

The Outward Bound Trust Marathon Training Guide

The Virgin Money London Marathon is going to be an amazing day of running for you. You will be running with thousands of others in one of the world's greatest marathons, past some of London's most iconic landmarks and through streets lined with crowds cheering you every step of the way. However, it will also be a day that tests you physically, mentally and emotionally but all the ups and downs will be worth it when you cross the finish line and you collect your medal. Completing a marathon is a massive challenge but a life changing one. Once you've climbed and summited the marathon mountain you'll be ready to tackle anything.

However, in preparation you've got to get through the training over the winter months to ensure you're physically and mentally ready to tackle 26.2 miles in April. It's unlikely to be a smooth road the whole way but we're here to support you thus giving you the best chance of making it to race day confident you can achieve your personal goals, whether you're a marathon debutante looking for your first finish or an improving runner giving the marathon distance another go.

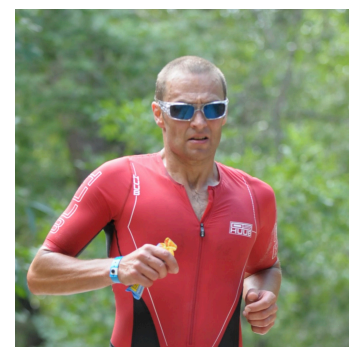
Over the next few weeks and months you will see, read or hear a lot of things about running a marathon, some will be fact, some will be myth and some will be contradictory. You may also see what other athletes or friends are doing, some will be doing more or less miles than you, some will have different plans or no plan at all, some will swear by a brand of trainer, a recovery drink, or a pre run routine, but remember, do what suits you as you are an individual.

It is beyond the scope of this generic training plan and guide to inform you everything about running a marathon, sometimes you have to use your best judgement or seek advice from a specialist. This guide aims to give you the key information which I feel will support you in your training to make it an enjoyable and ultimately a successful experience. If you require more support please don't hesitate to contact me directly (peter@enduranceinmind.co.uk).

The coach - Peter Hayward

Now you have secured a place and committed to running the Virgin London Marathon supporting The Outward Bound Trust I have devised a training plan to help you all the way to the iconic finish line on The Mall! I hope it will be a day you create memories to remember forever.

The Outward Bound Trust (OBT) Training Plan is aimed to get you to the start line and is based my on knowledge from five years higher education, my coaching experience and 20 years competing in a range of endurance events myself.



My coaching ethos is based on smart training: the key to optimal training and performance is the development of a structured, informed and detailed plan.

If you are interested in reading my full biography please visit my website at www.enduranceinmind.co.uk. My website also outlines the individual bespoke services and support I can offer to supplement the Outward Bound Trust Training Plan.

Planning Your Marathon Journey

Be patient - take your time to get started. As you're a new runner who maybe hasn't done any exercise for a while, spend the first few weeks of your new regime regularly walking and building up the miles (weeks 1 - 4) until you feel confident and competent enough to break into short periods of jogging with regular walk breaks.



Build routine and consistency first

There are no hard and fast rules - it's down to personal circumstances, motivation, fitness levels and goals. However, as a beginner, consistency of regular running is the most important thing you should aim for. One week of running won't make you a marathon runner; many consistent weeks put together will. It takes time for your fitness levels to improve so don't expect miracles overnight.

Stick with the plan

Doing too much, too hard, or too soon often ends in injury, frustration or disappointment. You need to build up the time you are able to run over many weeks and months. In doing so you are building a strong body and mind. Be gentle and progress slowly at first. This is especially important as you're new to endurance running.

By gradually and appropriately progressing the duration, intensity and frequency of your running you optimise long-term performance. Gradual overload allows adaptations as your body and mind become stronger. This takes time, patience, discipline and planning.

Staying motivated

Becoming a successful marathon runner is a mixture of patience and persistence. There will be highs and lows in your journey. Accept and learn from the lows, but make sure you enjoy the highs. Each time you run set yourself a small achievable target or goal and don't be daunted by the challenge you have set yourself. In general, the more you do, the easier it will become and the more achievable your marathon finish will be.

Get out and get started and you'll soon find that it will become part of your routine, you'll actually want to go for your run. And each time you go out, run with purpose and intent.

Your marathon journey – what to do, and when

June 2021: make training routine and build on your endurance base

Use these weeks to build regular physical activity into your week. Prepare and get yourself ready - especially important if you've been inactive for a little / long while.

By the end of this block you should have established your routine and have a realistic view of how much time you can give to your marathon training each week. Look at your work, social, home and lifestyle schedule and determine how much time you have. The plan is based on you committing to running at least three times a week. Devise a structure that is realistic rather than overambitious.

July 2021: get stronger

Be consistent and develop your distance. Consistency is the most important element of your marathon build-up. Dipping in and out of running as your motivation peaks and falls, results in your fitness being slower to develop and progress will stagnate. June and July miles are the key base miles of the plan.

August: 2021 going long

By this time of the plan the miles that you've covered will be really showing. You'll be feeling more confident and will be able to run for longer. Now is the time to teach your body to deal with the distance and so build up your long run. Now is also the time to master your marathon race pace and work out your fuel and hydration strategy.

September 2021: the finishing touches

September is about holding yourself together, staying healthy and injury-free. It's all about balance and confidence. Doing enough running to stay strong and keep building your fitness but not doing too much so that you reach the start fatigued and lacking motivation. It's easy to panic in September, think you've not done enough and try to ramp up the miles. Don't.

Go long for marathon glory!

Long runs are the foundation that build the stamina and endurance necessary to cover the marathon distance. They develop efficient running, help your breathing feel easier, make your heart stronger, help your body use its fuel for running and help you to get used to being on your feet for a long time.



'Long' is subjective. For a first timer with no running background, your long runs will mean starting from scratch. However, a regular runner is more likely to be able to string together a greater distance. Either way, you should gradually build up the time / distance you are able to run over the weeks to train your body to cope and give you the confidence that you can achieve your goal.

The initial focus is on increasing time on your feet rather than worrying about distance. Long, slow runs are done at controlled and manageable pace. Long runs give you the chance to practise your race day hydration and fuelling strategies as well as your pacing.

With long runs in mind, I would suggest doing these early in the day when it is cooler and completing local laps so you can return home to fill up water bottles. Hydration is going to be a key factor during your training which is different to previous years as you will be training through the summer months. Try to perfect your hydration strategy early on.

Perfect pace

Get this right and you'll have a great race. However, get it wrong and your marathon will be extremely tough in the later stages. The final six miles can be very tough if runners 'hit the wall' as a result of poor pacing, insufficient training or inadequate nutrition.

You might want to think again if you think having a pace plan doesn't apply to you because you 'just want to finish'. Knowing your target pace to 'just finish' or 'get round' will give you confidence that you are in control in the early stages of your race and are on track to reach your goals throughout the race.

One of the biggest mistakes marathon runners make is getting their pace wrong. Newer runners typically need to learn to slow down - especially at the start of a race. Running too fast too soon in the race can not only make the second half really tough, but could in fact jeopardise reaching the finish line.

The right pace to run is about understanding what effort you can sustain for the duration of your event. It's about having patience at the start, feeling in control, feeling confident and the master of your race. This will allow you to be ready to face the demands of the later stages fresher, stronger, and more focused. Working out a pace strategy that matches your ability, race aspirations and motivation will really help you to have a much better race experience. The best marathons are run at an 'even pace', which means starting off controlled and feeling good and trying to hold roughly the same mile split for each of the 26.2 miles.

You need to understand what it feels like to run at your race pace. You need to practise at, or close to, race pace during sections of your long training runs (not for the entire distance) This is especially important as your long runs build in duration.

Plan ahead

A training plan will help you to structure your workouts and will provide appropriate progressions and workouts week by week. The key is to make it personal to you. Make it fit your life! If you're feeling tired, adapt the plan or go for an 'easy' run instead of trying to force yourself to fit in the workout and risk fatigue, injury or illness - and don't try to catch up any missed workouts from this week next week!

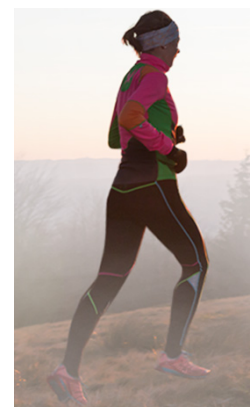
To help you with your marathon journey, I've put together two training plans - one for first-time marathon runners, and one for more seasoned runners which take you all the way from 14th June 2021 through to race week.

Before you get started: the kit

If you can, go to a specialised running shop and have your gait (running style) analysed so you can buy the correct fitting trainers - everybody runs differently - take expert advice as this will reduce the risk of injury

Buy two pairs of trainers and alternate between runs - it is advised to 'rest' shoes between runs - these two pairs should get you through the marathon

Buy good quality specific running clothing - again take expert advice on the layers you will need - running is more enjoyable when you are comfortable -



and you will need to run in all warm weather as the training plan takes you through the summer months which is different to previous years!

Technology has progressed and there are now a plethora of devices aimed at running - these can help focus your training and allow you to see more specific speed and distance data - but they come at a cost so it is up to you. These include heart rate monitors, GPS enabled watches, running pods, running apps for your smart phone (e.g. Strava)

The chart below indicates the different training zones (i.e. levels of intensity) depending on how you intend to measure them i.e. perceived level of exertion (Borg RPE scale) or heart rate monitor (HR)

To supplement the plan I would recommend keeping a training diary. I would certainly include quantitative data such as time, distance, RPE or HR, but you could also add information about what you ate pre- during - and post-run alongside more qualitative thoughts and musings about the run - did it go well, why, what was the weather like, how did you cope with obstacles you encountered on a difficult run etc. These are useful things to reflect on to see how you've progressed over the months, and to identify what worked for you and what didn't.

Training zones	Borg RPE	% Heart rate max *
1 - Easy	10 - 12	68 - 73 %
2 - Light aerobic / Steady	12 - 14	73 - 80 %
3 - Moderate aerobic / Moderate hard	14 - 16	80 - 87 %
4 - Threshold / Hard	16 - 18	87 - 93 %
5 - Above threshold	18 - 20	93 - 100 %

* heart rate max = 220 - your age i.e. a 47 year old would have a heart rate max of 173 (220-47=223; this is an approximate value without doing a physical test which is an alternative)

The 5 Elements of Endurance

1. Physical endurance

Running a marathon imposes tough physical demands on your body

The plan is based on the progressive overload model which includes the principles of adaptation, specificity, periodisation, and super compensation (it is beyond the scope of this guide to go into detail of this model - for those who are interested in learning more there is a wealth of information online and a plethora of books available focusing on marathon training which explain the progressive overload method of training)

The plan utilises and develops both the aerobic and anaerobic energy systems which are vital to athletic progression and performance

2. Sport psychology and mindset

Motivation - you are ahead of the game - you are more likely to succeed if you are motivated to exercise by something that means something to you i.e. its internal - you have chosen to run the marathon for The Outward Bound Trust and that means something to you!



Set yourself some goals - short, medium and long term - write them down. Goals should be SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time bound)

Short term e.g. I will not walk on this weeks long run or this week I will eat fruit rather than crisps with my lunch

Long term e.g. I will finish the London Marathon

Research shows that practice of psychological skills are key to performance in addition the physical training enabling an athlete to perform to their potential

Areas which can be developed with practice include reducing pre-race anxieties, mental toughness, resilience, confidence, motivation, coping with adversity and focus. Techniques used to develop these factors include goal setting, visualisation, self-talk and relaxation

3. Nutrition and hydration

Running puts many demands on your body and in order for it to meet those demands you have to fuel it right - would you put diesel in a petrol car and expect it to run. Try to make eating a balanced, healthy diet a habit - but don't stress if you have one unhealthy meal every now and then



Appropriate nutrition can reduce the risk of injury and illness. It also facilitates the positive adaptive response to training and enhances competition performance.

It is important to consider and practice training and racing nutrition, fluid balance, replacement and hydration

Online fuel and fluid calculators can be used to ensure optimal uptake and balance

Follow the manufacturers guidance when using sport nutrition products and supplements

Always be prepared with a good quality recovery meal / shake after your long run - it can be too easy to reward eat - don't undo your good work

4. Strength and conditioning

For the marathon runner strength and conditioning exercises are used to specifically to improve running performance. It will also help runners develop or maintain proper mechanics, can increase the athletes' tolerance to training and decrease the chance of injury

Strength and conditioning is about more than lifting weights as it encompasses the entire development of the athlete and what is needed to improve physical performance. This includes not only strength training but plyometrics, speed and agility, endurance and core stability

Some key exercises (which can be done at the gym or at home) include the plank, scorpion and back extensions to strengthen the core and single leg dead lift, step ups and lunges for the legs



I would recommend either talking to your gym instructor or exploring the plethora of strength and conditioning exercises on www.runnersworld.com (many of which can be done at home so avoiding expensive gym memberships)

5. Recovery

Rest and recovery are often overlooked in many endurance training programmes. To improve fitness / performance training involves exercising at different levels of intensity to stress or challenge the body. The training plan needs to incorporate structured, appropriate and adequate rest time to allow the body to recover and adapt from the stresses



For example, the body has an inflammatory response after a long bout of exercise. Muscle fibres become frayed and torn and that can take time to recover

During a marathon an athlete takes approximately 40,000 steps and with each one the full force of their bodyweight plus all that acceleration goes through the body so it's a really impactful event which has a very significant effect on the body

Race day tips and common errors to avoid

Do not try anything new - practice everything so it becomes second nature or habit



Fuel right - your last loading meal should be Saturday breakfast then taper your eating - by this stage you should know what fuels a long run - we are individuals so stick to what works for you

Check the weather forecast - prepare and wear the right clothing - if it's cold take something you can discard at the start line

Plan your day and arrive early - know where your supporters will be on the course and let them organise themselves on the day - focus on you - but make plans to meet friends ' family after the race

Try not to get carried away and start too fast - a common error - stick to your race pace and plan

Finally, don't forget to enjoy the day and celebrate the finish!!! Look around and soak up the amazing atmosphere

Training Plan devised and supported by:



Website: www.enduranceinmind.co.uk | **email:** peter@enduranceinmind.co.uk

Appendix

Marathon pacing guide	
Predicted marathon time	Average minutes per mile
3 hrs	6:52
3 hrs 30	8:00
4 hrs	9:09
4 hrs 30	10:17
5 hrs	11:26
5 hrs 30	12:35
6 hrs	13:43

The Borg Scale of Perceived Exertion		
Level of exertion	Borg rating	Examples
No exertion at all	6	Sitting watching television
Extremely light	7-8	Making a cup of tea
Very light	9-10	Moderate exercise which increases heart rate and breathing but doesn't make you out of breath - conversation is possible
Light	11-12	
Somewhat hard	13-14	Exercise that takes vigorous effort, heart rate increases and breathing rate increases - very short questions and answers possible if needed
Hard	15-16	
Very hard	17-18	The highest level of sustainable exercise
Maximal exertion	19-20	Maximal effort which is unsustainable for any length of time