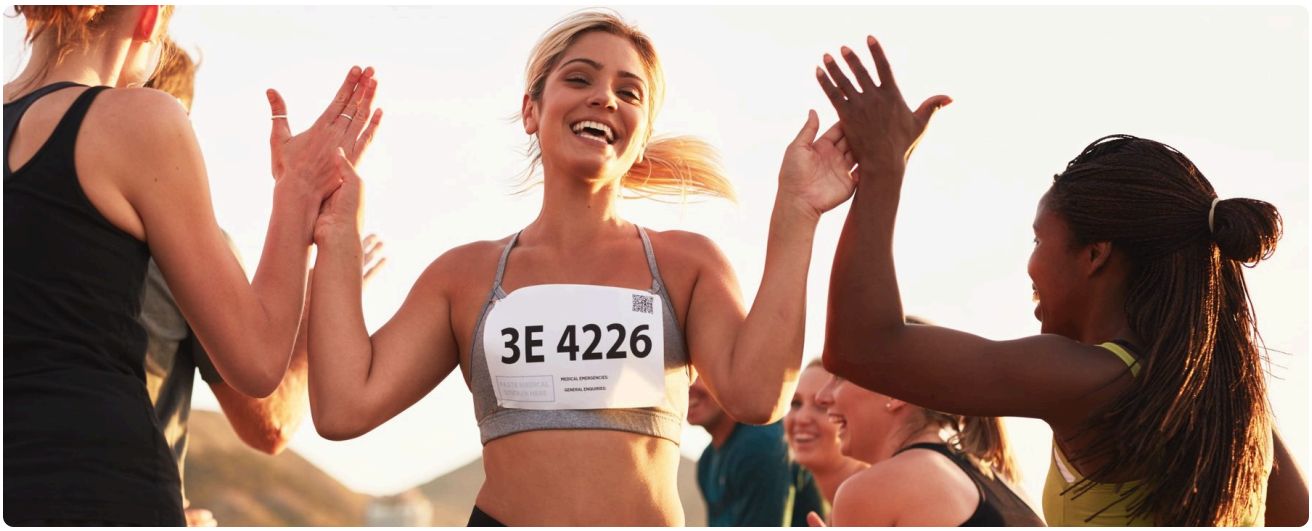
Plan: a faster half marathon

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Advanced: for runners who have finished a half marathon.

Train for 12 weeks with five runs a week: two easy runs, one interval session, one threshold or goal-pace session and a long run. Most running stays easy, the hard sessions are genuinely hard, and the last two weeks are a taper (a planned cut in training before race day so you start fresh).

Why it matters: Once you can finish, getting faster takes more structure: some time at threshold and near-maximal effort, built on plenty of easy running (see "Training intensity distribution").

Who it suits

- Runners who have finished a half marathon and run four or five days a week.
- Your recent long run should be at least 75 minutes.
- You know your threshold heart rate or pace, or are willing to test it (see "Thresholds and training zones").

What it costs

Item	Commitment
Running	5 sessions a week, 30 minutes to about 2 hours
Strength	2 sessions a week, about 40 to 45 minutes; 1 during the taper
Total time	About 7 hours a week at the peak, including strength
Difficulty	Intermediate to advanced

Set your goal pace

- **Use a recent race.** A common formula (Riegel's) predicts half marathon time as about 2.2 times your 10K time. A 50-minute 10K suggests about 1:50 for the half.
- **Be realistic:** many runners are slower than the prediction over longer distances, especially without high mileage.
- **Goal pace** is the pace for that finish time. Practice it in the plan and adjust after weeks 6 and 9.

How the sessions work

- **Easy:** zone 1, the easiest effort: you can talk in full sentences.
- **Intervals:** after 10 minutes easy, hard repeats (only a few words at a time) with equal easy recovery, then 10 minutes easy. See "Designing intervals."
- **Threshold:** zone 2, "comfortably hard": about the fastest pace you could hold for an hour.
- **Goal pace:** your planned race pace.
- **Threshold and goal-pace repeats:** after 10 minutes easy, with 2 minutes easy between repeats, then 10 minutes easy.
- **Strides:** 4 to 6 short bursts of about 20 seconds at a quick, relaxed pace near the end of an easy run. Faster than your race pace, but not an all-out sprint, with full recovery between.
- **Long run:** easy, with goal-pace finishes where shown.
- **Sample week:** Monday easy, Tuesday intervals, Wednesday easy, Thursday threshold or goal pace, Saturday long run; strength on Monday and Wednesday after the easy runs.

The 12-week plan

All times in minutes, including warm-up and cool-down.

Week	Easy	Intervals	Easy	Threshold or goal pace	Long run
1	40	5 × 3 min (47)	35	2 × 8 min threshold (38)	75
2	40	6 × 3 min (53)	40	2 × 10 min threshold (42)	82
3	45	5 × 4 min (56)	40	3 × 8 min threshold (48)	90
4 (easier)	35	4 × 3 min (41)	30	30 easy with strides	75
5	45	6 × 4 min (64)	40	3 × 10 min threshold (54)	96
6	45	2 sets of 10 × 30 s (45)	45	2 × 15 min threshold (52)	100
7	50	5 × 5 min (65)	45	25 min at threshold (45)	105, last 20 at goal pace
8 (easier)	40	4 × 3 min (41)	35	35 easy with strides	85
9	50	6 × 4 min (64)	45	3 × 12 min goal pace (60)	110
10 (peak)	50	5 × 5 min (65)	45	2 × 15 min goal pace (52)	115, last 30 at goal pace
11 (taper)	40	4 × 4 min (48)	35	2 × 10 min goal pace (42)	90
12 (race week)	40	3 × 3 min (35)	30	20 easy with 4 strides, two days before	Race

Check your progress: each long run stays within about 10% of your longest in the past month (see "Running injuries"). Weeks 11 and 12 drop to about 80% and 40% of week 10, not counting the race (see "Tapering before a race").

Too much? Drop the second easy run, or shorten the intervals. Never add extra hard sessions.

Strength, twice a week

Heavy lifting makes runners more efficient, and adding jumps helps most (see "Strength training for endurance athletes"). Strength work also lowers injury risk (see "Running injuries"). Plan my workouts puts these sessions on your strength days.

Weeks	How often	What to do
1 to 3 (learn the lifts)	Twice a week	Squat jumps first, landing in place: 3 × 5. Leg press and dumbbell Romanian deadlift: 2 × 10 to 12. Barbell split squat, light: 2 × 8 to 10 on each leg. Lat pull-down and dumbbell bench press: 2 × 10 to 12. Single-leg calf raise: 2 × 10 to 12 on each leg. Suitcase carry: 2 × 30 to 45 seconds on each side. Use weights you could lift a few more times.
4 to 10 (heavy)	Twice a week	Jumps first, with full rest: box jumps 3 × 5 in weeks 4 to 7, then broad jumps 3 × 5 and single-leg hop and stick 2 × 4 on each leg in weeks 8 to 10. Leg press and barbell Romanian deadlift: 3 × 4 to 6, heavy, with a rep or two to spare. Barbell split squat: 2 × 6 to 8 on each leg. Lat pull-down and dumbbell bench press: 3 × 6 to 8. Single-leg calf raise: 3 × 8 to 12 on each leg. Suitcase carry: 2 × 30 to 45 seconds on each side, heavier over time.
11 (taper)	Once a week	Leg press and Romanian deadlift: 2 × 4 to 6 at the same weight. Lat pull-down and dumbbell bench press: 2 × 6 to 8. Single-leg calf raise: 2 × 8 to 12 on each leg. Leave out the jumps.
12 (race week)	None	Rest from strength.

- **Put heavy leg days** two or more days before the long run and away from hard sessions where you can.
- **Squat instead of the leg press** once you know the lift (see "Learning a new lift").
- **Jumps follow** the beginner progression in "Plyometrics: jumps and throws": land quietly, and move on only when landings are controlled.
- **Upper body too:** a pull and a push each session keep your whole body strong, as "How much exercise is enough?" recommends.

Fueling and race day

- **Practice fueling** on long runs over about 75 minutes: 30 to 60 grams of carbohydrate an hour (see "Fueling for endurance events").
- **Carb load for two days** (eat more carbohydrate than usual) if you'll run longer than about 90 minutes (see "Race week and race-morning eating").
- **Pace evenly:** start at or slightly slower than goal pace for the first 3 miles.
- **Drink to thirst** (see "Hydration, sodium and race day").

Related guides

- Plan: your first half marathon

- Race week and race-morning eating

Related articles

- Training intensity distribution
- Thresholds and training zones
- Designing intervals
- Running economy
- Tapering before a race