

**MCMILLAN**  
**RUNNING**



**Marathon**  
**Training**  
**Guide**

*The ultimate guide from  
the World's #1 Coach*

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**WRITTEN BY GREG MCMILLAN**



*Looking to  
perform your  
best in long  
races like the  
marathon?  
You've come to  
the right place.*

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# Marathon Guide **Introduction**

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Not only did I win a National Championship at the marathon distance, but I've coached new runner marathon groups, over 15,000 runners to qualify for the Boston Marathon and even marathoners at the World Championships and Olympic Games.

*In this training guide, you'll learn how to get the preparation right in order to avoid getting injured and to have the fitness (mental and physical) to achieve your goal.*

Do it right and you will have success on race day. I've seen it over and over from my new runners, age groupers and pro athletes. Let's get started. physical) to achieve your goal.



# Four Factors for Success

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The goal in marathon training is to address the four key factors for success.

## Factor #1: Leg Durability

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The first factor is leg durability. While many runners think about cardiovascular fitness when training for a race, long races like the marathon are more dependent on the ability of your legs to handle the pounding across the race than on your cardiovascular fitness. After all, the average marathoner takes 35,000 to 45,000 steps during the race. Is there any wonder why you see marathoners hobbling around after the race? You can have great cardiovascular fitness, but if your legs can't handle the pounding then you'll hit the wall and struggle to finish.

A key aspect of training is to develop legs that can handle the distance. My training achieves this in four ways – sustainable and consistent weekly mileage, long runs, marathon-specific long runs and specialty leg strengthening exercises like in the available **Marathon Legs program**.

## Factor #2: Nutrition/Fueling

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The second factor is fueling. You've probably heard that you have plenty of fat within your body to power you for hours and hours but when running at marathon pace, you also burn carbohydrates and those

carbohydrate stores (called glycogen) are limited. They begin to deplete after two hours. While Eliud Kipchoge may run the marathon in under two hours, most of us take much longer than that.

As a result, you must fuel along the way. There are about as many fueling strategies as there are runners so it may take some experimentation to find what works for you. Here is my article on **marathon fueling** to give you a head start on your fueling plan.

## Factor #3: **Happy Brain**

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The third factor is a happy brain. A “happy brain” may sound funny, but we are learning a lot about how the brain functions. One concept coming through lately is that if the brain senses anything threatening, it will send more fatigue messages to you and can even cut the power to your working muscles to slow you down.

As a result, a key part of training is to get your brain used to the suffering that is inevitable in racing your best. Do it right and your brain will stay happy throughout the race and allow you to push to your best performance. Do it wrong and your brain will cause you to hit the wall and slow to a crawl.

As you’ll read below, key workouts in my training plans are designed to condition the mind to the suffering similar to what you’ll face in the race. I know that we usually try to avoid suffering and being tired and fatigued. But when training for a long race, you actually want to experience this suffering in small amounts across your training plan so that your brain is familiar with it and then allows you to perform your best on race day.

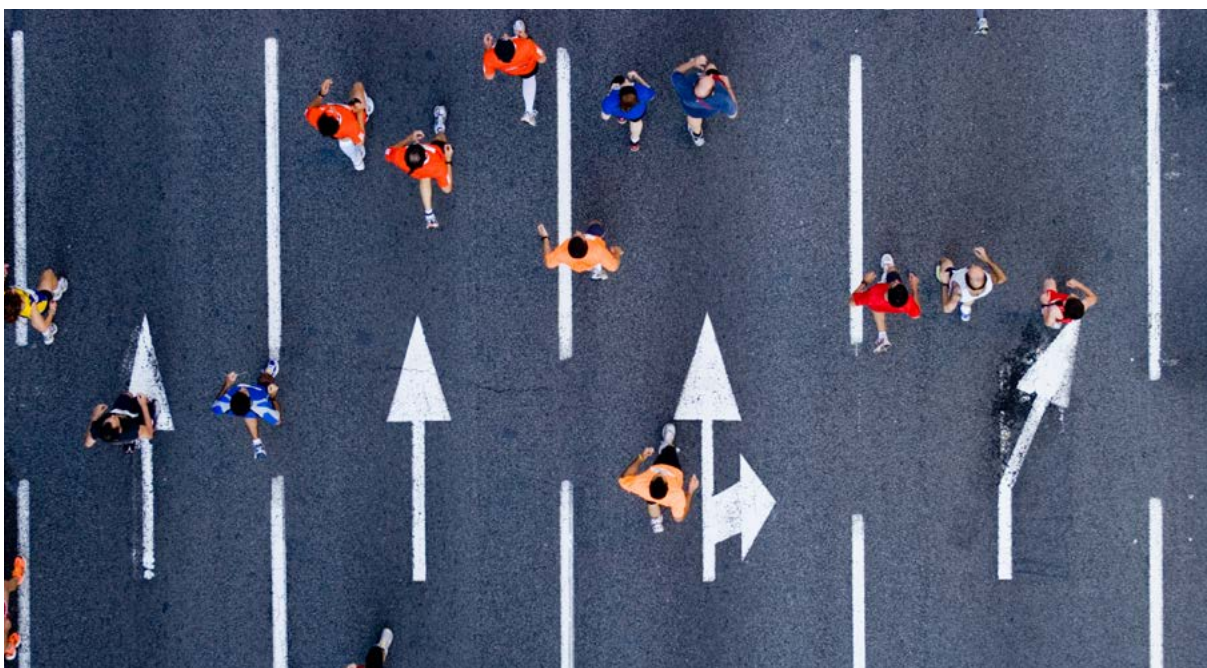
## Factor #4: **Proper Pacing**

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The fourth factor is proper pacing. Because you need to protect the legs, be careful burning your limited fuel stores and to keep the brain happy, you must pace yourself properly ([view my marathon pace chart](#)). Go too fast, too early and you'll pay dearly later in the race.

Depending on the course, an even pace (equal splits for the first and second half-marathons) or a slightly negative split (faster second half-marathon than the first) leads to your best race performance. [Here is my full video on pacing.](#)

Something many runners are surprised by is how you must greatly ramp up your mental intensity later in the race just to maintain pace. Normally, if you up your intensity you go faster but in longer races, you up the intensity just to maintain pace as fatigue sets in. Here is my strategy to get ready for this mental challenge. I call it [Go Zone Racing](#) and [here is my article on it.](#)



# Marathon Pace Chart (min/mile)

Finish Time	Avg Pace (min / mile)	1	2	3	5K	5	10K	15K	10	20K	HM	15	25K	30K	20	35K	25	40K	Finish
2:00:00	0:04:35	0:04:35	0:09:10	0:13:44	<b>0:14:12</b>	0:22:54	0:28:24	0:42:36	<b>0:45:48</b>	0:56:48	1:00:00	1:08:42	<b>1:11:00</b>	1:25:11	1:31:36	1:39:23	<b>1:54:30</b>	1:53:35	<b>2:00:00</b>
2:05:00	0:04:46	0:04:46	0:09:33	0:14:19	<b>0:14:47</b>	0:23:51	0:29:35	0:44:22	<b>0:47:43</b>	0:59:10	1:02:30	1:11:34	<b>1:13:57</b>	1:28:44	1:35:25	1:43:32	<b>1:59:16</b>	1:58:19	<b>2:05:00</b>
2:10:00	0:04:58	0:04:58	0:09:55	0:14:53	<b>0:15:23</b>	0:24:49	0:30:46	0:46:09	<b>0:49:37</b>	1:01:32	1:05:00	1:14:26	<b>1:16:55</b>	1:32:17	1:39:14	1:47:40	<b>2:04:03</b>	2:03:03	<b>2:10:00</b>
2:15:00	0:05:09	0:05:09	0:10:18	0:15:27	<b>0:15:58</b>	0:25:46	0:31:57	0:47:55	<b>0:51:32</b>	1:03:54	1:07:30	1:17:17	<b>1:19:52</b>	1:35:50	1:43:03	1:51:49	<b>2:08:49</b>	2:07:47	<b>2:15:00</b>
2:20:00	0:05:21	0:05:21	0:10:41	0:16:02	<b>0:16:34</b>	0:26:43	0:33:08	0:49:42	<b>0:53:26</b>	1:06:16	1:10:00	1:20:09	<b>1:22:49</b>	1:39:23	1:46:52	1:55:57	<b>2:13:35</b>	2:12:31	<b>2:20:00</b>
2:25:00	0:05:32	0:05:32	0:11:04	0:16:36	<b>0:17:09</b>	0:27:40	0:34:19	0:51:28	<b>0:55:21</b>	1:08:38	1:12:30	1:23:01	<b>1:25:47</b>	1:42:56	1:50:41	2:00:06	<b>2:18:22</b>	2:17:15	<b>2:25:00</b>
2:30:00	0:05:44	0:05:44	0:11:27	0:17:11	<b>0:17:45</b>	0:28:38	0:35:30	0:53:15	<b>0:57:15</b>	1:11:00	1:15:00	1:25:53	<b>1:28:44</b>	1:46:29	1:54:30	2:04:14	<b>2:23:08</b>	2:21:59	<b>2:30:00</b>
2:35:00	0:05:55	0:05:55	0:11:50	0:17:45	<b>0:18:20</b>	0:29:35	0:36:41	0:55:01	<b>0:59:10</b>	1:13:22	1:17:30	1:28:44	<b>1:31:42</b>	1:50:02	1:58:19	2:08:23	<b>2:27:54</b>	2:26:43	<b>2:35:00</b>
2:40:00	0:06:06	0:06:06	0:12:13	0:18:19	<b>0:18:56</b>	0:30:32	0:37:52	0:56:48	<b>1:01:04</b>	1:15:44	1:20:00	1:31:36	<b>1:34:39</b>	1:53:35	2:02:08	2:12:31	<b>2:32:40</b>	2:31:27	<b>2:40:00</b>
2:45:00	0:06:18	0:06:18	0:12:36	0:18:54	<b>0:19:31</b>	0:31:29	0:39:03	0:58:34	<b>1:02:59</b>	1:18:05	1:22:30	1:34:28	<b>1:37:37</b>	1:57:08	2:05:57	2:16:40	<b>2:37:27</b>	2:36:11	<b>2:45:00</b>
2:50:00	0:06:29	0:06:29	0:12:59	0:19:28	<b>0:20:07</b>	0:32:27	0:40:14	1:00:21	<b>1:04:53</b>	1:20:27	1:25:00	1:37:20	<b>1:40:34</b>	2:00:41	2:09:46	2:20:48	<b>2:42:13</b>	2:40:55	<b>2:50:00</b>
2:55:00	0:06:41	0:06:41	0:13:22	0:20:02	<b>0:20:42</b>	0:33:24	0:41:25	1:02:07	<b>1:06:48</b>	1:22:49	1:27:30	1:40:11	<b>1:43:32</b>	2:04:14	2:13:35	2:24:57	<b>2:46:59</b>	2:45:39	<b>2:55:00</b>
3:00:00	0:06:52	0:06:52	0:13:44	0:20:37	<b>0:21:18</b>	0:34:21	0:42:36	1:03:54	<b>1:08:42</b>	1:25:11	1:30:00	1:43:03	<b>1:46:29</b>	2:07:47	2:17:24	2:29:05	<b>2:51:45</b>	2:50:23	<b>3:00:00</b>
3:05:00	0:07:04	0:07:04	0:14:07	0:21:11	<b>0:21:53</b>	0:35:18	0:43:47	1:05:40	<b>1:10:37</b>	1:27:33	1:32:30	1:45:55	<b>1:49:27</b>	2:11:20	2:21:13	2:33:14	<b>2:56:32</b>	2:55:07	<b>3:05:00</b>
3:10:00	0:07:15	0:07:15	0:14:30	0:21:45	<b>0:22:29</b>	0:36:16	0:44:58	1:07:27	<b>1:12:31</b>	1:29:55	1:35:00	1:48:47	<b>1:52:24</b>	2:14:53	2:25:02	2:37:22	<b>3:01:18</b>	2:59:51	<b>3:10:00</b>
3:15:00	0:07:27	0:07:27	0:14:53	0:22:20	<b>0:23:04</b>	0:37:13	0:46:09	1:09:13	<b>1:14:26</b>	1:32:17	1:37:30	1:51:38	<b>1:55:22</b>	2:18:26	2:28:51	2:41:30	<b>3:06:04</b>	3:04:35	<b>3:15:00</b>
3:20:00	0:07:38	0:07:38	0:15:16	0:22:54	<b>0:23:40</b>	0:38:10	0:47:20	1:11:00	<b>1:16:20</b>	1:34:39	1:40:00	1:54:30	<b>1:58:19</b>	2:21:59	2:32:40	2:45:39	<b>3:10:50</b>	3:09:19	<b>3:20:00</b>
3:25:00	0:07:49	0:07:49	0:15:39	0:23:28	<b>0:24:15</b>	0:39:07	0:48:31	1:12:46	<b>1:18:15</b>	1:37:01	1:42:30	1:57:22	<b>2:01:17</b>	2:25:32	2:36:29	2:49:47	<b>3:15:37</b>	3:14:03	<b>3:25:00</b>
3:30:00	0:08:01	0:08:01	0:16:02	0:24:03	<b>0:24:51</b>	0:40:05	0:49:42	1:14:33	<b>1:20:09</b>	1:39:23	1:45:00	2:00:14	<b>2:04:14</b>	2:29:05	2:40:18	2:53:56	<b>3:20:23</b>	3:18:47	<b>3:30:00</b>
3:35:00	0:08:12	0:08:12	0:16:25	0:24:37	<b>0:25:26</b>	0:41:02	0:50:53	1:16:19	<b>1:22:04</b>	1:41:45	1:47:30	2:03:05	<b>2:07:12</b>	2:32:38	2:44:07	2:58:04	<b>3:25:09</b>	3:23:31	<b>3:35:00</b>
3:40:00	0:08:24	0:08:24	0:16:48	0:25:11	<b>0:26:02</b>	0:41:59	0:52:04	1:18:05	<b>1:23:58</b>	1:44:07	1:50:00	2:05:57	<b>2:10:09</b>	2:36:11	2:47:56	3:02:13	<b>3:29:55</b>	3:28:15	<b>3:40:00</b>
3:45:00	0:08:35	0:08:35	0:17:11	0:25:46	<b>0:26:37</b>	0:42:56	0:53:15	1:19:52	<b>1:25:53</b>	1:46:29	1:52:30	2:08:49	<b>2:13:07</b>	2:39:44	2:51:45	3:06:21	<b>3:34:42</b>	3:32:59	<b>3:45:00</b>
3:50:00	0:08:47	0:08:47	0:17:33	0:26:20	<b>0:27:13</b>	0:43:54	0:54:26	1:21:38	<b>1:27:47</b>	1:48:51	1:55:00	2:11:41	<b>2:16:04</b>	2:43:17	2:55:34	3:10:30	<b>3:39:28</b>	3:37:43	<b>3:50:00</b>
3:55:00	0:08:58	0:08:58	0:17:56	0:26:55	<b>0:27:48</b>	0:44:51	0:55:37	1:23:25	<b>1:29:42</b>	1:51:13	1:57:30	2:14:33	<b>2:19:02</b>	2:46:50	2:59:23	3:14:38	<b>3:44:14</b>	3:42:27	<b>3:55:00</b>
4:00:00	0:09:10	0:09:10	0:18:19	0:27:29	<b>0:28:24</b>	0:45:48	0:56:48	1:25:11	<b>1:31:36</b>	1:53:35	2:00:00	2:17:24	<b>2:21:59</b>	2:50:23	3:03:12	3:18:47	<b>3:49:00</b>	3:47:11	<b>4:00:00</b>
4:05:00	0:09:21	0:09:21	0:18:42	0:28:03	<b>0:28:59</b>	0:46:45	0:57:59	1:26:58	<b>1:33:31</b>	1:55:57	2:02:30	2:20:16	<b>2:24:57</b>	2:53:56	3:07:01	3:22:55	<b>3:53:47</b>	3:51:55	<b>4:05:00</b>
4:10:00	0:09:33	0:09:33	0:19:05	0:28:38	<b>0:29:35</b>	0:47:43	0:59:10	1:28:44	<b>1:35:25</b>	1:58:19	2:05:00	2:23:08	<b>2:27:54</b>	2:57:29	3:10:50	3:27:04	<b>3:58:33</b>	3:56:38	<b>4:10:00</b>
4:15:00	0:09:44	0:09:44	0:19:28	0:29:12	<b>0:30:10</b>	0:48:40	1:00:21	1:30:31	<b>1:37:20</b>	2:00:41	2:07:30	2:26:00	<b>2:30:52</b>	3:01:02	3:14:39	3:31:12	<b>4:03:19</b>	4:01:22	<b>4:15:00</b>
4:20:00	0:09:55	0:09:55	0:19:51	0:29:46	<b>0:30:46</b>	0:49:37	1:01:32	1:32:17	<b>1:39:14</b>	2:03:03	2:10:00	2:28:51	<b>2:33:49</b>	3:04:35	3:18:28	3:35:21	<b>4:08:05</b>	4:06:06	<b>4:20:00</b>
4:25:00	0:10:07	0:10:07	0:20:14	0:30:21	<b>0:31:21</b>	0:50:34	1:02:43	1:34:04	<b>1:41:09</b>	2:05:25	2:12:30	2:31:43	<b>2:36:46</b>	3:08:08	3:22:17	3:39:29	<b>4:12:52</b>	4:10:50	<b>4:25:00</b>
4:30:00	0:10:18	0:10:18	0:20:37	0:30:55	<b>0:31:57</b>	0:51:32	1:03:54	1:35:50	<b>1:43:03</b>	2:07:47	2:15:00	2:34:35	<b>2:39:44</b>	3:11:41	3:26:06	3:43:38	<b>4:17:38</b>	4:15:34	<b>4:30:00</b>
4:35:00	0:10:30	0:10:30	0:21:00	0:31:29	<b>0:32:32</b>	0:52:29	1:05:05	1:37:37	<b>1:44:58</b>	2:10:09	2:17:30	2:37:27	<b>2:42:41</b>	3:15:14	3:29:55	3:47:46	<b>4:22:24</b>	4:20:18	<b>4:35:00</b>
4:40:00	0:10:41	0:10:41	0:21:22	0:32:04	<b>0:33:08</b>	0:53:26	1:06:16	1:39:23	<b>1:46:52</b>	2:12:31	2:20:00	2:40:18	<b>2:45:39</b>	3:18:47	3:33:44	3:51:55	<b>4:27:11</b>	4:25:02	<b>4:40:00</b>
4:45:00	0:10:53	0:10:53	0:21:45	0:32:38	<b>0:33:43</b>	0:54:23	1:07:27	1:41:10	<b>1:48:47</b>	2:14:53	2:22:30	2:43:10	<b>2:48:36</b>	3:22:20	3:37:33	3:56:03	<b>4:31:57</b>	4:29:46	<b>4:45:00</b>
4:50:00	0:11:04	0:11:04	0:22:08	0:33:12	<b>0:34:19</b>	0:55:21	1:08:38	1:42:56	<b>1:50:41</b>	2:17:15	2:25:00	2:46:02	<b>2:51:34</b>	3:25:53	3:41:22	4:00:11	<b>4:36:43</b>	4:34:30	<b>4:50:00</b>
4:55:00	0:11:16	0:11:16	0:22:31	0:33:47	<b>0:34:54</b>	0:56:18	1:09:49	1:44:43	<b>1:52:36</b>	2:19:37	2:27:30	2:48:54	<b>2:54:31</b>	3:29:26	3:45:11	4:04:20	<b>4:41:29</b>	4:39:14	<b>4:55:00</b>
5:00:00	0:11:27	0:11:27	0:22:54	0:34:21	<b>0:35:30</b>	0:57:15	1:11:00	1:46:29	<b>1:54:30</b>	2:21:59	2:30:00	2:51:45	<b>2:57:29</b>	3:32:59	3:49:00	4:08:28	<b>4:46:16</b>	4:43:58	<b>5:00:00</b>

# Marathon Pace Chart (min/km)

Finish Time	Avg Pace (min / km)	1 km	2 km	3 km	4 km	5 km	10 km	15 km	20 km	HM	25 km	30 km	35 km	40 km	Finish
2:00:00	0:02:51	0:02:51	0:05:41	0:08:32	0:11:23	<b>0:14:13</b>	0:28:26	0:42:40	0:56:53	1:00:00	<b>1:11:06</b>	1:25:19	1:39:32	1:53:45	<b>2:00:00</b>
2:05:00	0:02:58	0:02:58	0:05:55	0:08:53	0:11:51	<b>0:14:49</b>	0:29:37	0:44:26	0:59:15	1:02:30	<b>1:14:04</b>	1:28:52	1:43:41	1:58:30	<b>2:05:00</b>
2:10:00	0:03:05	0:03:05	0:06:10	0:09:15	0:12:19	<b>0:15:24</b>	0:30:49	0:46:13	1:01:37	1:05:00	<b>1:17:01</b>	1:32:26	1:47:50	2:03:14	<b>2:10:00</b>
2:15:00	0:03:12	0:03:12	0:06:24	0:09:36	0:12:48	<b>0:16:00</b>	0:32:00	0:47:59	1:03:59	1:07:30	<b>1:19:59</b>	1:35:59	1:51:59	2:07:59	<b>2:15:00</b>
2:20:00	0:03:19	0:03:19	0:06:38	0:09:57	0:13:16	<b>0:16:35</b>	0:33:11	0:49:46	1:06:22	1:10:00	<b>1:22:57</b>	1:39:32	1:56:08	2:12:43	<b>2:20:00</b>
2:25:00	0:03:26	0:03:26	0:06:52	0:10:19	0:13:45	<b>0:17:11</b>	0:34:22	0:51:33	1:08:44	1:12:30	<b>1:25:55</b>	1:43:06	2:00:16	2:17:27	<b>2:25:00</b>
2:30:00	0:03:33	0:03:33	0:07:07	0:10:40	0:14:13	<b>0:17:46</b>	0:35:33	0:53:19	1:11:06	1:15:00	<b>1:28:52</b>	1:46:39	2:04:25	2:22:12	<b>2:30:00</b>
2:35:00	0:03:40	0:03:40	0:07:21	0:11:01	0:14:42	<b>0:18:22</b>	0:36:44	0:55:06	1:13:28	1:17:30	<b>1:31:50</b>	1:50:12	2:08:34	2:26:56	<b>2:35:00</b>
2:40:00	0:03:48	0:03:48	0:07:35	0:11:23	0:15:10	<b>0:18:58</b>	0:37:55	0:56:53	1:15:50	1:20:00	<b>1:34:48</b>	1:53:45	2:12:43	2:31:41	<b>2:40:00</b>
2:45:00	0:03:55	0:03:55	0:07:49	0:11:44	0:15:38	<b>0:19:33</b>	0:39:06	0:58:39	1:18:12	1:22:30	<b>1:37:46</b>	1:57:19	2:16:52	2:36:25	<b>2:45:00</b>
2:50:00	0:04:02	0:04:02	0:08:03	0:12:05	0:16:07	<b>0:20:09</b>	0:40:17	1:00:26	1:20:35	1:25:00	<b>1:40:43</b>	2:00:52	2:21:01	2:41:09	<b>2:50:00</b>
2:55:00	0:04:09	0:04:09	0:08:18	0:12:27	0:16:35	<b>0:20:44</b>	0:41:28	1:02:13	1:22:57	1:27:30	<b>1:43:41</b>	2:04:25	2:25:10	2:45:54	<b>2:55:00</b>
3:00:00	0:04:16	0:04:16	0:08:32	0:12:48	0:17:04	<b>0:21:20</b>	0:42:40	1:03:59	1:25:19	1:30:00	<b>1:46:39</b>	2:07:59	2:29:18	2:50:38	<b>3:00:00</b>
3:05:00	0:04:23	0:04:23	0:08:46	0:13:09	0:17:32	<b>0:21:55</b>	0:43:51	1:05:46	1:27:41	1:32:30	<b>1:49:37</b>	2:11:32	2:33:27	2:55:23	<b>3:05:00</b>
3:10:00	0:04:30	0:04:30	0:09:00	0:13:31	0:18:01	<b>0:22:31</b>	0:45:02	1:07:33	1:30:03	1:35:00	<b>1:52:34</b>	2:15:05	2:37:36	3:00:07	<b>3:10:00</b>
3:15:00	0:04:37	0:04:37	0:09:15	0:13:52	0:18:29	<b>0:23:06</b>	0:46:13	1:09:19	1:32:26	1:37:30	<b>1:55:32</b>	2:18:39	2:41:45	3:04:51	<b>3:15:00</b>
3:20:00	0:04:44	0:04:44	0:09:29	0:14:13	0:18:58	<b>0:23:42</b>	0:47:24	1:11:06	1:34:48	1:40:00	<b>1:58:30</b>	2:22:12	2:45:54	3:09:36	<b>3:20:00</b>
3:25:00	0:04:52	0:04:52	0:09:43	0:14:35	0:19:26	<b>0:24:18</b>	0:48:35	1:12:53	1:37:10	1:42:30	<b>2:01:28</b>	2:25:45	2:50:03	3:14:20	<b>3:25:00</b>
3:30:00	0:04:59	0:04:59	0:09:57	0:14:56	0:19:54	<b>0:24:53</b>	0:49:46	1:14:39	1:39:32	1:45:00	<b>2:04:25</b>	2:29:18	2:54:11	3:19:05	<b>3:30:00</b>
3:35:00	0:05:06	0:05:06	0:10:11	0:15:17	0:20:23	<b>0:25:29</b>	0:50:57	1:16:26	1:41:54	1:47:30	<b>2:07:23</b>	2:32:52	2:58:20	3:23:49	<b>3:35:00</b>
3:40:00	0:05:13	0:05:13	0:10:26	0:15:38	0:20:51	<b>0:26:04</b>	0:52:08	1:18:12	1:44:17	1:50:00	<b>2:10:21</b>	2:36:25	3:02:29	3:28:33	<b>3:40:00</b>
3:45:00	0:05:20	0:05:20	0:10:40	0:16:00	0:21:20	<b>0:26:40</b>	0:53:19	1:19:59	1:46:39	1:52:30	<b>2:13:19</b>	2:39:58	3:06:38	3:33:18	<b>3:45:00</b>
3:50:00	0:05:27	0:05:27	0:10:54	0:16:21	0:21:48	<b>0:27:15</b>	0:54:31	1:21:46	1:49:01	1:55:00	<b>2:16:16</b>	2:43:32	3:10:47	3:38:02	<b>3:50:00</b>
3:55:00	0:05:34	0:05:34	0:11:08	0:16:42	0:22:17	<b>0:27:51</b>	0:55:42	1:23:32	1:51:23	1:57:30	<b>2:19:14</b>	2:47:05	3:14:56	3:42:47	<b>3:55:00</b>
4:00:00	0:05:41	0:05:41	0:11:23	0:17:04	0:22:45	<b>0:28:26</b>	0:56:53	1:25:19	1:53:45	2:00:00	<b>2:22:12</b>	2:50:38	3:19:05	3:47:31	<b>4:00:00</b>
4:05:00	0:05:48	0:05:48	0:11:37	0:17:25	0:23:14	<b>0:29:02</b>	0:58:04	1:27:06	1:56:08	2:02:30	<b>2:25:10</b>	2:54:11	3:23:13	3:52:15	<b>4:05:00</b>
4:10:00	0:05:55	0:05:55	0:11:51	0:17:46	0:23:42	<b>0:29:37</b>	0:59:15	1:28:52	1:58:30	2:05:00	<b>2:28:07</b>	2:57:45	3:27:22	3:57:00	<b>4:10:00</b>
4:15:00	0:06:03	0:06:03	0:12:05	0:18:08	0:24:10	<b>0:30:13</b>	1:00:26	1:30:39	2:00:52	2:07:30	<b>2:31:05</b>	3:01:18	3:31:31	4:01:44	<b>4:15:00</b>
4:20:00	0:06:10	0:06:10	0:12:19	0:18:29	0:24:39	<b>0:30:49</b>	1:01:37	1:32:26	2:03:14	2:10:00	<b>2:34:03</b>	3:04:51	3:35:40	4:06:28	<b>4:20:00</b>
4:25:00	0:06:17	0:06:17	0:12:34	0:18:50	0:25:07	<b>0:31:24</b>	1:02:48	1:34:12	2:05:36	2:12:30	<b>2:37:01</b>	3:08:25	3:39:49	4:11:13	<b>4:25:00</b>
4:30:00	0:06:24	0:06:24	0:12:48	0:19:12	0:25:36	<b>0:32:00</b>	1:03:59	1:35:59	2:07:59	2:15:00	<b>2:39:58</b>	3:11:58	3:43:58	4:15:57	<b>4:30:00</b>
4:35:00	0:06:31	0:06:31	0:13:02	0:19:33	0:26:04	<b>0:32:35</b>	1:05:10	1:37:46	2:10:21	2:17:30	<b>2:42:56</b>	3:15:31	3:48:06	4:20:42	<b>4:35:00</b>
4:40:00	0:06:38	0:06:38	0:13:16	0:19:54	0:26:33	<b>0:33:11</b>	1:06:22	1:39:32	2:12:43	2:20:00	<b>2:45:54</b>	3:19:05	3:52:15	4:25:26	<b>4:40:00</b>
4:45:00	0:06:45	0:06:45	0:13:31	0:20:16	0:27:01	<b>0:33:46</b>	1:07:33	1:41:19	2:15:05	2:22:30	<b>2:48:52</b>	3:22:38	3:56:24	4:30:10	<b>4:45:00</b>
4:50:00	0:06:52	0:06:52	0:13:45	0:20:37	0:27:29	<b>0:34:22</b>	1:08:44	1:43:06	2:17:27	2:25:00	<b>2:51:49</b>	3:26:11	4:00:33	4:34:55	<b>4:50:00</b>
4:55:00	0:06:59	0:06:59	0:13:59	0:20:58	0:27:58	<b>0:34:57</b>	1:09:55	1:44:52	2:19:50	2:27:30	<b>2:54:47</b>	3:29:44	4:04:42	4:39:39	<b>4:55:00</b>
5:00:00	0:07:07	0:07:07	0:14:13	0:21:20	0:28:26	<b>0:35:33</b>	1:11:06	1:46:39	2:22:12	2:30:00	<b>2:57:45</b>	3:33:18	4:08:51	4:44:24	<b>5:00:00</b>

# Six Components of a Great Marathon Plan

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Learning the factors for success is one thing, but we also need to know how to address them in training. Here are my seven components of a great training plan for a long race.

## #1) Sustainable & Consistent Mileage with Down Weeks

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I'm a fan of stacking successful week on top of successful week. The only way to do that is to select a training plan that is sustainable so you can be consistent. Too often, runners select a plan that will only fit into their lives when everything goes perfectly. How often does that happen? Hardly ever. That's why I like runners to select a training plan where the training load has some "wiggle room" meaning that they can still accomplish the training even if "life happens." That's why I have **different levels of plans** so you can find the one that best fits your life.

Additionally, a great plan must have flexibility so you can adjust it based on how you're feeling and your life schedule. In my plans, I always provide a range for the volume (mileage), intensity and frequency (# of days per week) so you can adjust as necessary. Further, I empower my athletes to adjust.

**Here is more on the concept of adjusting based on how you are feeling.** As you get more comfortable adjusting your plan, you'll see injuries decrease and the quality of your running soar.

*Lastly, a smart training plan will have “down weeks” every third or fourth week. A down week is a reduction in training load by 15-25% to allow the musculoskeletal system to recover and for the mind to recharge before the next training block.*

My plans allow down weeks and the result has been a huge reduction in injuries and much higher quality training. That's a win-win that has been part of my secret to success. **Here is my video on down weeks.**

## #2) Long Runs

It goes without saying that a proper plan for a long race needs long runs. Remember, you need long runs 1) to fatigue the leg muscles (to address leg durability), 2) to learn to burn more fat and spare your limited carbohydrate stores (and to increase the carbohydrate stores), 3) practice fueling and 4) to expose the brain to suffering from running for hours and hours – all related to the factors of success mentioned earlier. Due to its importance, I have several articles and videos linked in the resources section below – **but here is a good one to start with.**

In my plans, I like to build up the long runs at a safe rate while taking a “down” or step back week every 3rd or 4th week so the body can recover. Building up then reducing the long run to a shorter level in this way has greatly reduced the injury rate in my runners.

Then, once we get to 8-10 weeks before the race, I begin to alternate a regular long run (run at an easy effort with the goal of just covering the distance/time) with fast finish long runs, where you run the middle/late stages of the run at goal pace and then try to run the last 10-15 minutes as fast as you can. These fast finish long runs are my secret to racing success as they give you lots of practice at running fast while suffering. That's exactly what you'll face in the race so getting used to it in small doses in training is very helpful.



### #3) Goal Pace Workouts

A great training plan includes goal pace workouts. Grooving your goal pace keeps you from going too fast too early in the race. Plus, goal pace workouts make you more economical at it. Plus, your brain learns what goal pace feels like when you are fresh at the start of a run as well as when you are fatigued later in a run.

*My plans include a sequence of goal pace workouts that start with short, easily accomplishable goal pace workouts and build and build across the training so that by the time you get to the race, you really have goal pace dialed in and know with confidence that you can achieve your goal.*

(And if your goal pace workouts aren't going well, you'll know to adjust your expectations so you can still have a positive race.)

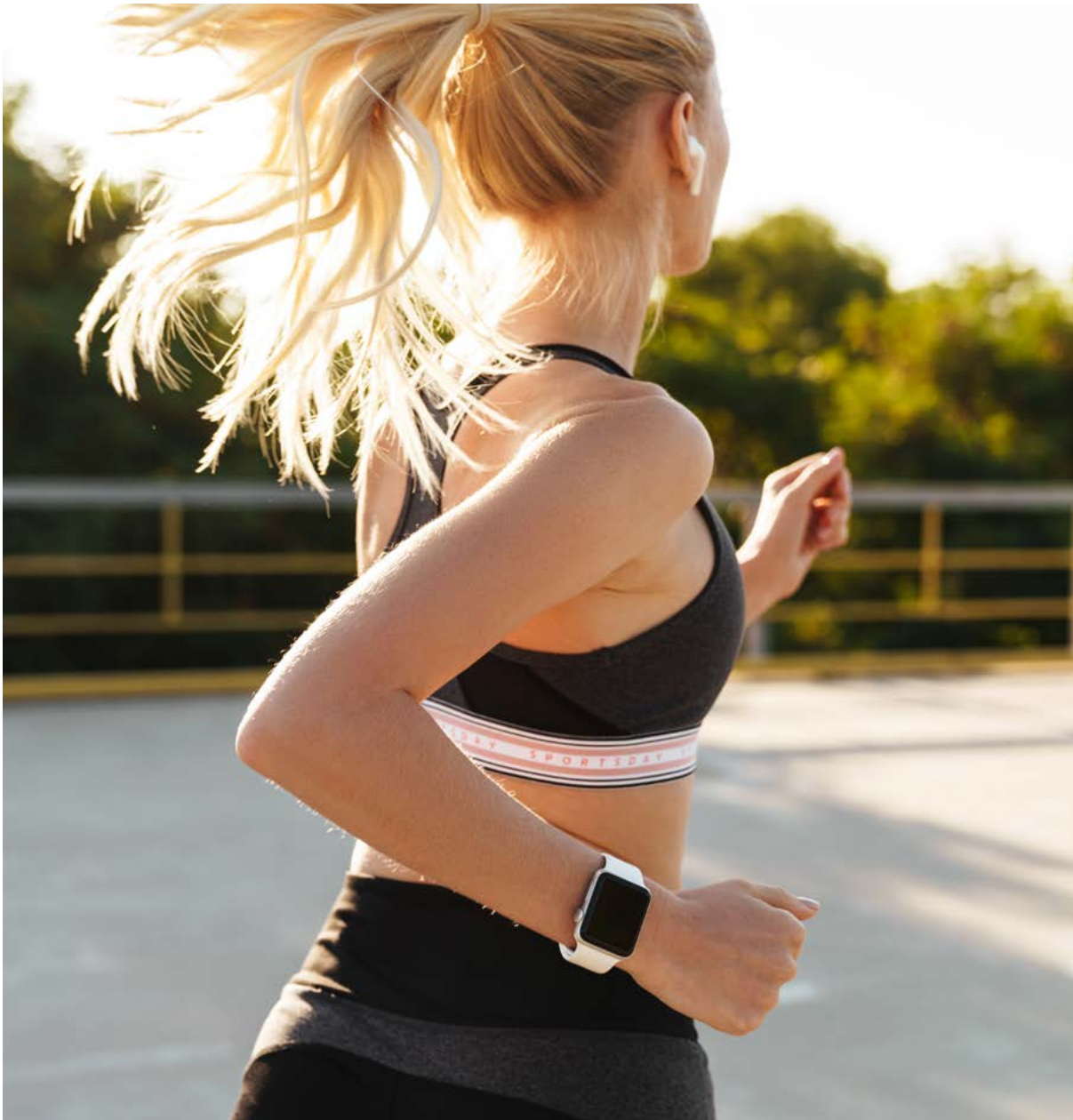
After entering your information into the **marathon pace calculator**, you'll see the Race Pace Workouts section where you can see examples of the types of goal workouts, I recommend you include in your training plan if you aren't using one of my plans.

### #4) Workout Variety

Another aspect to a great plan is variety in workouts. I never like plans that simply repeat the same workout(s) week after week. I feel the body and mind get stale. Instead, I like to have lots of variety in workouts – some that challenge your stamina, some that challenge your speed, some your hill running and some that challenge your running form.

Not only does a variety in workouts keep the training fun, but they make goal pace feel easier. And we know that doing faster workouts improves your running economy. It's a win-win-win.

*After entering your information into the [McMillanRunning.com](https://www.mcmillanrunning.com) calculator, you'll see the Recommended Workouts section where you can see examples of the types of workouts, I recommend you include in your training plan if you aren't using one of my plans.*



## #5) Practice Fueling

I mentioned that fueling was one of the factors for success so a great training plan must have opportunities to practice your fueling. Dial it in in training so that on race day you can be on auto pilot and just execute what you've learned has worked. My plans include multiple dress rehearsals for the race where you will practice your fueling (as well as pace, gear, etc.). The better rehearsed you are, the better race day will go.

## #6) Prehab

Don't get hurt. I'm going to say it again. Don't get hurt. A few years ago, I made it my mission to reduce running injuries. If you've seen any of the research, it shows that 50-80% of runners get injured every training cycle to the point that it interrupts their training. That's unacceptable. As a result, I not only created plans that better fit into runner's lives and how they are feeling, but my plans include your prehab (core, strength and mobility) routines. The combination of these smarter, more flexible training plans -plus the prehab routines- resulted in a reduction in the injury rate for athletes using McMillan plans by 80%!

I'm really proud of that, as there is nothing worse than a runner who can't run. I never want you to be the fittest spectator at your goal race. With **my plans**, you'll get to the starting line healthy and the finish line faster.

# Sample Marathon Training Plan

Week	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	OFF, XT or 30-45 min	PR: 70-90 min w/last 15-25 min fast	50-70 min	SP: 12-16 x 400m w/ 200m jog	OFF, XT or 40-60 min	50-70 min	GPLR: 14-20 MI w/ Optional last 4-6 MI at marathon GP
2	OFF, XT or 30-45 min	FR: 12-15 x 1min w/ 1 min jog	50-70 min	SP: 6-8 x 800m w/ 400m jog	OFF, XT or 40-60 min	50-70 min	LR: 16-20 MI
3	OFF, XT or 30-45 min	FR: 80-100 min w/ Optional 8-10 x 1 min w/ 1 min jog	50-70 min	CL: 8-10 x 1000m w/ 200m jog	OFF, XT or 40-60 min	50-70 min	LR: 16-22 MI
4 DW	OFF, XT or 20-30 min	LS: 40-50 min w/ Optional 8-10 x 100m w/ 100m jog	40-50 min	GP: 6-8 MI	OFF, XT or 40-60 min	40-50 min	3rdsPR: 90-105 min
5	OFF, XT or 30-45 min	FR: 80-100 min w/ Optional 4-5 x 2 min w/ 1min jog	50-70 min	Yasso 800s: 8-10 x 800m	OFF, XT or 40-60 min	50-70 min	CHOICE: LR or SQLR 18-24 MI
6	OFF, XT or 30-45 min	FR: 12-15 x 1 min w/ 1 min jog	50-70 min	TR: 20-30 min	OFF, XT or 40-60 min	50-70 min	FFLR: 16-20 MI w/ last 6-8 MI at marathon GP w/ fast finish or RACE: 10KM-13.1MI
7	OFF, XT or 30-45 min	FR: 12-15 x 1 min w/ 1 min jog	50-70 min	GP: 8-10 MI	OFF, XT or 40-60 min	50-70 min	CHOICE: LR or SQLR 22-26 MI
8 DW	OFF, XT or 20-30 min	LS: 40-50 min w/ Optional 8-10 x 100m w/ 100m jog	40-50 min	Yasso 800s: 8-10 x 800m	OFF, XT or 40-60 min	40-50 min	FFLR: 16-20 MI w/ last 6-8 MI at marathon GP w/ fast finish or RACE: 10KM-13.1MI
9	OFF, XT or 30-45 min	80-100 min	50-70 min	GP: 10-12 MI	OFF, XT or 40-60 min	50-70 min	CHOICE: LR, SQLR or PCLR 22-28 MI
10	OFF, XT or 30-45 min	FR: 12-15 x 1 min w/ 1 min jog	50-70 min	Ti: 3 x 1600m w/ 3 min jog	OFF, XT or 40-60 min	30-40 min	FFLR: 14-18 MI w/ last 6-8 MI at marathon GP w/ fast finish or RACE: 10KM-13.1MI
11 Peak	OFF, XT or 20-30 min	FR: 8-10 x 1 min w/ 1 min jog	30-40 min	TR: 20-30 min	OFF, XT or 30-40 min	30-40 min	GPLR: 12 MI w/ last 6 MI at marathon GP
12 Peak	OFF, XT or 20-30 min	LS: 8-10 x 25 sec w/ 1min jog	Cl: 4-5 x 1000m w/ 200m jog	30 min	OFF, XT or 20 min	20 min	RACE: Marathon

# Key Marathon Training Plan

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<b>3rdsPR</b>	3rds Progression Run
<b>CI</b>	Cruise Intervals
<b>DW</b>	Down Weak
<b>FFLR</b>	Fast Finish Long Run
<b>FR</b>	Fartlek Run
<b>GP</b>	Goal Pace
<b>GPLR</b>	Goal Pace Long Run
<b>Hills</b>	Hill Workout
<b>KM</b>	Kilometers
<b>LS</b>	Leg Speed
<b>LR</b>	Long Run
<b>m</b>	Meters
<b>MI</b>	Miles
<b>min</b>	Minutes
<b>OFF</b>	No exercise
<b>PCLR</b>	Pace Change Long Run
<b>PR</b>	Progression Run
<b>sec</b>	Seconds
<b>SP</b>	Speed Workout
<b>SQLR</b>	Squires Long Run
<b>SS</b>	Steady State Run
<b>TI</b>	Tempo Intervals
<b>TR</b>	Tempo Run
<b>TT</b>	Time Trial
<b>XT</b>	Cross-Training

# Final Thoughts

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I know you can run a fast marathon. It just takes a smart plan that allows flexibility along with prehab training so you stay healthy. My plans provide both along with a fun dose of variety and just the right amount of brain training to keep the training exciting and build a brain that helps you get the most from yourself on race day. I look forward to working with you!



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