

Beginners plan

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4
Week 1	4M slow	3M slow	4M	3M, timed
Week 2	3M easy	3M, with a few 50m bursts	3M easy	5-6M slow
Week 3	4M easy	4M, with a few 100m bursts	3M, timed, plus 1M jog	7-8M slow (or 1 hour)
Week 4	4M easy	4M, inc several 30-sec bursts	4M	8M slow (or 1 hour)
Week 5	4M or 35mins easy, off-road if possible	4-5M of fast-and-slow, with bursts up the hills (but not down them)	4M or 35 mins easy, off-road if possible	9-10M steady, or 10K race
Week 6	3-4M easy on soft ground	1M jog, then 2 x 5 mins fast, with 5min slow jog recovery	4M easy on grass	9-10M slow
Week 7	3-4M easy, off-road if possible	3M, inc a few short bursts	3M on grass	Warm up, then 10K race, then 10mins walking or jogging
Week 8	4-5M easy, off-road	1M jog, then 2 x 7-8mins fast, with 5min jog recovery	4M on grass, inc several short bursts	11-12M, as slow as you like
Week 9	3-4M easy, on soft ground	1M jog, then 2 x 5mins fast, with 5min slow jog recovery between	4M easy on grass	9-10M slow
Week 10	3M easy, off-road	1M jog, then 1M at race speed, then 1M jog	2M jog	Race day

Rest days

These are to be taken in between running days or listen to your body and rest when it needs it, but that's not an excuse to slack off!! Include plenty of stretching and even a sports massage leading up to the event.

Half-Marathon Race Preparation

Although nothing like as taxing as a full marathon, the 21K distance does need to be treated with respect, particularly if the weather is hot. You should finish your breakfast three hours before the start, but there is nothing wrong with drinking tea, coffee, water or squash up to an hour before the start, and if it is really hot, I suggest drinking half a pint of water five minutes before the start. Don't drink half an hour before the start, or you'll be bursting for a pee while waiting for the gun!

If you're aiming to run fast, you should go through a gentle warm-up routine during the 20 minutes leading up to the start – jogging, stretching and striding. If you're doing an event with a large field, you'll probably find yourself running very fast in the first mile, so try to keep warm and loose during the final few minutes when you are wedged in the crowd.

Intermediate plan

	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sunday
Week 1	5M easy	5M, a little faster than Mon	5M, inc 15 mins of 30 secs fast, 60 secs jogging	5M easy, off-road	Rest	5M easy, inc some strides	7-8M easy
Week 2	4M easy	6M steady, on a hilly course	5M, inc 16 mins of 1 min fast, 16min jogging	5M easy	Rest	Warm up, then 3M fast (timed). Warm down	7-8M easy
Week 3	4M easy	6M steady, finishing faster	4M easy	Warm up, then 8 x 90 secs fast, 90 secs slow	Rest	Warm up, then 4 x 800m (or 4 x 3mins), with 3min recovery jogs	7-8M slow
Week 4	4M easy	6M, fairly fast	Repetitions: 4 x 3 mins fast, with 2min recoveries	5M easy	Rest	1M jog, then 5M fairly fast, then 1M jog	10M slow
Week 5	5M easy, off-road	6M, starting slow, finishing faster	3 x 5mins fast, with 5min jog recoveries	5M easy, inc 6 x 150m fast strides	Rest or 3M jog	2M slow, then 1M fast, then 2M slow	Warm up, then 10K race or 5M pace run (timed)
Week 6	5M easy	5M, inc 16 x 1min fast, 1 min slow	2 x 2M (approx), timed, at threshold pace	5-6M easy	Rest or 3M jog	1M easy, then 4-5M fairly fast, then 1M jog	10M steady
Week 7	5M easy, off-road if possible	Rest	8M, fairly fast	4M easy	Rest or 3M jog	4M on grass, inc 6 x 200m strides	Warm up, then 10K race. Warm down
Week 8	5M easy, off-road	6M steady, inc bursts up hills	3 x 1M (or 3 x 5mins), with 5min recoveries	5M easy	5M easy	6-7M, inc 10 x 30 secs fast, 30 secs slow	10-12M steady
Week 9	5M easy	5M, inc 16 x 1min fast, 1 min slow	Warm up, then 2 x 2M (approx), timed, at threshold pace	5-6M easy	Rest or 3M jog	1M easy then 4-5M fairly fast, then 1M jog	10M steady
Week 10	5M easy	6-7M at a comfortable pace	Warm up, then 2M at race pace, then 2M jog	5M easy, inc 6 x 30 secs fast	Rest	3M, in race kit	Race day

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