

YOUR FASTEST

HALF

by Coach Andy Leuterio

I love the half-mary. It's long enough that you need to really put in some serious training, yet not so long that it takes an extended period of recovery like a full marathon. Following one of the Golden Rules of running, which is to "rest one day for every mile raced", I've found that it really takes nearly a month to fully recover from an honest effort in a full mary.

On the other hand, a half-marathon doesn't really have to take almost two weeks to get over. If you've got at least several thousand kilometers of running in your legs (not hard to accomplish if you've been running 40-50/week for several years), then a full recovery from a half mary can take only several days... and you won't feel like you got run over by a truck, either!

Be that as it may, it takes strength, aerobic efficiency, and good old leg speed to run a fast 21k! Assuming that you've graduated from just "jogging" to actually being a real runner, have good running form, and don't quail at the prospect of a 2 ½ hour long run, then here's a 10-week program that will

have you shaving several minutes off your Personal Best. It combines several weeks of hill running to build leg strength, staple circuit runs every week to incorporate some core exercises and to break up the monotony of an ordinary run, occasional fartleks and tempo sessions, several Progression Long Runs to get you accustomed to running fast in a fatigued state, and a lovely, 2-week speed/taper phase to really open up the lungs and get you running your fastest yet.

To make real gains in your fitness you need to gradually increase your mileage into the 50-60km/week range, but rather than having just 2-3 long sessions (more than 60 minutes), I recommend you go for frequency. There are at most 3 Key Workouts in a week, but add 1 or 2 more recovery runs of just 30-45" each at a very low intensity. Don't knock the recovery runs; these help your body recruit more muscle fibers and boost your neuromuscular efficiency (ie, muscle memory) than by just sitting on the couch. Of course, play it by ear. If you find you've accumulated enough fatigue to really take

a day off, then do so. You can shuffle the workouts in any week to accommodate your schedule, but be sensible. It's okay to have a recovery run the day after running hill repeats, but it doesn't make sense to have threshold repeats the day after a killer long run!

Note that the distance and duration totals are on the high side, but they're just a target. Columns "A1" and "B1" are for most runners who currently average 40-50km/week, while "A2" and "B2" are for more experienced (and harder) runners. Don't get too hung up on meeting each and every week's mileage totals. As long as you can accomplish the more important sessions, then you'll most likely get a lot of bang for your training buck. What's most important are consistency, frequency, variety, intensity, and of course, optimal recovery. Let your body be your guide.

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YOUR FASTEST HALF PLAN

ARE YOU A REGULAR OR EXPERIENCED RUNNER?

REGULAR
(40 - 50KM/ WK)

A A1, A2

EXPERIENCED
(50+KM/ WK)

B B1, B2

WEEK 1					
Day	Workout	Distance			Duration
		A1	B1	A2	
1	Aerobic Hill Run	8	15	60	90
2	Recovery Run	6	8	40	60
3	Circuit Run	8	12	60	80
4	Aerobic Hill Run	8	15	60	90
5	Recovery/Circuit Run	6	6	40	40
6	Long Steady Run	15	20	90	120
		51	76	350	480
Hours :				5.83	8

WEEK 2					
Day	Workout	Distance			Duration
		A1	B1	A2	
1	Aerobic Hill Run	8	15	60	90
2	Recovery Run	6	8	40	60
3	Circuit Run	8	12	60	80
4	Aerobic Hill Run	8	15	60	90
5	Recovery/Circuit Run	6	6	40	40
6	Long Steady Run	18	24	120	150
		54	80	380	510
Hours :				6.33	8.5

WEEK 3					
Day	Workout	Distance			Duration
		A1	B1	A2	
1	Aerobic Hill Run	8	15	60	90
2	Recovery Run	6	8	40	60
3	Circuit Run	8	12	60	80
4	Aerobic Hill Run	8	15	60	80
5	Recovery/Circuit Run	6	6	40	40
6	Long Steady Run/ Progression Run	21	24	120	140
		50	80	380	500
Hours :				6.33	8.33

WEEK 4					
Day	Workout	Distance			Duration
		A1	B1	A2	
1	Fartlek Hill Run	8	12	60	70
2	Recovery Run	6	6	40	40
3	Circuit Run, Negative Split	8	10	60	70
4	Fartlek Hill Run	8	12	60	70
5	Recovery/Circuit Run	6	6	40	40
6	Negative Split 20k: 10 x 2k, running the first 5 repeats at 42k Race Pace or slightly faster. Run the last 5 repeats at 10k Race Pace on 60-90s RI.	20	20	120	120
		56	66	380	410
Hours :				6.33	6.83

WEEK 5					
You'll probably be f@cked from the previous week's sessions, so lighten up a bit this week!					
Day	Workout	Distance			Duration
		A1	B1	A2	
1	Recovery Run	8	8	60	60
2	Circuit Run	8	10	60	80
3	Recovery Run	8	8	60	60
4	Recovery/Circuit Run	6	6	40	40
		30	32	220	240
Hours :				3.67	4

WEEK 6					
Day	Workout	Distance			Duration
		A1	B1	A2	
1	Aerobic Hill Run	10	15	60	90
2	Recovery Run	6	8	40	60
3	Circuit Run	8	12	60	80
4	Aerobic Hill Run	19	15	60	90
5	Recovery/Circuit Run	6	6	40	40
6	Long Steady Run/ Progression Run	21	24	120	140
		61	80	380	500
Hours :				6.33	8.33

WEEK 7					
Day	Workout	Distance			Duration
		A1	B1	A2	
1	Aerobic Hill Run	10	15	60	90
2	Recovery Run	6	8	40	60
3	Circuit Run	8	12	60	80
4	Negative Split Hill Run: Break this into 20-25" segments, running each successive segment 30-90s faster until the final stretch is at 10k Race pace.	10	15	60	90
5	Recovery/Circuit Run	6	6	40	40
6	Progression Run: run the same route and distance as the previous week's Long Steady Run, but this time make a point to run the last 3-4km as fast as you can!	21	24	120	140
		61	80	380	500
Hours :				6.33	8.33

WEEK 8					
Day	Workout	Distance			Duration
		A1	B1	A2	
1	Recovery Run	6	8	40	60
2	Recovery Run	6	8	40	60
3	Circuit Run, Negative Split	10	12	60	80
4	Negative Split Hill Run: Break this into 20-25" segments, running each successive segment 30-90s faster until the final stretch is at 10k Race pace.	12	17	70	110
5	Recovery/Circuit Run	6	6	40	40
6	Tempo and LT Pace Repeats: 10 x 2km, running the first 5 repeats at 21k Race Pace or Tempo effort, and the last 5 at 10k Race Pace or LT effort, 60-90s RI.	20	20	120	120
		60	71	370	470
Hours :				6.17	7.83

WEEK 9					
Day	Workout	Distance			Duration
		A1	B1	A2	
1	Recovery Run	6	8	40	60
2	Recovery Run	6	8	40	60
3	Circuit Run, Negative Split	10	12	60	80
4	Negative Split Hill Run: Break this into 20-25" segments, running each successive segment 30-90s faster until the final stretch is at 10k Race pace.	12	12	70	60
5	Recovery/Circuit Run	6	6	40	40
6	Hilly Tempo Run	12	12	70	60
		52	58	320	360
Hours :				5.33	6

WEEK 9					
Day	Workout	Distance			Duration
		A1	B1	A2	
1	Recovery Run	6	8	40	60
2	Circuit Run, Negative Split	10	12	60	80
3	Fartlek Run	8	12	50	70
4	Recovery/Circuit Run	6	6	40	40
5	Race Day!	21	21		Surprise Yourself!
		51	59		

Terminologies	
Aerobic Hill Run	This strength training workout is "speedwork in disguise". Keep the effort at "talk-able" pace all throughout, avoiding spikes in effort or HR whenever possible. Practice also running fast downhill.
Recovery Run	You can't go too slow on this. Keep the effort very light and pleasurable. Skip this if you're honestly too sore to get off your ass.
Circuit Run	Another aerobic effort, unless otherwise indicated as "Negative Split". Break your standard run into 1-3km segments, with active RI of a series of pushups, crunches, v-ups, squats, planks... be creative working your core and upper body! This is a good 2-in-1 workout and is more interesting than another snoozer run.
Long Steady Run	Practice good posture and quick, efficient cadence for extended periods of time.
Progression Run	A long run that's run faster and faster in the closing k's. Depending on your route and fitness, you could run the first half at an easy effort, then steadily go harder every 15" or 2km. Be creative! Your last 10-15" should be run as fast as possible.
Fartlek Hill Run	After building up strength over a few weeks, play around with your speed. @ork them hills, brotha.
RI	Rest Interval
LT	Lactate Threshold, also known as 10k Race Pace. If using an HRM, get your average HR from your fastest 10k to estimate your LT.

RACE WEEK TIPS

Coach Andy Leuterio



TAPER:

Assuming you had a good lead up to Race Week, then you deserve a taper. Taper is often misunderstood to mean "zero training", but it actually means the art of both resting and maintaining muscle memory. You rest in order to let the muscles fully recover from the weeks of hard training, but you maintain muscle memory with shorter, low intensity runs. Zero training the week of race day is a very bad idea since your body will totally shut down (you lose sport-specific fitness after just a few days). There's no hard-and-fast rule on how many taper workouts to perform, but it's USUALLY a good idea to maintain the same frequency minus 1 workout or 2 while keeping the sessions short and sweet. Definitely no hard intervals anymore, but a few 30-second pickups won't hurt you if you really need to reassure yourself that you've got the speed in your legs. The goal of a good taper is to keep your muscles supple and your aerobic engine in tune!

NUTRITION :

As with your gear, never try anything new on Race Day. Might I add, anything new the night BEFORE Race Day. Eat something filling for early dinner that won't give you tummy troubles; whatever you're comfortable with but I don't know if high cholesterol foods and several bottles of beer ever helped anyone! During the race, depending on your intensity (an HRM helps), a gel every 30-45" should keep you from bonking. Some people don't really need to drink the supplied sports drink every aid station, so just drink the normal amount and frequency that you practiced. Don't pass up the chance to douse yourself with water, though, especially in hot and humid conditions!

RACING:

Racing is just good technique done at a high intensity and for an extended period of time. Assuming you did the training, then just relax and go through the motions. "FLOW" through the race, breathe rhythmically, be aware of your foot strike, your arm swing, your posture, try to see yourself in the 3rd person and examine if you look relaxed-but-fast or struggling-and-slow. Focus more on the movement and the effort rather than what your GPS or HRM is telling you; those are tools to help you understand what your body is going through. They're not there to dictate your race! When you're in a bad patch, really focus on the FLOW. Think of all the hard workouts you did, think of the things that pull you to the finish line. No matter how hard you're suffering, just remind yourself: It's just a race! No one's trying to kill you, so get out there and be fearless!

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