12 Week Marathon Training Plan

Distances in kilometres.

Week	Phase	Long run	Key session	Week total
1	Build	**18 km**	3 × 8 min threshold, 2 min jog	**42 km**
2	Build	**20 km**	10 km steady with 5 km at marathon pace	**46 km**
3	Build	**22 km**	4 × 8 min threshold, 2 min jog	**50 km**
4	Easier week	**16 km**	Easy runs only, 6 × 20 s strides	**38 km**
5	Build	**24 km**	14 km with 8 km at marathon pace	**54 km**
6	Peak	**27 km**	3 × 10 min threshold, 2 min jog	**58 km**
7	Peak	**29 km**	16 km with 10 km at marathon pace	**61 km**
8	Easier week	**21 km**	Easy runs, or a half marathon tune-up race as the long run	**45 km**
9	Peak	**32 km**	18 km with 12 km at marathon pace	**64 km**
10	Taper	**24 km**	12 km with 8 km at marathon pace	**50 km**
11	Taper	**16 km**	10 km with 5 km at marathon pace	**36 km**
12	Race week	**—**	3 short easy runs, 2 with 4 × 20 s strides + RACE	**17 km**

The daily check: heart rate, sleep and recovery

A plan on paper does not know that you slept four hours or had a brutal week at work. Your body does. Before a key session or long run, take ten seconds for this check:

Check	Green	Amber	Red
Sleep	About your usual, most nights 7 hours or more	One short night	Several short nights in a row
Morning resting heart rate (or HRV)	In your normal range	Clearly outside your normal range	Outside your normal range for several days
Legs and mood	Fresh or normal	Heavy, flat, short-tempered	Sore in one spot, or pain that changes how you run
Life stress	Normal	A hard day	A hard week, travel, illness in the family

- All green: run the session as written.
- One amber: do the run, but make it easy. Move the key session to later in the week, or skip it.
- Two or more amber, or any red: rest, or walk, or jog very easily for a short time. Pain that changes how you run or signs of illness mean no running until it is sorted out.
- Amber most days for a week: turn that week into an easier week, even if the plan says build.

Health note. General plan, not medical advice. If you have a heart condition, chest pain, dizziness, an injury, are pregnant or are coming back after a long break, check with a doctor first. Stop and seek help if you feel unwell.