Happy Half Marathon Intermediate Training Plan

THE SCHEDULE BELOW IS FOR INTERMEDIATE RUNNERS: Individuals who are no longer novice runners and who want to improve their performances. You should be capable of running 30 to 60 minutes a day, five to seven days a week, have competed in at least a few 5-K and 10-K races, if not a marathon, and at least be willing to consider the possibility that some speedwork might help you improve. If that sounds like too much training, and this is your first half marathon, you might be more comfortable training using the Beginner Program. The terms used in the training schedule are somewhat obvious, but following is an explanation of the terminology.

Easy Runs:
The runs on Tuesdays and Thursdays and sometimes Saturdays are designed to be done at a comfortable pace. Don't worry about how fast you run these workouts. Run easy! If you're training with a friend, the two of you should be able to hold a conversation. If you can't do that, you're running too fast.

Distance:
The training schedule dictates workouts at distances, from 3 to 12 miles. Don't worry about running precisely those distances, but you should come close. Pick a course through the neighborhood, or in some scenic area where you think you might enjoy running. Then measure the course either by car or bicycle or GPS watch.

Stretch & Strength:
Mondays and Thursdays are days on which I advise you to spend extra time stretching--and do some strength training too. Monday is a rest day and Thursday is an "easy" day, so don't overdo it. If you want to stay away from the gym so that Monday becomes a complete day of rest, switch some of your stretching and strengthening to Tuesday or another day of the week. It's wise to stretch every day, particularly after you finish your run. And don't forget to stretch while warming up for your hard runs on Wednesdays. I can't emphasize this strongly enough. Strength training could consist of push-ups, pull-ups, use of free weights or working out with various machines at a health club.

Runners generally benefit if they combine light weights with a high number of repetitions, rather than pumping very heavy iron.

Rest:
Rest is as important a part of your training as the runs. You will be able to run the long runs on the weekend better--and limit your risk of injury--if you rest before, and rest after. Be realistic about your fatigue level--particularly in the closing weeks of the program--and don't be afraid to take an extra day off now and then.

Long Runs:
The key to getting ready to finish a Half Marathon is the long run, progressively increasing in distance each weekend. Over a period of 11 weeks, your longest run will increase from 5 to 12 miles. And in the final week, you get to run 13.1 miles in the race itself. The

schedule below suggests doing your long runs on Sundays. You can do them Saturdays, if more convenient, but it is easier to do a long run the day after a pace run, than vice versa.

Walking:
Walking is an excellent exercise that a lot of runners overlook in their training. I don't specify walking breaks, but feel free to walk during your running workouts any time you feel tired or need to shift gears.

Racing:
Most runners enjoy racing, so I've included three races during the training period: one every third week, building from 5-K to 10-K to 15-K. There is nothing magic about those particular distances, and there is no necessity to race. Plug in whatever races look interesting from your local area wherever they fit in your schedule. (See "Juggling," below.) You can use races to test your fitness and predict your finishing time in the half marathon and what pace to run that race.

Speedwork:
If you want to run at a fast pace, you need to train at a fast pace several days a week. This training schedule for intermediate runners alternates interval running with Tempo Runs. (See below). An interval workout usually consists of fast repeats separated by walking or jogging. The program begins with 5 x 400 meters in the first week and adds one more 400 every other week to reach 10 x 400 meters the week before your half marathon. Walk or jog between each repeat. The best place to run 400-meter repeats is on a track, although you can also use an accurately-measured road course. Run the 400s at about your pace for 5-K, or 10-K.

Tempo Runs:
This is a continuous run with a buildup in the middle to near 10-K race pace. A Tempo Run of 30 to 45 minutes would begin with 10-15 minutes easy running, build to 15-20 minutes near the middle, then 5-10 minutes easy toward the end. The pace buildup should be gradual, not sudden, with peak speed coming about two-thirds into the workout. Hold that peak only for a minute or two

Pace:
A lot of runners look at my training schedules and ask, "What do you mean by 'pace?'" I mean "race pace," the pace at which you expect to run the half marathon. Some workouts are designed as pace runs to get you used to running the pace you will run in the race. In Week 10, for example, I ask you to do "5 m race pace." Hopefully that is self-explanatory. You might want to do a short warm-up before starting each of these pace runs.

Warm-up:
Warming up is important, not only before the race itself, but before your speed workouts and pace runs. Most novice runners do not warm up, except in the race itself. This is okay, because they're more interested in finishing rather than finishing fast. You have a different goal, otherwise you wouldn't be using the intermediate program, so warm up before you run fast. My usual warm-up is to jog a mile or two, sit down and stretch for 5-10 minutes, then run some easy strides (100 meters at near race pace). And I usually cool down afterwards by doing half the warm-up distance.

Cross-Train:
I don't always prescribe cross-training for intermediate runners. That's because you're usually somewhat more focused on pure running than novice runners. But if you find that cross-training helps you prevent injuries, or if you enjoy it, feel free to substitute cross-training on

one or more of the easy days. (In this program, that would be Tuesday or Thursday.) Notice I used the word "substitute." Usually it's not a good idea to add cross-training, particularly hard cross-training, to an existing schedule under the mistaken belief that it will make you stronger. It may actually cause you to overtrain, which can have a negative effect on performance, because you never get a chance to rest. What form of cross-training works best? It could be swimming, cycling, walking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, or even some combination that could include strength training.

Juggling:
Don't be afraid to juggle the workouts from day to day and week to week. If you have an important business meeting on Thursday, do that workout on Wednesday instead. If your family is going to be on vacation one week when you will have more or less time to train, adjust the schedule accordingly. If this means running hard on successive days, so be it. Program in an extra day of rest to compensate. Be consistent with your training, and the overall details won't matter. Feel free to make minor modifications to suit your own particular schedule. Feel free to make
minor modifications to suit your work and family schedule.

14 Week Intermediate Half Marathon Training Program

Week	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
1	Strength & Stretch	3 m run	30 min temp run	3 m run & strength	Rest	3 m run	4 m run
2	Strength & Stretch	3 m run	2 m run or cross	3m run & strength	Rest	30 min cross	4.5 m run
3	Strength & Stretch	3.5 m run	6 x 400 5k pace	3 m run & strength	Rest	30 min run	5 k race
4	Strength & Stretch	3 m run	30 min temp run	3 m run & strength	Rest	3 m run	4 m run
5	Strength & Stretch	3.5 m run	40 min tempo run	3.5 m run & strength	Rest	3 m run	6 m run
6	Strength & Stretch	4 m run	7 x 400 5k pace	4 m run & strength	Rest	3 m run	7 m run
7	Strength & Stretch	4 m run	40 min tempo run	4 m run & strength	Rest	30 min run	10 k race
8	Strength & Stretch	4.5 m run	8 x 400 5k pace	3 m run & strength	Rest	4 m run pace	9 m run
9	Strength & Stretch	4.5 m run	40 min tempo run	4 m run & strength	Rest	5 m run pace	11 m run
10	Strength & Stretch	4 m run	3 m run or cross	3 m run & strength	Rest	30 min run	7 m run
11	Strength & Stretch	5 m run	6 x 400 5k pace	3 m run & strength	Rest	30 min run	15 K race
12	Strength & Stretch	5 m run	45 min tempo run	4 m run & strength	Rest	5 m run	12 m run
13	Strength & Stretch	5 m run	8 x 400 5k pace	5 m run & strength	Rest	3 m run	6 m run
14	Strength & Stretch	4 m run	3 m run or cross	Rest	20 min run	Race Day!	