



## 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@royalvictoriamarathon.com](mailto:CoachBruce@royalvictoriamarathon.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.

Aerobic running means that you should exercise between 70 and 100% of your maximum aerobic effort. This, therefore, 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](#) and [fartlek](#) runs is aerobic running.

### Week 1

- **Sunday, May 24:** 75 minutes steady aerobic running
- **Monday, May 25:** Rest day; day off
- **Tuesday, May 26:** 40 minutes
- **Wednesday, May 27:** 50 minutes
- **Thursday, May 28:** 60 minutes
- **Friday, May 29:** Rest or up to 30 minutes
- **Saturday, May 30:** 40 minutes including 8 x 100m [relaxed strides](#) with 100m of jogging between each stride

### Week 2

- **Sunday, May 31:** 85 minutes steady aerobic running
- **Monday, June 1:** Rest Day; day off
- **Tuesday, June 2:** 60 minutes
- **Wednesday, June 3:** 45 minutes
- **Thursday, June 4:** 30-40 minutes
- **Friday, June 5:** Rest day; day off
- **Saturday, June 6:** 60 minutes including 8 x 100m [relaxed strides](#) with 100m of jogging between each stride or 30 minutes if racing tomorrow

### Week 3

- **Sunday, June 7:** 95 minutes (1:35) steady aerobic running
- **Monday, June 8:** Rest day; day off
- **Tuesday, June 9:** 50 minutes
- **Wednesday, June 10:** 20 minutes easy warm up, 20 minutes @ marathon goal pace, 10 minutes cool down, or 60 minutes easy if you raced the half marathon
- **Thursday, June 11:** 65 minutes
- **Friday, June 12:** Rest day or 30 minutes easy
- **Saturday, June 13:** 45 minutes including 10 x 100m [relaxed strides](#)

#### **Week 4** **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, June 14:** 75 minutes (1:15) steady aerobic running
- **Monday, June 15:** Rest day; day off
- **Tuesday, June 16:** 30-45 minutes
- **Wednesday, June 17:** 45 including 10 x 100m relaxed strides
- **Thursday, June 18:** 30-45 minutes
- **Friday, June 19:** Rest day; day off
- **Saturday, June 20:** 45 minutes

#### **Week 5**

- **Sunday, June 21:** 105 minutes (1:45) steady aerobic running
- **Monday, June 22:** Rest day; day off
- **Tuesday, June 23:** 45 minutes
- **Wednesday, June 24:** 20 minutes easy warm up; 20 minutes [fartlek](#) with 4 surges of 2-3 minutes in duration; 10 minutes easy cool down
- **Thursday, June 25:** 45 minutes
- **Friday, June 26:** Rest day or 30 minutes easy/cross training
- **Saturday, June 27:** 45 minutes including 10 x 100m [relaxed strides](#)

#### **Week 6**

- **Sunday, June 28:** 2:00 of steady aerobic running
- **Monday, June 29:** Rest day; day off
- **Tuesday, June 30:** 45 minutes
- **Wednesday, July 1:** 20 minutes of easy warm up; 20 minute [out-and-back tempo](#) running first 10 minutes at marathon effort, and the last 10 minutes slightly slower than 10k effort; 10 minutes easy cool down **OR** race
- **Thursday, July 2:** 45 minutes
- **Friday, July 3:** Rest day or 30 minutes easy/cross training
- **Saturday, July 4:** 50 minutes including 10 x 100m [relaxed strides](#).

#### **Week 7**

##### **Recovery Week**

- **Sunday, July 5:** 75 minutes steady aerobic running
- **Monday, July 6:** Rest day; day off
- **Tuesday, July 7:** 30-40 minutes
- **Wednesday, July 8:** 45 minutes including 12 x 100m [relaxed strides](#).
- **Thursday, July 9:** 30-40 minutes
- **Friday, July 10:** Rest day; day off
- **Saturday, July 11:** 30 minutes

#### **Week 8**

- **Sunday, July 12:** 135 minutes (2:15) steady aerobic running
- **Monday, July 13:** Rest day; day off or easy jog
- **Tuesday, July 14:** 50 minutes easy
- **Wednesday, July 15:** 15 minutes easy warm up, 30 minutes at marathon goal pace, 15 minutes easy warm down or 40 minutes if you raced
- **Thursday, July 16:** 55 minutes

- **Friday, July 17:** Rest day or 30 minutes easy/cross training
- **Saturday, July 18:** 50 minutes including 10 x 100m [relaxed strides](#)

### **Week 9**

- **Sunday, July 19:** 150 minutes (2:30) steady aerobic running
- **Monday, July 20:** Rest day; day off
- **Tuesday, July 21:** 45 minutes
- **Wednesday, July 22:** 15 minutes easy warm up; 30 minutes [out-and-back tempo](#), 15 minutes easy warm down
- **Thursday, July 23:** 60 minutes
- **Friday, July 24:** Rest day or 30 minutes easy/cross training
- **Saturday, July 25:** 40 minutes...big long run tomorrow

### **Week 10**

#### **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, July 26:** 75 minutes steady aerobic running **or** race and warm up and cool down adding up to 75 minutes
- **Monday, July 27:** Rest day; day off
- **Tuesday, July 28:** 45 minutes
- **Wednesday, July 29:** 20 minutes easy warm up; 6 X 4 minutes at 8 km pace with 2 minutes rest; 10 minutes easy cool down
- **Thursday, July 30:** 60 minutes
- **Friday, July 31:** Rest day or 30 minutes easy/cross training
- **Saturday, August 1:** 50 minutes including 8 x 100m [relaxed strides](#)

### **Week 11**

- **Sunday, August 2:** 2:45 steady aerobic running  
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, August 3:** Rest day; day off
- **Tuesday, August 4:** 40 minutes
- **Wednesday, August 5:** 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, August 6:** 65 minutes
- **Friday, August 7:** Rest day or 30 minutes easy/cross training
- **Saturday, August 8:** 60 minutes including 12 x 100m [relaxed strides](#)

## Week 12

### Recovery Week

- **Sunday, August 9:** 150 minutes (2:30) steady aerobic running
- **Monday, August 10:** Rest day; day off
- **Tuesday, August 11:** 45 minutes
- **Wednesday, August 12:** 20 minutes easy warm up; 20 minute [out-and-back tempo](#) run at 10 km effort; 20 minute easy cool down
- **Thursday, August 13:** 50 minutes
- **Friday, August 14:** 30 minutes or day off
- **Saturday, August 15:** 40 minutes including 8 x 100m [relaxed strides](#)

## Week 13

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, August 16:** 3:00-3:15 steady aerobic running  
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, August 17:** Rest day; day off
- **Tuesday, August 18:** 45 minutes
- **Wednesday, August 19:** 20 minutes easy warm up; 3 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, August 20:** 80 minutes
- **Friday, August 21:** Rest day or 30 minutes easy/cross training
- **Saturday, August 22:** 40 minutes including 8 x 100m [relaxed strides](#)

## Week 14

### 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, August 23:** Marathon tempo, 10 minutes easy warm up, 18 km at marathon goal pace, 10 minutes easy.
- **Monday, August 24:** Rest day; day off

- **Tuesday, August 25:** 50 minutes easy
- **Wednesday, August 26:** 15 minutes, 15 minutes at marathon pace, 3 minute jog recovery, 10 minutes of 200m uphill at 10k effort, 200m downhill at marathon effort, 10 minutes easy cool down
- **Thursday, August 27:** 70 minutes
- **Friday, August 28:** Rest day or 30 minutes easy/cross training
- **Saturday, August 29:** 50 minutes including 8 x 100m [relaxed strides](#)

### Week 15

#### Recovery Week

- **Sunday, August 30:** 10 minutes easy, 25 km at marathon pace on rolling pavement, 5-10 minutes easy
- **Monday, August 31:** Rest day; day off
- **Tuesday, September 1:** 30 minutes easy.
- **Wednesday, September 2:** 20 minutes easy warm up, 4X 4 minutes at 10 km effort on rolling terrain with 2 minutes rest, 15 minutes easy cool down
- **Thursday, September 3:** 50 minutes
- **Friday, September 4:** 30 minutes
- **Saturday, September 5:** Rest day, day off

### Week 16

- **Sunday, September 6:** 15 minutes easy, 30 minutes at marathon pace, 5 minutes easy, 20 minutes at marathon pace, 5 minutes easy, 30 minutes at marathon pace, 15 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, September 7:** Rest day; day off
- **Tuesday, September 8:** 40 minutes
- **Wednesday, September 9:** 20 minutes easy warm up; 10 minutes at 10 km effort, 5 minutes jog, 5 minutes at 10k effort, 5 minutes jog, 10 minutes at 10k effort, 10 minutes easy cool down
- **Thursday, September 10:** 50 minutes
- **Friday, September 11:** 30 minutes easy
- **Saturday, September 12:** 30 minutes easy

### Week 17

- **Sunday, September 13:** 2:15 long run
- **Monday, September 14:** Rest day; day off
- **Tuesday, September 15:** 40 minutes easy
- **Wednesday, September 16:** 45 minutes
- **Thursday, September 17:** 20 minutes easy warm up, 40 minutes at marathon pace on hilly route, 3 minute jog recovery, 3X 2 minutes at 5 km effort with 2 minutes easy on hills, 20 minutes cool down
- **Friday, September 18:** 30 minutes easy
- **Saturday, September 19:** 60 minutes including 8 x 100m [relaxed strides](#)

### Week 18

#### 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, September 20:** 2:15 steady aerobic running
- **Monday, September 21:** Rest day; day off
- **Tuesday, September 22:** 40 minutes
- **Wednesday, September 23:** 15 minutes easy warm up, 12 X 1 minute at 5k pace/1 minute easy jogging, 15 minutes easy cool down
- **Thursday, September 24:** 65 minutes
- **Friday, September 25:** 30 minutes
- **Saturday, September 26:** 50 minutes including 12 x 100m [relaxed strides](#)

### Week 19

#### Taper

- **Sunday, September 27:** 1:45 steady aerobic running - last long run
- **Monday, September 28:** Rest day; day off
- **Tuesday, September 29:** 40 minutes.
- **Wednesday, September 30:** 20 minutes easy warm up, 8X 2 minutes at 5 km pace with 90 seconds jogging between each, 10 minutes easy cool down
- **Thursday, October 1:** 30 minutes
- **Friday, October 2:** Rest day...no running
- **Saturday, October 3:** 40 minutes including 6 x 100m [relaxed strides](#).

### Week 20

#### RACE WEEK!!

- **Sunday, October 4:** 60 minutes.
- **Monday, October 5:** Rest day; day off.
- **Tuesday, October 6:** 35 minutes.
- **Wednesday, October 7:** 30 minutes with 10 minutes at marathon pace.
- **Thursday, October 8:** Rest day; day off.
- **Friday, October 9:** 20 minutes.
- **Saturday, October 10:** 10 minute jog including 3 relaxed strides.
- **Sunday, October 11: 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.

Knock 'em dead - you've done the work! Your medal is waiting for you!