



WE ARE
MACMILLAN
CANCER SUPPORT

YOUR HALF MARATHON

TRAINING GUIDE



**THANKS
SO
MUCH**

Thank you for joining Team Macmillan. We think you're amazing for having the dedication and commitment to take part in this event.

At the finish, the sense of achievement will be huge having completed your challenge and helped people affected by cancer too.



GET STARTED

Safety first

To start with, it is vitally important to ensure that it's safe for you to begin an exercise programme. It's a good idea to see your doctor for a check-up before you get started.

Comfort over style

Correctly fitted running shoes is one area where you should not compromise, they are an investment in comfort and injury prevention. Visit a specialist store to get your feet measured and running style analysed to make sure you get the right pair.

Slow and steady wins the race

Don't be tempted to go as far and fast as possible on your first run. Start slowly and build up over time to give your muscles and joints time to get used to the activity.

Eat well

Diet will be important during training so try and stick to a healthy eating plan, this will ensure your body has enough energy to keep up the extra exercise.

Set goals

Whatever your reason for taking part, it will help your motivation to set yourself goals. Remember, every step you take will help us support people affected by cancer.

i Make sure you're eating a good mix of carbohydrates and stay well hydrated. You may also find eating a carbohydrate snack two to three hours before you train will help keep your energy levels topped up.

A close-up photograph of a person's right foot wearing a white and black running shoe, positioned on a patch of green grass. The shoe is angled towards the bottom right of the frame.

FITTING TRAINING

INTO YOUR BUSY LIFE

You may not always be able to fit in everything we've suggested in the training schedule. But if you make a few changes to your lifestyle, you may well find some extra training time. For example, you could:

- get up an hour earlier and go out for a quick run before work
- make a run part of your commute or run in your lunch break.

And as well as running, you could work on your overall fitness by:

- walking instead of driving to the shops.
- taking the stairs rather than the lift.

You can always ask for help with your training schedule at your local gym as cross-training will significantly help your running.





INJURY PREVENTION TIPS

Wear good shoes

Get good-quality running shoes from a specialist running store. Consider buying a second pair and rotating them as you build up to your big day. If you don't have a specialist running store near you, a good physiotherapist or podiatrist should be able to advise you.

Warm up and stretch

Inflexibility is one of the main reasons we get injuries and can increase as our bodies become tired. So it's vital to include a warm up and regular stretching as part of your training programme. And don't forget – only stretch after your muscles have warmed up.



Vary your training surface

Too much road running can aggravate your joints, while running too much on soft ground may not be supportive enough. Avoid excessive running on cambered roads and don't begin hill sessions until you've established a good base level of endurance.

Have enough rest

Rest is as important as training. It's vital that you allow your body adequate time to recover, particularly from hard sessions. Don't even consider running with injuries or if you're feeling ill or rundown as this may only delay recovery.

Strengthen up

Many running injuries are caused by abnormal biomechanics and muscle imbalances, most of which are made worse by running. Doing regular core and lower-limb strengthening may help lessen the risk of injury and should be incorporated into your training programme early on. Ask physiotherapists, sports masseurs and gym instructors to show you exercises that will suit you.

i **Never train with an injury.** Most aches and pains can be treated with ice and rest. But if your pain doesn't subside or gets worse, seek the advice of a qualified physio or sports therapist before you start training again.



ACHES AND PAINS

Most runners will come up across the odd problem when training, even if they follow our schedules and injury prevention tips. Here's our guide to the commonest problems and how best to deal with them.

Aching muscles

Even the fittest among us will probably experience aching muscles when we start to run. The aching muscle normally comes about because runners aren't used to exercising, they've overexercised, they're used to a different type of exercise or they haven't warmed up. Applying ice to the swelling and resting the muscles is normally enough to solve the problem.

Blisters

Blisters happen when something rubs against the skin and causes fluid to form beneath it. The longer the friction goes on the more fluid forms, creating pressure and pain. Eventually the blister may burst, exposing raw skin and more pain. New runners usually get blisters because their feet aren't toughened or they haven't broken in new running shoes. Avoid them by:

- making sure your feet are dry and don't move around in the shoe
- putting insoles in your shoes for a smoother fit
- wearing acrylic or polyester socks rather than cotton or wool
- taking time and care when choosing shoes – too-tight shoes will cramp your feet and too-loose ones will make your feet slide.

Joint pain

Pain in your ankles, knees, hips or lower back when running is a sign something's wrong. It could be down to the wrong kind of running shoes, a biomechanic problem, a muscle imbalance or the wear and tear of running on hard surfaces. Keeping training will make the problem worse and you could risk serious long-term injury. See a professional such as a physiotherapist or sports therapist for this one.

Chafing

Labels, seams and badly fitting clothes can all create friction, leading to serious and uncomfortable chafing. Avoid this by training in your Team Macmillan running top. And apply Vaseline® wherever your clothes may rub to avoid chafing and soreness during your run.

ANY TECHNICAL QUESTIONS?

Why do I need to warm up before I run?

You need to warm up before any physical activity so that you prevent muscle tears, strains and pulls. Warming up increases breathing and heart rate, leading to increased blood flow to the working muscles. As your body temperature rises, muscles, tendons and ligaments become more pliable and ready for the stretching and exercise which follows. A decent warm up should last around 8–12 minutes. For a runner, this could consist of a slow jog followed by more jogging at a gradually increased intensity.

Why should I stretch and what should I do?

Once you've warmed up, it's important to stretch. That's so that you give yourself even more protection against pulls, strains and tears, as well as helping to prevent stiffness after your run. Muscles are like metal – bend them when cold and they're likely to crack or break; warm them up and they're much more pliable.

You should stretch all the major muscle groups, particularly the big muscle groups of the legs. These are: the quadriceps (front of the upper leg); the hamstrings (back of the upper leg); the calves (back of lower leg); the peroneus (side and front of lower leg); and the groin (inside of upper leg and buttocks). Stretches should be static and last for around 8–12 seconds each side. Avoid ballistic stretching or bouncing as this can lead to injury.

Why do I need to do a cool-down after my run and what should I do?

Cooling down and stretching after a run will help reduce muscle stiffness and increase the rate of recovery. Cooling down helps to remove accumulated bi-products such as lactic acid and carbon dioxide that can build up during a run. Your cool-down should consist of a very slow jog for five minutes followed by a three-minute walk and a repeat of your stretches.

Why do I need to vary my speed when training?

Doing all your training at the same pace will mean you'll be able to complete the race. However, if you're aiming for a certain finishing time, you'll need to train at higher intensities than your usual pace. This will improve the capacities of your muscles, energy systems, oxygen transport and your heart, all enabling you to run faster. Speed sessions improve your body's endurance by enabling you to store more energy, increasing your lactate toleration and allowing you to run for longer.



Enjoy yourself

You've signed up to take part in an incredible event so make the most of the experience. Enjoy running in the great outdoors, and know that you're helping to change lives as you do it. And, if you start losing motivation or finding training tough, just take a deep breath and remember this: we couldn't do what we do without you.

More support?

If you have any more questions about training for your half marathon, jog over to macmillan.org.uk/running or email us at running@macmillan.org.uk

If you have any questions about cancer or if you'd like to talk about what you're going through, please give our support line a call on **0808 808 00 00** (Monday – Friday, 9am – 8pm). Or visit us at macmillan.org.uk



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