

## VLM Marathon Sunday run training plan

<b>Wk</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Miles</b>	<b>Events</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>11-Jan</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>Trent Park XC</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>18-Jan</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>St Albans 10m</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>25-Jan</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>Gade Valley 12m</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>01-Feb</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>Watford ½m</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>08-Feb</b>	<b>14</b>	
<b>6</b>	<b>15-Feb</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>Royston XC; Bramley 20m/10m</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>22-Feb</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>Gade Valley 17m</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>01-Mar</b>	<b>14</b>	
<b>9</b>	<b>08-Mar</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>MK ½m or 20m</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>15-Mar</b>	<b>18.5</b>	<b>Silverstone ½m</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>22-Mar</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>Gade Valley 20m</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>29-Mar</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>Oakley 20m; Daffodil Dawdle Off-Road marathon</b>
<b>13</b>	<b>05-Apr</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>Club 20m</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>12-Apr</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>Sandy 10m</b>
<b>15</b>	<b>19-Apr</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>Flitwick 10k</b>
<b>16</b>	<b>26-Apr</b>	<b>26.2</b>	<b>London marathon</b>

## Nutrition

People often get mystified by what to eat during marathon training and think they should be eating copious amounts of pasta.

When you are exercising the body has in the region of 90 minutes of fuel (glycogen) in reserve, so for training runs of up to 90 minutes you should be ok to train with just water. However once you go over this you need to begin to think about fuelling before / during and after the run.

In the days before your long run you need to increase the carbohydrate element of your diet slightly, maybe an extra potato on the plate or 10g-15g extra porridge in the morning – do not pig out. One caveat is should you begin to lose vast quantities of weight when it is not needed, then you need to consider your nutrition balance in more depth.

During the run you should test different gels / sports drinks to see how your body reacts, also test out how long it takes until you feel the benefit of the gel / drink (some take 20 minutes to hit your system) that way you can practice & plan your race strategy before the event.

After the long run you will feel hungry, again this isn't an excuse to eat anything that isn't nailed down. Instead within 20-30 minutes of finishing a race try to get some good quality protein into your system, this will help your body to repair itself after the run. Again when you sit down to your dinner have an extra couple of potatoes (if it's a Sunday) but try not to over eat, your body will tell you what it needs.

Also consider the level of fluids that you are drinking both in the days before you run and also during the run itself.

In the days leading up to the run your urine should be a straw colour, which indicates that you are properly hydrated, hunger can sometimes be an indicator that you are actually dehydrated so do the test.

During the race you need to ensure that you remain hydrated, so get used to drinking on the move. It might just be a sip every mile will do the trick, but you also need to know how much fluid you lose when you run.

A simple test is to weigh yourself before you run, go run for an hour and then weight yourself when you get back. Rough rule of thumb is every pound you lose equals a litre of water, but you need to allow for the water you have consumed within the 60 minutes.

## **Marathon Training The 10 Dos and Don'ts**

### **The Dos!**

#### **1. Run the race!!!**

Preparing to run a marathon takes time and during that period you will get cold feet (and not just through any winter training!). It is normal to question why you are putting yourself through it. The end product of running the race is the culmination of all of that hard work and the experience is all encompassing. Be ready to tell your inner self to get knotted when those doubts creep in!!!

#### **2. Complete the training!!!**

There is no doubt that if you don't put the miles in then you will not complete the race in the way you are hoping. That could mean you end up walking large parts of it or, worse still, you don't even complete it. Make sure your training plan fits in around your race goals and other commitments you may have at home.

#### **3. Do have a target time and share that with someone.**

The sharing process firms the target up and ensures that you commit to the training and race plan.

#### **4. If you haven't got a game plan (that's race tactics!) at least 4 weeks before the race then please discuss this with your coach.**

A game plan is like a route map from A to B without one of those you are most likely going to get lost (in a proverbial sense of course!) This includes having a (realistic) target pace (minutes per mile) and sticking with it.

#### **5. Complete some preparation races in the build up to the marathon, but don't overdo it.**

The races give you an opportunity to take checkpoints on your training and get used to race conditions, particularly if you haven't had that experience before.

#### **6. Listen to your body!**

It will tell you how it is feeling as you increase the training load and get closer to the race. If it is crying out for rest on a particular day then give it some! You will almost certainly feel better for it and be fresher for training on the next occasion.

#### **7. Break your training down into blocks of 4-6 weeks (4 weeks is best for beginners/intermediate runners).**

Build up your training during the block and then back off in the last week to give your body a chance to recover and benefit from what is known as 'adaptation', adapting to the increased load you have put on it. You can then start another 4-6 week block. Your last block before the marathon should include a period of at least two weeks as a taper down.

**8. Do continue to have a balanced diet during your training and make sure you drink enough fluids.**

As you progress through your training you will be increasing the load on your body and the volume of calories burnt. You must ensure that you put enough calories back into your body. As you go into your pre race taper increase the proportion of carbohydrate in your diet so that you ensure your body is fuelled up for the race (this is known as carbo loading).

**9. Do get used to drinking enough fluid on your training runs, particularly the long runs.**

You also need to ensure that you are replacing carbohydrate and electrolytes as you burn these off, so find energy drinks/gels that work for you. Use some of the earlier parts of your training plan to experiment with different brands of energy drinks and gels so that you get used to taking them. Trying a new type of energy drink or gel on the day of the race is an absolutely no!!!!

**10. Do build in regular treats and rewards into your training plan to keep yourself going.**

For example, buying yourself a new pair of running shoes at the start of your taper down period in readiness for the race or treat yourself to a massage at the end of each 4 week training block.

**The Don'ts!**

**1. Some may say 'don't do it!'**

..but that is generally a remark made by those that haven't experienced the elation of finishing that 26.2 mile run. Instead, don't cut corners with your long runs. These are the backbone to any marathon training schedule and are the key to successfully completing the race and doing that in a time you will be proud of. You should be completing at least two training runs of at least 20 miles in your build up. If you can get the opportunity try and build a 20 mile race into your training plan it has the double benefit of ensuring you complete one of the long runs you need and also doing that in race conditions. If you are running a spring marathon then the club organises a 20 mile run and there are also 3 or 4 20 mile races to choose from.

**2. Don't get to the start of the race without a target time in mind that you would like to run the race in.**

If you are at the start with no target then your mental state is more likely to be 'anything will do!' If you have completed the training and followed the advice given to you then you should be ready to follow a game plan in the race.

**3. Don't run your long runs too quickly.**

You should be completing these at a slow pace. This is generally going to be a minute per mile slower than your target marathon pace. It will feel slow. But this pace also helps your body get used to burning fat as you extend the range of your training runs. Another important part of the training if you are going to avoid the infamous 'wall' in the race itself. If you have a heart rate monitor try using that on your long training runs and ensure that you don't go above 65%-70% of your maximum heart rate. Only when you get closer to the marathon should you start to inject periods of your long run at a pace closer to your target marathon pace.

**4. If you miss any training sessions, for whatever reason, don't be tempted to cram in extra training in order to catch up.**

You will most likely over train and run the risk of picking up an injury.

**5. Don't go off too quickly at the start!**

It is so easy to get sucked in with other runners and ending up running their race plan. Remember that if you are seconds per mile too fast at the start you are likely to be minutes per mile too slow at the end (a good rule of thumb is for every second per mile you are too fast at the start you will be 10 seconds per mile too slow as you reach the last few miles. This is one of the reasons why you see so many runners walking in the final stages of the marathon!). Always keep your target pace in mind.

**6. Don't start your training too late.**

You should have at least 16 weeks between the start of your training and the race itself. Ideally you will be completing long, slow runs of at least 8-10 miles long before the 16 week training period starts. This enables you to have a plan that includes at least two to three training blocks of 4 weeks plus a period of 3-4 weeks pre race to include your taper down.

**7. Don't wear new shoes for the race or run the race in kit that you have not worn before!!**

Shoes should be broken in but not worn out (see the information in the Coaches Corner for more information). Given the mileage you will be doing during your training you may need to face up to the fact that you will need to buy at least two pairs of shoes to get you through training and the race itself!! Wearing new kit that has not been broken in means that you are likely to end up with chaffing and blisters in places that you are not expecting and have to endure that discomfort for a long period of the race! Use your build up runs and races to get into good habits with using Vaseline and talcum powder in all of the right areas! (The one exception to this rule is socks – new is more likely to mean better!)

**8. Don't increase your training volume or intensity too quickly.**

As a good rule of thumb, your total weekly training mileage should not increase by more than 10% per week and you should not be doing more than 50% of that weekly mileage in your long run.

**9. Don't ignore the coaching team at the club!!**

They are here to help you. If you have any questions about your training plan or preparation please catch up with one of them and ask them! Other runners in the club training for a marathon are also important resources that you can use. Training in a group is a powerful motivator and you can help each other get through the tough times and share in each others successes that's one of the great benefits of being in a club, so make the most of it!

**10. Don't think that 13.1 miles is the half way point in the race!!!**

It may be in pure mileage terms but you need to train your mind into believing that the halfway point is really at 18-20 miles. This will make the closing stages of the race more manageable and, dare I say it, more enjoyable! Build this into your game plan! (see the Dos above)

## **Race Preparation**

Nothing is truer with racing. Here's the ideal approach:

### **The day before the race**

1. The most important thing to remember is to relax.
2. Prepare all your race kit .If you have your number already, pin it to the front of your race T-shirt. Double-check the start time and travel directions.
3. Decide on a race plan. If you're aiming for a specific time, work out your target mile splits for the race. Choose even splits or a slightly faster second half. Copy the splits upside down onto your number, or keep the plan with your kit and copy it onto your forearm when you arrive at the race.
4. Drink plenty (but steer clear of alcohol). (You can use the urine test! It should be almost clear if you are properly hydrated). Have two glasses of water when you get up, and carry a bottle of water with you wherever you go. Have a tried-and tested pre-run supper, and if it's a long race (half-marathon or more), take special care to eat plenty of low-fat, high-carbohydrate food during the day, such as bread and pasta. But don't get bloated.
5. Don't plan a day of hectic shopping, gardening, or anything else that will keep you on your feet for most of the day. Just relax.

### **On the morning of the race**

1. Start with a shower to wake you up.
2. Drink 500-750ml of water to replace any fluids you have lost overnight.
3. Make sure you have breakfast. Your body will have burnt 400-600 calories overnight. These need to be replaced with easily digested foods (porridge, bread and honey or jam). Avoid anything greasy, heavy or that you know from experience leaves you bloated.
4. Head to the race. Aim to arrive 60 minutes before the start — just remember to factor in plenty of time if there may be parking difficulties or you have to collect your race number. This will give you time to use the loo, get changed, drop off your kit bag, find the start line, and warm up.
5. About 25 minutes before the race starts, do an easy jog to warm up. Try to remember that your warm-up should be inversely proportional to the race distance i.e. if you are racing a 5K then a 2 min jog is not enough whereas racing a half marathon may only require a light jog to the start as you can use the opening of the race to ease up to your race pace.

### **In the race**

1. Don't go off too fast. If you've made a pace chart of your mile splits, make sure that you follow it.
2. If things start to go wrong, don't worry — just ease down and assess how you actually feel.
3. Walk through the drinks stations to ensure that you hydrate properly. For races over 10 miles, consider taking energy gels to restock your energy reserves (but practice using them in training first).

4. Enjoy the work. This will sound strange, but even if you're having a slow race, have fun. There will always be more races on other days.

5. Only speed up in the last mile (1-2km) for a 5K, two miles (3km) for a 10K, and three miles for a half-marathon.