</td><td>Time</td></tr>
<tr><td>Tuesday</td><td>20 mins</td></tr>
<tr><td>Friday</td><td>20 mins</td></tr>
<tr><td>Sunday</td><td>35 mins</td></tr>
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