

5 week marathon training plan

5 Week Marathon Training Plan: Your Guide to Efficient Race Preparation

5 week marathon training plan might sound ambitious, especially if you're used to longer buildup periods, but with the right approach, it's entirely possible to get race-ready in just over a month. Whether you're short on time due to a late decision to run a marathon or simply looking for a focused, intense preparation to sharpen your fitness, this plan can help you reach the starting line feeling confident and strong.

Training for a marathon in five weeks means prioritizing smart workouts, recovery, and nutrition. You won't have the luxury of long base-building phases, so every run counts. In this article, we'll break down a 5 week marathon training plan that is balanced, achievable, and designed to optimize your performance while reducing injury risk. We'll also explore essential tips for pacing, cross-training, and mental readiness to help you make the most of your limited training window.

Understanding the Basics of a 5 Week Marathon Training Plan

Before diving into the specifics, it's crucial to understand what a condensed marathon training plan entails. Traditional marathon training programs often span 12 to 20 weeks, gradually increasing mileage and intensity. A 5 week plan compresses that timeline significantly, so it emphasizes quality over quantity.

Why Choose a 5 Week Marathon Training Plan?

Life's busy, and sometimes you find yourself signing up for a marathon with less than ideal preparation time. A 5 week marathon training plan can work well if you already have a decent fitness base, such as regular running experience or a recent half marathon under your belt. It's also suitable for runners who want to sharpen their speed and endurance quickly or recover from a break in a focused way.

This shorter plan demands discipline and consistency but can be very rewarding. You'll focus on key workouts that build stamina, speed, and race-specific endurance without unnecessary volume that might increase the risk of burnout or injury.

Key Components of the Plan

- **Mileage Build-up:** Gradual increase in weekly running distance to enhance endurance.
- **Long Runs:** These are critical to simulate race day conditions and prepare your body for the marathon distance.
- **Speed and Tempo Sessions:** To improve aerobic capacity and pace control.
- **Recovery Runs and Rest Days:** Vital for muscle repair and avoiding overtraining.
- **Cross-Training:** Helps maintain fitness while reducing impact on joints.

Week-by-Week Breakdown of the 5 Week Marathon Training Plan

Here's a detailed look at how you can structure your training over five weeks to get marathon-ready:

Week 1: Establish a Strong Foundation

- **Monday:** Rest or gentle yoga to prepare your muscles.
- **Tuesday:** 3-4 miles easy run to loosen up.
- **Wednesday:** Speed intervals – 4 x 800 meters at 5K pace with jogging recovery.
- **Thursday:** Cross-training, such as cycling or swimming for 30-45 minutes.
- **Friday:** Rest or active recovery walk.
- **Saturday:** Long run of 8-10 miles at a comfortable pace.
- **Sunday:** Easy 3 miles or rest.

This week is about getting your body used to the rhythm of training while laying a cardiovascular base.

Week 2: Building Endurance and Strength

- **Monday:** Rest day.
- **Tuesday:** Tempo run – 5 miles at a steady, comfortably hard pace.
- **Wednesday:** Easy 4 miles.
- **Thursday:** Hill repeats – 6 x 200 meters uphill with jog down.
- **Friday:** Cross-training or rest.
- **Saturday:** Long run of 12 miles.
- **Sunday:** Recovery jog or rest.

Adding tempo runs and hill work increases your stamina and leg strength—both critical for marathon success.

Week 3: Peak Intensity and Mileage

- **Monday:** Rest to recover from hard efforts.
- **Tuesday:** Intervals – 6 x 800 meters at 5K pace.
- **Wednesday:** Easy 5 miles.
- **Thursday:** Tempo run of 6 miles.
- **Friday:** Cross-training or rest.
- **Saturday:** Long run of 14-16 miles at an easy pace.
- **Sunday:** Easy 3-4 miles or rest.

This week represents the peak of your training. The long run pushes your endurance limits, while intervals and tempo runs boost your speed.

Week 4: Tapering Begins

- **Monday:** Rest.
- **Tuesday:** Easy 4 miles.
- **Wednesday:** Tempo run, 4 miles at marathon goal pace.
- **Thursday:** Easy 3 miles.
- **Friday:** Rest or gentle cross-training.
- **Saturday:** Long run reduced to 8 miles.
- **Sunday:** Easy 3 miles or rest.

Reducing mileage allows your body to start recovering while keeping your legs primed for race day.

Week 5: Race Week

- **Monday:** Rest.
- **Tuesday:** Easy 3 miles.
- **Wednesday:** Short tempo run – 2 miles at marathon pace.
- **Thursday:** Rest.
- **Friday:** Easy 2 miles or rest.
- **Saturday:** Rest.
- **Sunday:** Marathon day!

This week focuses on rest, mental preparation, and maintaining sharpness without fatigue.

Essential Tips to Maximize Your 5 Week Marathon Training Plan

Prioritize Recovery and Listen to Your Body

Because the training timeline is condensed, recovery becomes even more critical. Pay close attention to signs of overtraining such as persistent fatigue, unusual soreness, or sleep disturbances. Incorporate stretching, foam rolling, and adequate sleep to keep your muscles healthy.

Nutrition and Hydration Matter More Than Ever

Fueling your body properly helps maximize workout benefits and speeds recovery. Emphasize a balanced diet rich in complex carbohydrates, lean proteins, and healthy fats. Hydrate consistently, especially on long run days and after intense sessions to replenish electrolytes.

Cross-Training Supports Injury Prevention

Engaging in low-impact activities like swimming, cycling, or elliptical workouts supports cardiovascular fitness without the pounding of running. This is especially valuable during rest days or when recovering from minor niggles.

Practice Race Day Strategies During Training

Use your long runs to experiment with hydration timing, energy gels, and pacing. Understanding what works for you helps avoid unpleasant surprises during the marathon.

Adapting the Plan Based on Your Experience Level

If you're a beginner, the 5 week marathon training plan should be approached with caution. Focus on finishing the race rather than achieving a specific time goal. You might reduce the intensity of speed workouts and prioritize easy runs and long distances to build endurance more gently.

For intermediate or experienced runners, this plan can be a powerful tool to sharpen fitness and improve marathon times. The inclusion of tempo runs, hill repeats, and intervals stimulates fitness gains efficiently within a limited timeframe.

Final Thoughts on Running a Marathon with a 5 Week Training Plan

Training for a marathon in just five weeks isn't the conventional route, but it's definitely doable with the right preparation and mindset. The key is to focus on quality workouts, adequate recovery, and smart nutrition. Remember that the marathon itself is a test of both physical and mental resilience—trust your training, pace yourself wisely, and enjoy the journey to the finish line.

This 5 week marathon training plan offers a balanced approach designed to help you hit the ground running, literally, and cross that finish line feeling accomplished. Whether it's your first marathon or a tune-up race, this plan can fit into your busy schedule while setting you up for success. Lace up, stay committed, and embrace the challenge!

Frequently Asked Questions

Is a 5 week marathon training plan effective for beginners?

A 5 week marathon training plan can be challenging for beginners because typical plans range from 12 to 20 weeks. Beginners may risk injury or burnout without a solid base fitness level. It's important to have prior running experience and consult a coach or professional before attempting a condensed plan.

What are the key components of a 5 week marathon training plan?

Key components include a mix of long runs, speed workouts, easy recovery runs, rest days, and tapering in the final week. Nutrition, hydration, and injury prevention strategies are also essential to support the accelerated training schedule.

How many miles per week should I run in a 5 week marathon training plan?

Mileage varies by individual, but typically weekly mileage will increase progressively from about 20-25 miles in the first week up to 40-45 miles in peak weeks. The long run should gradually increase to around 18-20 miles before tapering.

Can I complete a marathon with only 5 weeks of training?

While it is possible to complete a marathon with only 5 weeks of training, it is generally recommended only for experienced runners who already have a strong base of fitness. Proper preparation reduces risk of injury and improves performance.

How should I structure my weekly runs in a 5 week marathon training plan?

A typical week might include 1 long run, 1-2 speed or tempo runs, 2-3 easy recovery runs, and 1-2 rest days. The long run builds endurance, speed runs improve pace, and recovery runs help with muscle repair.

What is the importance of tapering in a 5 week marathon training plan?

Tapering, usually during the last week, involves reducing mileage to allow the body to recover and build strength. This improves race day performance and decreases fatigue and injury risk.

How do I avoid injury while following a 5 week marathon training plan?

To avoid injury, gradually increase mileage, incorporate rest days, listen to your body, stretch regularly, cross-train if possible, and ensure proper nutrition and hydration. Using proper running shoes and technique also helps.

Should I include cross-training in a 5 week marathon training plan?

Yes, cross-training such as cycling, swimming, or strength training can improve overall fitness, help prevent injury, and provide active recovery, especially when time is limited in a condensed training plan.

How important is nutrition during a 5 week marathon training plan?

Nutrition is critical to fuel workouts, promote recovery, and maintain energy levels. A balanced diet rich in carbohydrates, protein, healthy fats, and hydration supports training demands and race day performance.

What are some sample workouts in a 5 week marathon

training plan?

Sample workouts include long runs (12-20 miles), tempo runs (comfortably hard pace for 20-40 minutes), interval training (e.g., 6x800m at faster pace), and easy recovery runs (3-5 miles at a relaxed pace). Rest and cross-training days are also scheduled.

Additional Resources

5 Week Marathon Training Plan: A Strategic Approach to Race Day Success

5 week marathon training plan offers a condensed yet focused strategy for runners aiming to prepare efficiently for a 26.2-mile race in a limited timeframe. While traditional marathon programs often span 12 to 20 weeks, a five-week schedule requires meticulous planning, disciplined execution, and a clear understanding of training priorities. This article delves into the feasibility, design, and practical considerations of a 5 week marathon training plan, providing insights for runners who need to optimize their preparation without compromising health or performance.

Understanding the Constraints of a 5 Week Marathon Training Plan

Typically, marathon training encompasses progressive mileage buildup, endurance runs, speed work, and adequate recovery. The conventional timeline allows the body to adapt gradually, minimizing injury risk while maximizing aerobic capacity. However, a 5 week marathon training plan compresses these elements into a significantly shorter period, which poses unique challenges.

The primary concern is balancing intensity with recovery. Runners must accelerate their conditioning without overloading muscles, joints, and tendons. For beginners, this short schedule is less advisable due to the high injury risk and insufficient time for physiological adaptation. Conversely, experienced runners with a solid fitness base may leverage such a plan effectively, especially when time constraints or unexpected race sign-ups occur.

Who Should Consider a 5 Week Marathon Training Plan?

This training approach is best suited for:

- **Experienced runners** who maintain a consistent running routine and have completed half marathons or marathons before.
- **Highly fit individuals** transitioning from other endurance sports such as

cycling or triathlon.

- **Runners with limited time** due to personal or professional commitments but who still want to compete.

For novices, a 5 week timeline may increase the likelihood of overtraining and injury, reducing the chance of a successful race day.

Key Components of an Effective 5 Week Marathon Training Plan

The success of any marathon training lies in its structure. A 5 week marathon training plan must integrate several critical elements while maintaining flexibility.

1. Progressive Long Runs

Long runs remain the cornerstone of marathon training, building endurance and mental toughness. In a compressed schedule, these runs should progress cautiously but steadily. For example, starting with an 8-10 mile run in the first week and peaking around 18-20 miles by week four can be ideal.

2. Speed and Tempo Workouts

Incorporating speed intervals and tempo runs enhances lactate threshold and running economy. These workouts should be strategically placed midweek, allowing recovery days before and after. Tempo runs at or slightly below marathon pace help the body adapt to sustained effort.

3. Recovery and Cross-Training

Recovery is paramount, especially when training intensity is elevated. Rest days and low-impact cross-training activities such as swimming or cycling can reduce injury risk while maintaining cardiovascular fitness.

4. Nutrition and Hydration Strategies

Given the accelerated training load, appropriate fueling supports performance and recovery. Emphasizing carbohydrates for glycogen replenishment, adequate

protein for muscle repair, and hydration protocols aligned with race conditions is critical.

Sample Weekly Breakdown of a 5 Week Marathon Training Plan

An illustrative schedule might look like this:

1. **Week 1:** Establish base with moderate mileage; 8-10 mile long run; easy-paced runs and one tempo session.
2. **Week 2:** Increase mileage; introduce speed intervals; 12-14 mile long run; cross-training day.
3. **Week 3:** Peak intensity; longest long run of 18-20 miles; tempo and speed work; emphasis on recovery.
4. **Week 4:** Begin tapering; reduce mileage; maintain intensity with shorter speed sessions; 10-12 mile long run.
5. **Week 5:** Race week; minimal running; focus on rest, nutrition, and mental preparation.

This structure ensures that runners approach race day with sufficient endurance and freshness.

Evaluating the Pros and Cons of a 5 Week Marathon Training Plan

While the 5 week marathon training plan caters to specific needs, it carries inherent advantages and disadvantages.

Advantages

- **Time-efficient:** Ideal for runners with limited preparation time.
- **Focused training:** Emphasizes quality workouts and essential mileage.
- **Motivation boost:** Shorter timeline can enhance commitment and focus.

Disadvantages

- **Increased injury risk:** Rapid mileage increase can strain muscles and connective tissues.
- **Less margin for error:** Illness or missed workouts have a greater impact.
- **Limited endurance adaptation:** May not sufficiently prepare beginners for marathon demands.

Understanding these factors helps runners tailor their approach and mitigate potential downsides.

Integrating Technology and Monitoring Progress

In a condensed training plan, monitoring physiological responses becomes even more crucial. The use of GPS watches, heart rate monitors, and running apps can provide real-time feedback on pace, distance, and recovery status. Tracking metrics such as resting heart rate, sleep quality, and perceived exertion can inform necessary adjustments to training intensity.

Additionally, online platforms offering training analytics and virtual coaching can enhance accountability and optimize workout effectiveness within such a short timeframe.

Adapting the 5 Week Marathon Training Plan for Different Goals

Runners might approach this plan with varying objectives—finishing the race, setting a personal best, or simply experiencing the marathon. Adjustments to the plan's intensity and volume should reflect these goals.

For those targeting completion:

- Focus on consistent mileage and injury prevention.
- Long runs should emphasize time on feet rather than speed.

For performance-oriented runners:

- Integrate more tempo and interval sessions.

- Include pace-specific workouts that simulate race conditions.

Flexibility and self-awareness remain essential throughout the process.

Conclusion: Navigating the Challenges of a 5 Week Marathon Training Plan

Although unconventional, a 5 week marathon training plan can be an effective pathway for certain runners who possess a solid fitness foundation and require a shorter preparation window. Success hinges on strategic scheduling, balanced workload, and attentive recovery practices. By embracing a professional and analytical approach, athletes can maximize their readiness for marathon day while minimizing risks associated with accelerated training. Ultimately, this plan offers a pragmatic solution for runners balancing ambition with real-world constraints.

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5 week marathon training plan: *Daniels' Running Formula* Jack Daniels, 2022 In the fourth

edition of Daniels' Running Formula, legendary running coach Jack Daniels has refined his revolutionary VDOT system, providing more precise training pace plans and expanding coverage of ultradistance training, triathlon preparation, and training in challenging environments.

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5 week marathon training plan: Daniels' Running Formula-3rd Edition Jack Daniels, 2013-12-31 Get in the best shape of your running career! Daniels provides a results-proven formula to guide you through training at the right intensity to run stronger, longer, and faster. Each program incorporates training intensities to help you build endurance, strength, and speed.

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5 week marathon training plan: Be a Better Runner Sally Edwards, Carl Foster, Roy Wallack, 2011-04-01 Written by marathoner and Triathlon Hall of Fame inductee, Sally Edwards, *Be A Better Runner* addresses every possible concern from posture and form to nutrition, footwear and race strategy. You'll learn how to adapt running mechanics such as stride and pacing to your body type and fitness level while specific training regimens prepare you for any type of running event including sprints, distance runs, and marathons. Co-authored with Carl Foster, the former President of the American College of Sports Medicine, *Be A Better Runner* Every features the latest research in the science of running. You'll learn the latest strategies to boost your performance, train more effectively, and aid post-workout recovery. The latest research on special concerns such as running after age 40, during pregnancy, overtraining in younger runners and preventing amenorrhoea in female distance runners is also highlighted.

5 week marathon training plan: Mastering Running Cathy Utzschneider, 2014-06-25 Mastering Running, regardless of your age, optimal performance and new personal bests await. Cathy Utzschneider, highly accomplished and renowned masters runner and coach, has created the definitive guide for runners, athletes, and fitness buffs. Runners from 30 to 100 will benefit from the targeted approach that covers these aspects: • Evaluating and refining running form to improve speed and endurance • Exercises, stretches, and routines to prevent common age-related injuries • Training programs for the mile, 5K, 10K, half marathon, and full marathon • Proven strategies, used by today's top runners, that shave seconds off your time Mastering Running contains all the advice and instruction you'd expect from an elite-level coach. With details on segmenting, front running, tapering, recovering, and fueling, Mastering Running is the one guide you'll rely on time and again for a lifetime of serious running.

5 week marathon training plan: Running a Marathon For Dummies Jason Karp, 2012-10-18 Get ready to run the race of your life Marathons in the U.S. have seen record increases in participation during the past few years. Running a Marathon For Dummies helps aspiring marathon runners prepare to successfully complete their first race, and shows experienced runners how to take their game to the next level. Running a Marathon For Dummies gives you exercises, programs, and tips to improve your running stamina, speed, and overall health. It takes you from sitting on the couch through running your first 26.2 mile marathon—and beyond. For seasoned runners, Running a Marathon For Dummies offers tips and advice for how to continue improving performance through drills, exercises, and other techniques. Provides a timed training promise for runners of all skill levels, from non-runners, first marathoners, and mid-race runners to more experienced runners Includes information on how running increases heart strength, keeps illnesses

away, keeps arteries clear, and improves a person's mood Gives you drills, exercises, and techniques to improve your endurance Whether you're a couch potato or a regularly hit the asphalt, *Running a Marathon For Dummies* gives you everything you need to run the race of your life.

5 week marathon training plan: *Advanced Marathoning* Pete Pfitzinger, Scott Douglas, 2025 This book provides advanced marathoners with reliable information on how to train smarter and remain injury free. It includes advice on heart rate training, nutritional guidelines, recovery products and technology, and how to adjust training schedules for recovery and weekly mileage--

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5 week marathon training plan: *The Complete Book of Men's Health* Men's Health Books, 2000-08-22 Provides information on health-related topics, exercise, diet, and personal grooming

5 week marathon training plan: *The Official Rock 'n' Roll Guide to Marathon & Half-Marathon Training* Mario Fraioli, 2013-04-01 Rock your run with The Official Rock 'n' Roll Guide to Marathon and Half-Marathon Training! This practical, encouraging guide makes preparing for marathon and half-marathon as rewarding as race day. With coaching advice, running workouts, and training programs from Coach Mario Fraioli, you'll enjoy training and cross the finish line feeling great. Coach Mario will guide you from sign-up to finish line. With his expert advice, you'll choose your race, set your goals, select the right gear, and move swiftly through a beginner or experienced marathon or half-marathon training program. Fraioli covers all of running's most important topics: dynamic warm-up exercises, smart and realistic workouts, healthy sports nutrition and hydration guidelines, tips for quick and complete recovery, strength training and crosstraining, advice to treat common running injuries, and strategies for race week and race day. He offers useful tools like running pace charts, a sweat loss calculator, and a preview of each Rock 'n' Roll race course. The Rock 'n' Roll Marathon and Half-Marathon series is the world's most popular running series because each race is a fun and feel-good challenge. Now with the Official Rock 'n' Roll Guide, you'll be ready to rock your marathon or half-marathon.

5 week marathon training plan: *The Runner's Devotional* Dana Niesluchowski, David R. Veerman, Livingstone, 2011-08-17 Ever wondered if there's a purpose to your running and what it has to do with your spiritual life? The Runner's Devotional will inspire you in your faith while encouraging you to excel at the sport you love! This book is for runners of all levels—casual and avid, competitive and recreational—who want to improve their running skills, attain personal running goals, and grow closer to God. Fifty-two devotional readings will keep runners motivated, inspired, and running in the right direction, both on and off the road, through life's many peaks and valleys. Each devotional includes an inspirational reading, a personal story from a runner, Scripture application, running tips, and questions to consider. Additional features include health and fitness tips, and weekly runner's logs.

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provides ways to avoid common training and racing mistakes, recovery methods unique to forty-plus athletes, secrets to staying injury-free, and much more.

5 week marathon training plan: *Runner's World*, 2006-04 Runner's World magazine aims to help runners achieve their personal health, fitness, and performance goals, and to inspire them with vivid, memorable storytelling.

5 week marathon training plan: *Relentless Forward Progress* Bryon Powell, 2013-10-04 Ready to Run an Ultramarathon? When you consider marathons, do you think, been there, done that? Like so many others, do you believe that humans were born to run? Do you seek a new challenge that tests your mental and physical limits? If you answered yes to any of these questions, then it's time to read *Relentless Forward Progress* and give ultramarathons a try! Veteran ultramarathoner and coach Bryon Powell shares insider know-ledge about training, racing, fueling, hydration, and much more. In this guide, you'll find: --Daily training plans for races from 50k to 100 miles --A crash course in how to trail run --Advice from some of the world's top ultrarunners --Proven strategies for race day success --Useful approaches for running uphill and downhill --What to look for in ultramarathon gear --Practical wisdom on speed work --Cross training ideas for running fitness and recovery --Tips on running barefoot --Inspiration to go farther than you've ever gone before

5 week marathon training plan: Developing Endurance NSCA -National Strength & Conditioning Association, Ben Reuter, 2012-02-29 Runners, cyclists, swimmers, rowers, triathletes, and ultradistance athletes must sustain performance at a high level to come out on top. *Developing Endurance* shows how to achieve optimal stamina to race your best through science-based aerobic, anaerobic, and resistance training. Written by 11 top experts in the National Strength and Conditioning Association, the top sport conditioning organization in the world, this guide provides both the background information and the exercises, drills, workouts, and programs for ultimate results. Athletes and coaches will appreciate the assessment tools, analyses, and instruction to define specific needs and establish effective training goals. Armed with these tools and information, you can create the ideal personalized training program for your sport and avoid lengthy plateaus while taking performance to the highest level. Earn continuing education credits/units! A continuing education course and exam that uses this book is also available. It may be purchased separately or as part of a package that includes all the course materials and exam.

5 week marathon training plan: Mastering the Half Marathon Cathy Utzschneider, 2014-06-25 The half marathon has become the fastest-growing race distance in the United States, both in terms of number of finishers and number of new races. Additionally, according to Running USA's National Runner Survey, the half marathon is the favorite distance of both sexes. *Mastering the Half Marathon* is your guide to completing or even reaching personal records in one of the most popular running events. Author Cathy Utzschneider has been ranked fifth in the world in her age group and won seven USA Track and Field age-group titles since she started running competitively at age 40. In *Mastering the Half Marathon*, masters runners will benefit from the targeted approach that she has used to guide 46 national masters age-group champions. This mini e-book begins with an introduction to the half marathon before moving into training workouts, plans, and tips. Included are 12-week training plans for both experienced and beginning runners. *Mastering the Half Marathon* also focuses on speed development, detailing information on exertion, fartlek training, threshold running, and interval running. The mini e-book concludes with strategies for race day, including pacing, and fueling during and after the race. *Mastering the Half Marathon* is an abridged version of Cathy Utzschneider's *Mastering Running* (Human Kinetics, 2014), which provides information and advice on topics that matter most to older runners, proving that age is no obstacle to excellence.

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5 week marathon training plan: *Hal Higdon's Half Marathon Training* Hal Higdon, 2016-04-01 Hal Higdon's name is synonymous with running. As contributing editor of Runner's World and best-selling author, he has helped countless runners achieve their distance goals. Now, he's created the definitive guide on today's most popular distance, the 13.1-mile half marathon. Hal Higdon's Half Marathon Training is everything you wanted to know about running the half marathon, including where to begin, what to focus on, how to pace yourself, how to avoid injury, how to track your progress, how to stay the course, and how to improve. Whether this is your first or fiftieth half marathon, there is a plan for you. Inside you'll find more than 15 customizable programs, ranging from novice to advanced (you'll even find a walking-only plan), as well as proven strategies, race-day tips, and motivation from half-marathoners around the globe. From day 1 to mile 13.1, Hal will guide, encourage, and pace you to your goal. Other guides might help you complete the half, but only one will introduce you to the joys of running. Hal Higdon's Half Marathon Training is a book you'll return to for guidance and inspiration for a lifetime of running.

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OUC Orlando Half partners with training app to get you ready (11don MSN) If you want proof the app works, Cooper ended up completing all six majors last year after he finished the Boston Marathon

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