



## MARATHON - QUEST FOR IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

If you have questions regarding any of the training programs feel free to contact Bruce Deacon by email at [CoachBruce@runvictoriamarathon.com](mailto:CoachBruce@runvictoriamarathon.com).

### Aerobic Conditioning

This period lasts for a total of 9 weeks. The objective of this portion of the training program is to develop a sound base of aerobic running by gradually increasing the mileage of the major long run each week and the amount of time run on other days. In this program the long run is placed on the Sunday, of each week. However, this can be modified to suit your schedule.

Aerobic running means you should exercise between 65 and 75% of your maximum aerobic effort. This is not Long Slow Distance - it is more like Long STEADY Distance. This is running at a good effort and finishing each run feeling pleasantly tired. All running, except for the tempo runs, during this period should be aerobic running (30-40 seconds per kilometre slower than goal pace). You should not get to the point that you are gasping for air and having difficulty maintaining your running pace. When running, you should not be so out of breath that you cannot carry on a conversation with your running buddy.

### 20 Weeks to Go (May 26, 2023)

- **Sunday:** 1:15 steady at 30-45 seconds/km slower than marathon pace
- **Monday:** Day off
- **Tuesday:** 40 minutes
- **Wednesday:** 50 minutes
- **Thursday:** 60 minutes
- **Friday:** Rest or up to 30 minutes
- **Saturday:** 40 minutes including 8 x 100m [relaxed strides](#) with 100m of jogging between each stride

### 19 Weeks to Go

- **Sunday:** 18 km steady at 30-45 seconds/km slower than marathon pace
- **Monday:** Day off
- **Tuesday:** 60 minutes
- **Wednesday:** 45 minutes
- **Thursday:** 30-40 minutes
- **Friday:** Day off
- **Saturday:** 60 minutes including 8 x 100m [relaxed strides](#) with 100m of jogging between each stride or 30 minutes if racing tomorrow

### 18 Weeks to Go

- **Sunday:** 20km steady at 30-45 seconds/km slower than marathon pace
- **Monday:** Day off
- **Tuesday:** 50 minutes
- **Wednesday:** 20 minutes easy warm up, 20 minutes @ the pace of your last marathon, 10 minutes cool down
- **Thursday:** 65 minutes
- **Friday:** Rest day or 30 minutes easy
- **Saturday:** 45 minutes including 10 x 100m [relaxed strides](#)



## 17 Weeks to Go

### **Recovery Week**

This is the first of a number of recovery weeks during this training program. The recovery weeks are inserted into the program to allow you an easier week to recover from the previous two intense weeks, and to give some rest in preparation for the more intense training that will come in the weeks that follow. Treat recovery weeks as a reward for the hard work you have put in to date. Try to get some more sleep than normal. Pamper yourself with a hot tub, massage, or Epsom salt soak.

- **Sunday:** 16 km steady at 30-45 seconds/km slower than marathon pace
- **Monday:** Day off
- **Tuesday:** 30-45 minutes
- **Wednesday:** 45 including 10 x 100m [relaxed strides](#)
- **Thursday:** 30-45 minutes
- **Friday:** Day off
- **Saturday:** 45 minutes

## 16 Weeks to Go

- **Sunday:** The lesser of 22 km or 2:20 steady at 30-45 seconds/km slower than marathon pace
- **Monday:** Day off
- **Tuesday:** 45 minutes
- **Wednesday:** 20 minutes easy warm up jog; 6 sets of 2' @ 10k effort/1 minute jog; 10 minutes easy cool down jog
- **Thursday:** 45 minutes
- **Friday:** Rest day or 30 minutes easy/cross training
- **Saturday:** 45 minutes including 10 x 100m [relaxed strides](#)

## 15 Weeks to Go

- **Sunday:** The lesser of 24 km or 2:40 steady at 30-45 seconds/km slower than marathon pace
- **Monday:** Day off
- **Tuesday:** 45 minutes
- **Wednesday:** 20 minutes of easy warm up jog; 20 minute [out-and-back tempo](#) running first 10 minutes at marathon goal effort, and the last 10 minutes slightly slower than 10k effort; 10 minutes easy cool down jog
- **Thursday:** 45 minutes
- **Friday:** Rest day or 30 minutes easy/cross training
- **Saturday:** 50 minutes including 10 x 100m [relaxed strides](#)

## 14 Weeks to Go

### **Recovery Week**

- **Sunday:** 18 km steady at 30-45 seconds/km slower than marathon pace
- **Monday:** Day off
- **Tuesday:** 30-40 minutes
- **Wednesday:** 45 minutes including 12 x 100m [relaxed strides](#)
- **Thursday:** 30-40 minutes
- **Friday:** Day off
- **Saturday:** 30 minutes



### 13 Weeks to Go

- **Sunday:** The lesser of 26 km steady or 2:55 at 30-45 seconds/km slower than marathon pace
- **Monday:** Day off or easy jog
- **Tuesday:** 50 minutes easy
- **Wednesday:** 15 minutes easy warm up jog, 30 minutes at marathon goal pace, 15 minutes easy warm down jog
- **Thursday:** 55 minutes
- **Friday:** Rest day or 30 minutes easy/cross training
- **Saturday:** 50 minutes including 10 x 100m [relaxed strides](#)

### 12 Weeks to Go

- **Sunday:** The lesser of 28 km or 3:10 steady at 30-45 seconds/km slower than marathon pace
- **Monday:** Day off
- **Tuesday:** 45 minutes
- **Wednesday:** 15 minutes easy warm up; 30 minutes [out-and-back tempo](#), 15 minutes easy warm down
- **Thursday:** 60 minutes
- **Friday:** Rest day or 30 minutes easy/cross training
- **Saturday:** 40 minutes

### 11 Weeks to Go

#### **Aerobic Capacity Phase Begins**

The term aerobic literally means “with oxygen”. When we speak of aerobic running, we mean running at a moderate intensity that allows your body to use oxygen to burn both glycogen and fats for fuel. Simply put, if you want to burn fats, you need to run aerobically. As marathoners, we will need to access this important fuel source, because even the leanest of us have more than enough fat to finish multiple marathons.

The opposite of aerobic running is anaerobic running. This is when the intensity of your exercise exceeds your oxygen capacity and your body burns glycogen in the absence of oxygen. A 400 meter sprinter would rely on anaerobic fuel sources in their races, but a marathoner would run entirely aerobically. The faster the pace you can run aerobically without relying on anaerobic energy systems, the better the distance runner you will be.

The Aerobic Capacity Phase is designed to help increase the pace at which you can run aerobically. It is done in two ways:

- 1) We increase the duration of our long runs to help us become more efficient at burning fats; and,
- 2) We focus on running at the high ends of our aerobic zone.
  - **Sunday:** 16 km steady at 30-45 seconds/km slower than marathon pace
  - **Monday:** Day off
  - **Tuesday:** 45 minutes
  - **Wednesday:** 20 minutes easy warm up; 6 X 4 minutes at 8 km pace with 2 minutes rest; 10 minutes easy cool down
  - **Thursday:** 60 minutes
  - **Friday:** Rest day or 30 minutes easy/cross training
  - **Saturday:** 50 minutes including 8 x 100m [relaxed strides](#)



## 10 Weeks to Go

- **Sunday:** The lesser of 30 km or 3:25 steady at 30-45 seconds/km slower than marathon pace. Remember to hydrate along the way and to consume 300 calories of carbohydrates and proteins within 15 minutes of finishing your run and a full meal within 2 hours
- **Monday:** Day off
- **Tuesday:** 40 minutes
- **Wednesday:** 20 minutes easy warm up; 4 minutes at 10k pace, 2 minutes jog rest, 6 minutes at 10k pace, 2 minutes jog rest, 8 minutes at 10k pace, 2 minutes jog rest, 4X 1 minute at 5 k pace with 1 minute between each; 10 minute easy cool down
- **Thursday:** 65 minutes
- **Friday:** Rest day or 30 minutes easy/cross training
- **Saturday:** 60 minutes including 12 x 100m [relaxed strides](#)

## 9 Weeks to Go

Note: This is a particularly hard week. Make sure to take care of yourself by getting extra sleep, eating well, and staying well hydrated. If it is hot, run in the early morning or evening.

- **Sunday:** The lesser of 32 km or 3:35 steady at 30-45 seconds/km slower than marathon pace. Remember to hydrate along the way and to consume 300 calories of carbohydrates and proteins within 15 minutes of finishing your run and a full meal within 2 hours
- **Monday:** Day off
- **Tuesday:** 40 minutes
- **Wednesday:** 20 minutes easy warm up; 20 minute [out-and-back tempo](#) run at 10 km effort; 20 minute easy cool down
- **Thursday:** 80 minutes
- **Friday:** 30 minutes or day off
- **Saturday:** 40 minutes including 8 x 100m [relaxed strides](#)

## 8 Weeks to Go

### Recovery Week

- **Sunday:** 18 km steady at 30-45 seconds/km slower than marathon pace
- **Monday:** Day off
- **Tuesday:** 45 minutes
- **Wednesday:** 20 minutes easy warm up; 4 sets of 4 minutes at 10 km pace, 60 seconds rest, 2 minutes at 5 km pace with 3 minutes jog between sets, 20 minutes easy cool down.
- **Thursday:** 40 minutes
- **Friday:** Rest day or 30 minutes easy/cross training
- **Saturday:** 30 minutes including 8 x 100m [relaxed strides](#)

## 7 Weeks to Go

### Marathon Specific Training

The next phase is what I refer to as marathon specific training. The object is to get used to running at your marathon goal pace. Remembering that this is a pace that you intend to hold for over two and a half hours, it tempo runs at marathon pace should feel comfortably quick. If you are struggling to keep your marathon pace it means one of 4 things:

- 1) You are still tired from your recent workouts. Take two days off of running. It is important at this stage to run quality and to learn how to relax while running fast. If you are too tired to do that,



then you **MUST** respect your body's need for more rest. Many good marathons are lost by pushing too hard at this phase.

- 2) You are coming down with a virus. Inability to hold a pace you should be able to run can mean that you are on the verge of getting sick. Don't be a hero!
- 3) You might not be fit enough to run your goal pace. Perhaps your goal is too ambitious. Maybe you have lost some time due to sickness or injury. Reconsider your race goals and adjust your time accordingly.
- 4) You might just have a bad day. You can write off a bad workout, but if this happens more than once, examine the other 3 possibilities.

It is **CRITICAL** to pace yourself well. We will be starting to add marathon pace sections to your long runs. It is so easy to get carried away and to turn your long runs into races by not returning back to the easy pace after the marathon pace section. Many a good marathon is lost like this!! Respect the paces. The entire object is to learn to run relax and not straining at your marathon pace.

- **Sunday:** Marathon tempo, 30 minutes steady, 2 sets of 30 minutes at marathon goal pace with 5 minutes jog recovery, 30 minutes easy.
- **Monday:** Day off
- **Tuesday:** 50 minutes easy
- **Wednesday:** 15 minutes, 15 minutes at marathon pace, 3 minute jog recovery, 10 minutes continuous of 200m uphill at 10k effort, 200m downhill at marathon effort, 10 minutes easy cool down (note: choose a gradual uphill that is not too steep)
- **Thursday:** 70 minutes
- **Friday:** Rest day or 30 minutes easy/cross training
- **Saturday:** 30-40 minutes easy

### **6 Weeks to Go**

#### **Recovery Week**

- **Sunday:** 30 minutes easy, 3 sets of 30 minutes at marathon pace on rolling pavement with 5 minutes jog recovery, 10 minutes easy
- **Monday:** Day off
- **Tuesday:** 30 minutes easy.
- **Wednesday:** 20 minutes easy warm up, 3X 4 minutes at 10 km effort on rolling terrain with 2 minutes rest, 15 minutes easy cool down
- **Thursday:** 50 minutes
- **Friday:** 30 minutes
- **Saturday:** Day off

### **5 Weeks to Go**

- **Sunday:** 2 hours run as: 15 minutes easy, 30 minutes at marathon pace, 5 minutes easy, 20 minutes at half marathon pace, 10 minutes easy, 30 minutes at marathon pace, 10 easy,

**\*\*Make sure that you slow down dramatically on the easy sections. Otherwise, you run the risk of leaving your best running in training.**

or 8k warm up, half marathon race, 3k cool down

- **Monday:** Day off
- **Tuesday:** 30 minutes



- **Wednesday:** 20 minutes easy warm up; 10 minutes at 10 km effort, 5 minutes jog, 5 minutes at 10k effort, 5 minutes jog, 5 minutes at 10k effort, 10 minutes easy cool down
- **Thursday:** 50 minutes
- **Friday:** 30 minutes easy
- **Saturday:** 30 minutes easy

#### 4 Weeks to Go

- **Sunday:** The lesser of 34 km or 3:35 at 30-40 seconds/km slower than marathon pace. RUN CONTROLLED. Don't waste your marathon effort today...save it for 3 weeks! Note, we are going to limit our long runs to 3:35 because we get into diminishing benefits and increasing wear on your immune system.
- **Monday:** Day off
- **Tuesday:** 30 minutes easy
- **Wednesday:** 45 minutes
- **Thursday:** 20 minutes easy warm up, 40 minutes at marathon pace on hilly route, 5 minute jog recovery, 5 minutes at 5 km, 20 minutes cool down
- **Friday:** 30 minutes easy
- **Saturday:** 60 minutes including 8 x 100m [relaxed strides](#)

#### 3 Weeks to Go

##### **Sharpening and Tapering**

As we enter the last phase of the training, we are going to be cutting back on our mileage and emphasizing rest and speed. Of course as marathoners, speed is a relative term. The idea isn't to become a sprinter, but rather to refresh our nervous system to faster paces after the marathon specific training. This will help us be more efficient at race pace. The primary goal is to rest enough to arrive feeling healthy and fresh on race day.

- **Sunday:** The lesser of 24km or 2:25 steady aerobic running or race
- **Monday:** Day off
- **Tuesday:** 30 minutes
- **Wednesday:** 15 minutes easy warm up, 12 X 1 minute at 5k pace/1 minute easy jogging, 15 minutes easy cool down
- **Thursday:** 65 minutes
- **Friday:** 30 minutes
- **Saturday:** 40 minutes including 12 x 100m [relaxed strides](#)

#### 2 Weeks to Go

##### **Taper**

- **Sunday:** 18 km steady aerobic running - last long run
- **Monday:** Day off
- **Tuesday:** 40 minutes.
- **Wednesday:** 20 minutes easy warm up, 8X 2 minutes at 5 km pace with 90 seconds jogging between each, 10 minutes easy cool down
- **Thursday:** 30 minutes
- **Friday:** Rest day...no running
- **Saturday:** 40 minutes including 6 x 100m [relaxed strides](#)



## **RACE WEEK!!**

- **Sunday:** 60 minutes.
- **Monday:** Day off.
- **Tuesday:** 35 minutes.
- **Wednesday:** 30 minutes with 10 minutes at marathon pace.
- **Thursday:** Day off.
- **Friday:** 20 minutes.
- **Saturday:** 10 minute jog including 3 relaxed strides.
- **Sunday: RACE DAY!**

The main objective during this week is to combine gentle running with lots of relaxation. Many of you will have an idea of what will work for you in the final days prior to the race. However, we are all governed by the same physiological constraints...nothing but rest will help you at this stage. Last minute workouts or an extra hour run will not help. The only thing that will help you run faster now is arriving at the start line all rested up and ready to go. Here you go - you've done the work! Your medal is waiting for you!