



## **A Training Plan for the Country Music Half-Marathon**

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### **Overview**

Walking or running a half marathon is a challenging endeavor. It can also be a rewarding accomplishment, especially if you are well trained for the event and if you have a great race. This training plan is designed to help you make the most out of this great experience. If your goal is to walk or run a half-marathon, there are some important things you should know before training for this event.

- First, choose the actual race in which you want to participate (Country Music Half-Marathon is in Late April).
- Second, plan on training for 16 weeks prior to the race date.

This plan will give you tips on clothing, hydration, nutrition, and strength training as well as a 16 week training plan that will have you ready for the race of your life!

**If you are over the age of 40 and not accustomed to vigorous activity and/or have a medical condition please check with your Physician before starting a workout program.**

Let's get started.

### **Clothing**

Wear clothing made of wicking material that will hold the warmth in, while removing moisture from the body. Most running-related stores carry these types of clothing. Merino wool and Gore-tex are two good materials for this purpose.

Layering with these materials is also helpful in keeping the body warm during 30-45 minutes walks or jogs. On cold days, be sure and keep the head and hands covered.

An important consideration is how much to wear. Your body temperature will rise to a little over 100 degrees Fahrenheit during exercise, so dress in such a way that you can remove layers as you warm up. Good weather conditions for a long walk/run would be temperatures in the high 40's to low 50's with overcast skies.

As the days grow longer and late April approaches, you will not need as much warm weather clothing as you do in January and February. Late April in Nashville tends to be warm and humid, so warm clothing is usually not appropriate. Check with a salesperson at any running store to discuss the best clothing options for you. Avoid cotton as it will hold in moisture and you will be wet and cold in not time, which is uncomfortable and could lead to hypothermia.

## **Hydration**

Stay properly hydrated each day.

Many people are under the impression, that hydration is not as important while training in the colder temperatures. This is not correct. You will sweat because you are burning calories/fuel.

Fluid in the blood transports glucose to the muscles and carries away lactic acid. Sweat dissipates heat by way of the skin. Nancy Clark, MS, RD, CSSD, recommends drinking fluids to the point where you urinate every two to four hours throughout the day.

Remember fluid not only comes from drinking water. You can drink juice, sports drinks, and eat watery foods such as yogurt, oranges, and melon to increase fluid intake.

After a hard endurance race or workout, drink fluids to quench your thirst. A good drink for carbohydrate replacement and protein to repair muscles is low-fat skim chocolate milk. Drink 12 to 20 ounces after the workout to enhance recovery and reduce soreness. Sports drinks are another fluid replacement drink that aid in recovery.

## **Nutrition**

The foods we eat are important to our overall health and provide energy for a physically active lifestyle. What does healthy eating look like? Healthy eating:

- Emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products;
- Includes lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs, and nuts; and
- Is low in saturated fats, *trans* fats, cholesterol, salt (sodium), and added sugars.

The following website is a great tool for calculating/reviewing your daily food recommendations based on age, gender and activity level: <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/>. Monitoring your weight throughout training is one way to know if this recommended daily amount is adequate.

Early in training, you may need to eat only the recommended daily amounts of food. As you increase in intensity and endurance, you may need to add calories to your daily food intake to prevent unwanted weight loss and provide the energy needed for the training.

Approximately 590 calories are needed for each hour of running/jogging at the rate of 5 miles per hour. Added calories should come from increasing high-quality carbohydrates such as whole grains, breads, pastas and fruits to about 60% of calories each day to help replenish the

glycogen stored in your muscles and used for energy. You can get additional carbohydrates by adding more starches and grains and avoiding less fatty, greasy food.

### **Strength Training**

Strength or resistance training is an important component for any person whether they are a recreational or professional athlete. During exercise, the muscles can begin to break down even when properly fueled. Weight training will help you.

Strong muscles not only aid in movement, but also improve posture and appearance. Running a half-marathon is a tiring event, so having good muscle development will aid in the movement from start to finish. A strength training program should include high repetition, low weight exercises. Work the muscle groups that are not directly involved with the walk/run movement such as the arms, chest, back, shoulders and abdominals.

- Perform 8-10 separate exercises that train the major muscle groups i.e. chest, core muscles (rectus abdominus, erector spinae, multifidus, internal and external obliques, transverse abdominus, hip flexors, gluteals, hip adductors) arms, back, shoulders.
- Do 1-3 sets of each exercise.
- Perform each exercise 8-12 repetitions.
- Do resistance work on days you do not walk/jog.
- Be sure and do these with a full range of motion.

For assistance in a weight training plan, visit the [Vanderbilt Recreation and Wellness Center \(VRWC\) website](#) to schedule an appointment for a Fitness Evaluation with a VRWC Fitness Associate.

### **Walk/Run Plan**

Now we get to the plan for getting you from point A to point B as efficiently and comfortably as possible.

Walking/running 13.1 miles is not easy. Your muscles and joints will ache and you will feel tired. You may feel like you want to stop, but the many weeks of training prior to the actual event will build not only physical, but mental strength. These two in combination will get you there.

Tudor Bumpa, Ph.D, Department of Physical Education, York University cites in his book: *Theory and Methodology of Training*: “The main objective of General Physical Preparation (G.P.P.), regardless of specifics of the sport, is to improve the individuals working capacity. The higher the individuals working potential, the more easily it will adapt to the continuous increase in both physical and psychological demands of training. Also, the broader and stronger the G.P.P, the higher the level of biomotor abilities (components of fitness) that may be reached.”

Below is a sample plan to follow. There are many available but this is one I think will work for you. It is a conservative approach that builds the strength and aerobic efficiency over time.

**Note:** If you are a beginner, start out by walking at a brisk pace. If you are currently jogging or running, then you are on course.

Be sure to do easy stretching of the calves, hamstrings, and back muscles before and after the workout. Slow static stretching is the type of stretching that is easiest on the muscles. Hold each stretch for twenty seconds. **The HealthPlus** website has examples of different stretches.

### A Sixteen Week Plan for Success in Walking or Running a Half-Marathon

Week	M	T	W	TH	F	SA	SU	Total
1	3 easy	Weights/Rest	3 easy	Weights/Rest	3 up tempo	4 easy	Rest	13
2	3.5 easy	Weights/Rest	3 easy	Weights/Rest	3.5 up tempo	4 easy	Rest	14
3	4 up tempo	Weights/Rest	4 easy	Weights/Rest	4.5 easy	4.5 up tempo	Rest	17
4	4 easy	Weights/Rest	3 up tempo	Weights/Rest	4 easy	4 up tempo	Rest	15
5	4.5 easy	Weights/Rest	4 up tempo	Weights/Rest	4.5 up tempo	4.5 easy	Rest	17.5
6	5 up tempo	Weights/Rest	4 easy	Weights/Rest	5 up tempo	4 up tempo	Rest	18
7	5 easy	Weights/Rest	5 up tempo	Weights/Rest	6 easy	4 up tempo	Rest	20
8	6 easy	Weights/Rest	4 up tempo	Weights/Rest	5 easy	4 up tempo	Rest	19
9	6 up tempo	Weights/Rest	5 easy	Weights/Rest	5 up tempo	5 up tempo	Rest	21
10	6 easy	Weights/Rest	6 easy	Weights/Rest	5 up tempo	5 up tempo	Rest	22
11	6 easy	Weights/Rest	5 up tempo	Weights/Rest	6 up tempo	7 easy	Rest	24
12	5 up tempo	Weights/Rest	5 easy	Weights/Rest	4 up tempo	7 easy	Rest	21
13	5 up tempo	Weights/Rest	6 easy	Weights/Rest	4 up tempo	9 easy	Rest	24
14	5 up tempo	Rest	7 easy	Rest	6 up tempo	8 easy	Rest	26
15	6 up tempo	Rest	5 up tempo	Rest	4 easy	7 easy	Rest	22
16	4 up tempo	Rest	3 easy	Rest	2 easy	13.1 race	2 mile walk	24.1

The calculation for determining the correct effort in training is the Heart-Rate Training Zone. The calculation is to take the number 220 and subtract your age. Then multiply that number times .60% and .85%. Example  $220 - 40 \text{ years} = 180 \times .60\%$  and  $.85\%$ . The ideal zone is 108-148.

You can also use a talk-test. This is simply an easy conversation with your training partner. If you do not have a training partner, use the Rating of Perceived Exertion Scale (RPE).

The RPE is simply a self-monitoring tool that an exerciser may use to determine, based on effort, how they feel. The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) recommends the RPE as follows:

0	Nothing at all
0.5	Very, very weak
1	Very weak
2	Weak
3	Moderate
4	Somewhat strong
5	Strong
6	
7	Very strong
8	
9	
10	Very, very strong
•	Maximal

3-7= ideal training zone

### **Active REST**

Rest is very important, and many times, overlooked in a training program. After a 13.1 mile run/race, your legs will be tired and aching. This is normal and will cease in a few days.

In the sixteen week plan, you are to do a two-mile easy walk/run the day after the race to help aid the recovery process. Be sure and stretch before and after the walk/run.

Now comes the rest part. By “rest” I don’t mean to stop working out and become sedentary. The term used here is “active rest”. The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM), states that “the normal effective cycle of training involves an increase in training, which tires the athlete, but stimulates improvement in fitness. The vast majority of this improvement occurs during the rest and recovery period after an intense training bout.”

By resting actively, you maintain fitness without losing aerobic energy. One can find other ways to exercise without walking/jogging/ running fast. The important thing is to find an enjoyable activity and stay with it. The goal is to keep the metabolism elevated and burn calories without placing un-do stress on your mind and body. Remember, you were following a strict training plan for sixteen weeks that guided you along to reach a goal. Now, you should remain physically active to let the body recover naturally over a period of several weeks.

If you decide that you want to participate in another event, you can do so by simply building back up as you did prior to the half-marathon.

**References:**

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