

Training For Your Race

The First Step - The Training Schedules

According to MaMa Hobbit

I welcome all of you to Little Rock Marathon Training. Whether you're training for your 1st or 500th race, let me begin by saying in our household, everyone is a runner. If you are moving forward, you are running, so in my emails when I'm talking about "runners", I'm talking to everyone. I don't care if you run, walk, or crawl - talking to you. *(The purists out there may not like the way I use "runner", but hey, it's my training page.)*

Another word I use a lot is athlete. Merriam-Webster defines athlete as a person who is trained or skilled in exercises, sports, or games requiring physical strength, agility, or stamina. Having been coaches for 18 years, believe us when we say, the people we coach are athletes and should think of themselves that way.

So, you've decided to train for a race. It doesn't matter if you're training for your 1st race or you are what we call a "repeat offender" *(someone who didn't learn their lesson the first time and just keeps doing this)*, training for a race is pretty simple. You find the schedule you want to use (hopefully, you'll be using ours) and do the mileage required on the days you're supposed to run. As I said, pretty simple.



Notice, I didn't say training for a race was easy. Looking at the schedule, those distances seem pretty doable. A mile, two miles, three miles? No problem. Even up to double digits we tend to think, "Hey, I've got this, no sweat." And, if you're looking at that schedule sitting at a desk, or you're thinking of a mile in terms of driving it in your car, it is no sweat. Getting out there on your feet in the heat, the cold, the wind, the rain *(yes, we expect you to train in the rain, but not in lightning)*, and whatever else Mother Nature decides to dream up is a totally different animal when you're not driving the mileage. It always amazes me how many of our training routes go *up* both ways *(going out and coming back)*, when I would swear there is no hill on that route at all when I'm driving it.

Our training routes are written in miles and not in time, because all of our athletes are going to cover the same distance, no matter what their pace. If we wanted someone to run *(remember, walkers, we're talking to you too)* 3 miles and we put 30 minutes on the schedule, well, that would work perfectly for someone who runs a 10 minute mile, not so much for anyone who didn't run that pace.

For example, here are some distances covered in 30 minutes at different paces:

6 minutes per mile	5 mi
7 minutes per mile	4.28 mi
8 minutes per mile	3.75 mi
10 minutes per mile	3.00 mi
12 minutes per mile	2.50 mi
14 minutes per mile	2.14 mi
15 minutes per mile	2.0 mi
18 minutes per mile	1.66 mi
20 minutes per mile	1.50 mi

As you can see, the athletes who run faster than a 10 minute mile would end up running much farther than the 3 miles we want them to do and the athletes who are slower than a 10 minute mile would not run far enough. If we use time based mileages as our measure for the entire training season, we run the risk of having our faster runners being over-trained *(and more susceptible to injury)* and our slower runners being woefully under-trained *(and totally unprepared for the distance they are running on race day)*.

One of the most frequent training questions we get when the training season starts is: "When will I be finished on Saturday morning with my run?" Believe me when I say we are not trying to be smart alecks when we respond, "I don't know, how fast do you run? As you can see from the chart above, if you are covering a 3 mile distance, it could take you anywhere from 18 minutes to an hour, just based on the paces I used.

If you haven't quite decided which distance race you'll be doing, we always advise our athletes to start out training for the longer distance. It is much easier to drop from the marathon training to the half marathon training than to try to "catch" up to the marathon training from the half. If you are doing one of the Combo races, there are also Combo training schedules which have back-to-back longer mileage days to mimic race weekend.

Commit these to memory:

1. **Do take care of you.** If you haven't had a physical in a year (*or ever*), now is the time to schedule that appointment and make your doctor aware of your training plan.
2. **Do get out and run the shorter, mileage days.** It's okay to skip a week day here and there, but please don't get in the habit of just running your long, weekend run every week. The shorter runs help build your endurance and strength.
3. **Do stick to your schedule.** Don't do too much too quickly, whether it's mileage or speed. If the schedule calls for a 4 mile run - stick to 4 miles, don't decide if 4 miles is good, then 8 miles is better. Remember, a short, fast run is equal in intensity to a long, slow, distance run. Running at an all-out sprint every time you go out the door is hard on your body and doesn't give you time to rest, rebuild, and recuperate. The majority of injuries we see are caused from someone doing too much too soon.
4. **Do take advantage of your rest days and the "back up" mileage weeks.** Your body AND your mind need the break. (*And the longer the mileage gets, the more you'll look forward to those breaks.*)
5. **Do use your training to figure out what works for you.** We'll talk about equipment, clothing, and nutrition (*and anything else we think will help you be successful in accomplishing your goal*). One of the things you'll hear over and over is "Nothing new on race day!" When you toe the start line on race morning, we want you to be confident in everything you've done to prepare for the race.
6. **Do enjoy your training.** Most of you have decided to do this because you want to - you have a dream, a goal, a vision (*or, you just want that big, honkin medal*). Not every day will be an awesome run. Tom says, "Sometimes you're the dog and sometimes you're the hydrant." Or, his other variation, "Sometimes you're the bug and sometimes you're the windshield." Anyway, you get the picture. There will be days when you finish your training on top of the world, feeling invincible, and other days when you don't feel worthy to even own a pair of running shoes. Both those emotions are pretty normal during training (*sometimes you'll feel both of those things in the same run*).

One of my pet peeves (*I have so many they need a room of their own in our house*) is the word, "just". I hear runners all the time who say, "I just did 6 miles today.", or, "I'm just training for the half.", or, "I'm just walking the marathon." Please, please, please delete that word from your vocabulary. It doesn't matter if you're running or walking, doing a half mile or a 100 miler, every day you head out the door and work toward your goal is an accomplishment. Don't let anyone (*not even you*) tell you anything different.

If you have any questions about the Little Rock Marathon training schedules, please email Tom (single5297@yahoo.com) or me (hobbit_s@sbcglobal.net) and we'll be glad to help you.