

WOMEN'S HALF

21K TRAINING GUIDE & PROGRAMME

Complete Training Companion

16 weeks · Road running · First-timer to sub-elite

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This document was created by Women's Half Race to serve every woman who has ever thought about running 21 kilometres. It is designed to be shared freely, downloaded freely, and used without restriction. Pass it to a friend. Send it to your running group. Share it with the woman at work who mentioned she has always wanted to try. This guide belongs to every woman it reaches.



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WOMEN'S HALF

HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

This document was designed to do one thing: get you to the start line prepared, and carry you across the finish line proud. It is not a rulebook. It is not a punishment programme. It is your companion for 16 weeks — your coach in your pocket, your answer when you don't know what to do next.

STEP ONE

Start with the Self-Assessment

Read Section O1 before anything else. Choosing the wrong programme is the most common mistake. Be honest. The right level is the one that challenges you without breaking you.

STEP TWO

Print or save your 16-week schedule

Use the schedule as your weekly guide. On Sunday nights, review the week ahead. Know what is coming. Prepare mentally. Lay out your kit. Treat each session as a non-negotiable appointment.

STEP THREE

Read the support sections when you need them

Nutrition. Injuries. Mental strategy. Taper. These are not optional extras — they are the difference between surviving the distance and owning it. Read them before they become urgent.

STEP FOUR

Share this document

Send it to a friend. Tag a woman who should be running. This document was built to travel — from phone to phone, inbox to inbox, woman to woman. Every runner starts with someone believing in her.

STEP FIVE

Trust the process. Trust the plan. Trust yourself.

There will be hard weeks. There will be runs that feel impossible. There will be mornings where you question everything. That is the training working. Keep going. The finish line is already yours.

SECTION 01 RUNNER SELF-ASSESSMENT & PROGRAMME SELECTOR

Answer these 4 questions honestly. Your score selects your programme. Starting at the wrong level is the most common training mistake.

QUESTION 1 — How many km do you currently run per week (consistently)?

- A) 0–15 km/week or I'm mostly walking
- B) 15–35 km/week, running 3–4 days
- C) 35 km+ per week, running 4–6 days comfortably

QUESTION 2 — Have you run a half marathon (21.1 km) before?

- A) No — this will be my first
- B) Yes — I've finished 1–3 half marathons
- C) Yes — I have completed 4+ and want to chase a personal best

QUESTION 3 — What's your current 10 km race time (or best effort)?

- A) I haven't raced 10 km, or it takes me over 75 minutes
- B) 55–75 minutes
- C) Under 55 minutes

QUESTION 4 — How many days per week can you commit to training?

- A) 3–4 days, with some walk breaks expected
- B) 4–5 days, including 2 quality sessions
- C) 5–6 days, including 2–3 quality sessions

YOUR RESULTS

Mostly A's : 1ST TIMER PROGRAMME

Goal: Complete. Peak 42 km/week. Long run peaks at 16 km. 1 quality session/week from Week 4.

Mostly B's : AVID RUNNER PROGRAMME

Goal: 1:45–2:10. Peak 60 km/week. Long run peaks at 19 km. 2 quality sessions/week Tue + Thu.

Mostly C's : PB CHASER PROGRAMME

Goal: 1:30–1:50. Peak 80 km/week. Long run peaks at 22 km. 2–3 quality sessions/week.

MIX OF ANSWERS?

Choose the LOWER programme. It is better to train up than to overtrain and get injured.

Most runners run every session too fast. The table below shows what each effort type means in real min/km terms. Find your goal finish time column and use those paces throughout your programme. When in doubt, go slower.

EASY PACE (effort 3–4/10)

Conversational. You can speak full sentences. Breathing comfortable. Never gasping. This is 80% of all your running. Protect it.

TEMPO / HMP (effort 7–8/10)

Comfortably hard. Short phrases only. HMP = Half Marathon Pace (race goal pace). Used in quality sessions. Precise. Disciplined.

FINISH TIME	EASY PACE	TEMPO PACE	HM PACE	FAST PACE
1:30 (sub-elite)	5:00–5:30 /km	4:10–4:20 /km	4:16 /km	3:50–4:00 /km
1:40	5:30–6:00 /km	4:35–4:50 /km	4:45 /km	4:15–4:30 /km
1:50	6:00–6:30 /km	5:05–5:20 /km	5:13 /km	4:40–4:55 /km
2:00	6:30–7:10 /km	5:30–5:45 /km	5:41 /km	5:05–5:20 /km
2:10	7:00–7:40 /km	5:55–6:10 /km	6:09 /km	5:30–5:45 /km
2:20	7:30–8:10 /km	6:20–6:35 /km	6:38 /km	5:55–6:10 /km
2:30 (completion goal)	8:00–9:00 /km	—	7:06 /km	—

THE TALK TEST: If you cannot say "I am running at an easy pace" without gasping, you are running too fast. Slow down. Easy runs are not junk miles — they build your aerobic base and prevent injury.

Every term used in the 16-week schedules, explained in plain language. Refer back here whenever you're unsure.

TRAINING SESSION TYPES**Easy Run**

Conversational pace. Effort 3–4/10. This is your base. Never skip or replace with faster running.

Long Run

Weekly cornerstone. Done at easy pace. Builds endurance. Walk breaks are allowed and encouraged.

Fartlek (Rd Fartlek)

Swedish for "speed play." Unstructured surges during a run — lamp post to lamp post, for example.

Rd Surges / Road Surges

Timed bursts of faster running (60–90 sec) at effort 7/10, followed by full recovery jog. Done on road.

Tempo Run

Sustained effort at 7–8/10. "Comfortably hard." Typically 20–40 min continuous at threshold pace.

Progression Run (Prog Run)

Start easy, finish at HMP or faster. Teaches your body to run strong on tired legs.

Intervals (400m, 800m, 1km)

Repeated fast efforts with recovery jog between. Builds speed and VO₂max. Do NOT sprint — controlled.

Race Simulation (RS)

Long run with the final section at HMP. Practises race conditions. High demand — do not add extra km.

ABBREVIATIONS & TERMS**WU — Warm Up**

10–15 min easy jog before quality session begins.

CD — Cool Down

10–15 min easy jog after quality session. Non-negotiable.

HMP — Half Marathon Pace

Your goal race pace. See pace table in Section 02.

Strides

20-sec accelerations to 80% effort, full walk recovery. Sharpens legs before a race.

+S (with Strides)

Add 4–6 strides in the final km of your easy run.

V.Easy — Very Easy

Even slower than easy. Effort 2/10. Common in taper.

Phase 1 / Phase 2 / Phase 3

Training blocks (Habit/Base → Endurance/Dev → Race Prep).

Taper

Weeks 14–16: reduced volume so you arrive fresh on race day.

Broken Tempo

Tempo run split into 2–3 blocks with 2-min jog recovery.

Prog 10 km / RS 16 km

Progression run or Race Simulation of that distance.

PRE-RUN FUELLING

Runs under 60 min

You don't need to eat beforehand.
Hydrate with 400–600 ml water
30–60 min before you head out.
Coffee is fine if it's your routine.
Don't try anything new on race week.

Runs 60–90 min

Eat a light carb snack 60–90 min
before: banana, toast + honey,
or oats. Keep it small and familiar.
Avoid high fat or fibre.
Test options in training — not race day.

Long runs 90 min+

Full meal 2–3 hours before:
porridge, eggs on toast, or rice.
Include carbs + moderate protein.
Nothing new. Nothing greasy.
Practice race-day breakfast here.

FUELLING DURING YOUR RUN (long runs & race day)

The 45-minute rule:

If your run will exceed 75 minutes, you need to fuel. Start taking carbohydrate (gel, chew, or real food) from 45 minutes in — don't wait until you feel empty. By the time you feel it, you're already behind. Aim for 30–60g of carbohydrate per hour of running.

Gel timing guide (race day — 21.1 km):

Gel 1: km 6–7 (approx 45 min in) | Gel 2: km 12–13 (approx 90 min in) | Optional Gel 3: km 17–18 If needed

Always wash gels down with water (not isotonic drink). Practise your gel brand in training — your gut needs to learn it.

HYDRATION — BEFORE, DURING, AFTER

Daily baseline

2–3 litres of water/day.
More in summer or high
humidity. Urine should be
pale yellow, not clear.

During runs

150–200 ml every 15–20 min.
Don't wait until thirsty.
Use water points in long
runs and on race day.

Recovery (post-run)

500 ml in first 30 min.
Add electrolytes after runs
over 60 min (salt, sodium).
Avoid alcohol same day.

POST-RUN RECOVERY MEAL (within 30–60 minutes)

Combine carbohydrate + protein (3:1 ratio). Examples: chocolate milk, Greek yoghurt + fruit, eggs on toast, or a smoothie with banana + protein.

After long runs and hard sessions, this window matters most for muscle repair and glycogen replenishment.

Strength work prevents injury, improves running economy, and fills active recovery days without adding running load.

2 sessions of 20–30 minutes per week is enough. You are not training to lift — you are training to run better.

PRIORITY STRENGTH AREAS

1. GLUTES (most important for runners)

Weak glutes = knee pain, IT band, hip drop. Do: glute bridges, single-leg deadlifts, clamshells, hip thrusts. 3×12 reps, twice weekly.

2. CORE (stability, not crunches)

Focus on anti-rotation and stability. Do: dead bugs, bird dogs, planks, pallof press, side planks. 3×30 sec, twice weekly.

3. CALVES & ANKLES (injury prevention)

Single-leg calf raises on a step. 3×15 slow reps each leg. Prevents Achilles tendinopathy and plantar fasciitis.

4. HIP FLEXORS & HAMSTRINGS

Runners are chronically tight here. Stretch: pigeon pose, couch stretch, standing hamstring stretch. Hold 60 sec after every run.

CROSS-TRAINING OPTIONS

Cycling / spinning

Excellent active recovery. Zero impact. 30–45 min easy.

Swimming

Full-body recovery. Good on tired legs. Non-weight-bearing.

Yoga / Pilates

Mobility and core. Perfect for optional WED session.

Walking

Underrated. 30-min brisk walk counts as active recovery.

Foam rolling / massage gun

Do after runs, not before. Focus: calves, quads, IT band.

AVOID in training weeks: Heavy legs sessions (squats, lunges to failure) 48 hours before a long run or quality session. New gym classes, HIIT, or contact sports mid-programme. New movement patterns = unexpected soreness and injury risk.

COMMON INJURIES & RED FLAGS

Niggles are normal. Injuries are not. Learn the difference. The Pain Scale below guides your decision.

THE RUNNER'S PAIN SCALE — USE THIS BEFORE EVERY RUN

0–3 / 10

Run as planned. Monitor.

4–5 / 10

Reduce distance by 50%.

6–7 / 10

Rest today.
Reassess tomorrow.

8–10 / 10

Stop. See a physio.
Do not run.

INJURY

WHERE IT HURTS

LIKELY CAUSE

WHAT TO DO

IT Band Syndrome
ITBS

Outside of knee,
worsens with downhill

Weak glutes, sudden
mileage increase

Rest, glute work, foam
roll quads not IT band

Shin Splints
MTSS

Inner shin bone,
tender to touch

Too much, too soon.
Hard surfaces, worn shoes

Reduce volume. Ice.
Calf raises. New shoes.

Plantar Fasciitis

Heel / arch pain,
worst in the morning

Weak calves, tight
Achilles, worn shoes

Calf stretches, towel
scrunches, rest & physio

Runner's Knee
PFPS

Around / behind
kneecap

Quad imbalance,
weak hips, overpronation

Reduce downhill. Hip
strengthening. See physio.

Achilles Tendinopathy

Back of ankle, stiff
and sore in the morning

Sudden speed increase,
hill sessions, poor recovery

Eccentric heel drops.
Do NOT stretch aggressively.

RED FLAGS — Stop running immediately and seek medical attention:

Chest pain or tightness during running · Dizziness or fainting · Sharp bone pain (not muscle) · Swelling that doesn't reduce

Pain that changes your gait · Any pain rated 8+ on the scale above · Signs of stress fracture (localised bone tenderness)



WOMEN'S HALF

SECTION 07

MENTAL RACE STRATEGY — KM BY KM

The half marathon is as much mental as it is physical. This plan is not just a kilometre guide — it is a script for race day. Read it the night before. Know it. When it gets hard, you have already answered the question of what to do.

KM 1–3: DISCIPLINE. Start 10 seconds per km SLOWER than your goal pace. No exceptions.

Why this matters:

Adrenaline will lie to you. Everyone around you will feel like they're running slowly. They are not — they are going out too fast. Your first 3 km sets the tone for the entire race. A conservative start means a strong finish. Go fast early and you WILL blow up.

KM 4–7: SETTLE. Find your rhythm. Lock into your race pace. Relax your shoulders.

Check your breathing and your posture. Relax your hands (imagine holding crisps without breaking them). Scan your body from head to foot. Fix anything tight. These kilometres should feel almost too easy. You are building, not chasing.

KM 8–11: HALFWAY. Smile at km 10. This is where the real race begins.

You will hit km 10 and feel like you have run nothing. That is the goal. Use water points — walk through them if needed, drink fully. Take your second gel here. Mentally reset: you now have 11 km to go. You have run 11 km in training many times.

KM 12–16: BUILD. If you feel good, allow yourself to pick up slightly — but do not surge.

This is where trained runners begin to separate from those who went out too hard. You should be passing people, not being passed. Use mantras. Count lamp posts. Focus on runners ahead of you. Break the race into 2 km segments. Just get to the next one.

KM 17–19: RACE. Everything you have trained for is right here.

It is meant to be hard. That feeling is not a sign you have failed — it is proof the training is working. Every hard long run you did is paying out right now. Do not slow unless you genuinely need to. Shortened stride is fine. Keep moving forward.

KM 20–21.1: LEAVE NOTHING. The finish line is closer than the last water point.

You have 1–2 km left. Run with everything that remains. Hear the crowd. Look up. No one remembers the finish time as much as they remember crossing that line. This is the moment you started training for. Finish proud.

RACE DAY MANTRAS — pick 1 or 2 and make them yours:

"I am trained. I am ready." · "One km at a time." · "Slow is smooth, smooth is fast." · "I have done the work."
"Strong legs, calm mind." · "She goes the distance." · "Every step forward counts."

Weeks 14–16 of your programme have significantly reduced mileage. This is deliberate. It is called the taper. Here is why it works.

WHAT IS THE TAPER?

A taper is a structured reduction in training volume over the final 2–3 weeks before your race. Intensity is maintained or slightly reduced, but the total km drops significantly. This allows your body to repair micro-damage, top up muscle glycogen stores, and arrive at the start line fully recovered and fully charged. You cannot "top up" fitness in the final 2 weeks. The work is done.

TAPER MADNESS — THIS IS NORMAL

You feel sluggish

Your legs will feel heavy and flat. This is glycogen and fluids loading in. You ARE getting stronger.

You feel anxious

Without daily runs your mind invents new aches. These are not injuries. This is normal taper anxiety.

You want to do more

Adding extra km in the taper is the #1 mistake runners make. You will arrive tired. Trust the plan.

TAPER RULES

1. Follow the schedule exactly. Do not add runs "just to feel ready."
2. Sleep more than usual. 8–9 hours per night if you can manage it. Sleep is where adaptation happens.
3. Keep eating. You are still fuelling a trained athlete. Do not cut carbs in the taper — you need them stored.
4. Stay off your feet where possible. Avoid long days of walking, hiking, or standing events in the final week.
5. Trust the 15 weeks of work. The fitness is there. The taper releases it.

Q: I missed a week due to illness. What do I do?

Do not try to make it up. Simply resume from where you were. If you missed Weeks 1–8, go back one week behind where you were. If you missed Weeks 9+, resume at the current week at 70% volume. Never double up to compensate — that is how injuries happen.

Q: I'm travelling and can't do the scheduled sessions. Help.

Prioritise the long run above all else. If you can only do one run during a travel week, do the long run. Easy runs can be replaced with hotel gym cycling or treadmill. Miss quality sessions before you miss the long run.

Q: I can't do a specific session — is it okay to swap days?

Yes, with care. Never run hard two days in a row. Keep at least one rest day between quality sessions. If you move the long run, make sure you have 2 full days before the next quality session. Rest and easy days are not interchangeable with hard sessions.

Q: My legs feel heavy every run. Am I overtraining?

Heavy legs occasionally = normal. Heavy legs every run for 5+ days = warning sign. Signs of overtraining include: elevated resting heart rate, poor sleep, mood changes, persistent fatigue, no motivation. Take 3 full rest days and reassess before resuming.

Q: I missed 3+ weeks. Can I still race?

It depends on when in the programme you are. Missed Weeks 1–6: yes, resume and continue. Missed Weeks 7–11: reduce your goal — aim to complete rather than chase a time. Missed Weeks 12+: speak to a coach or physio about whether to defer entry.

Q: Is it okay to run with a cold?

Use the "neck rule." Symptoms above the neck (runny nose, sneezing): easy run may be fine. Symptoms below the neck (chest, fever, body aches, stomach): rest completely. Running with a fever is dangerous. 2 days of full rest beat 2 weeks off injured.

Q: My long run pace feels too slow. Should I speed it up?

No. The long run is not a time trial. Its purpose is time on feet and aerobic adaptation — both of which require easy pace. Running long runs too fast is the leading cause of runners arriving at race day overtrained, undertapered, or injured.

Q: Should I run in the heat? What about rain?

Heat: adjust pace upward by 30–60 sec/km in temperatures above 25°C. Hydrate more. Move your run to early morning or evening. Rain: run in it — get used to it. But lightning = stay indoors. Treadmill is a valid substitute for any outdoor session.

SECTION 10

RACE-DAY KIT & GEAR CHECKLIST

Everything you need for race day — laid out the night before. Nothing new on race day. Nothing untested on race day.

ESSENTIAL RACE-DAY KIT

- Race shoes (worn 3+ times in training)
- Moisture-wicking socks (no cotton)
- Race kit: shorts/tights + top (tested in training)
- Sports bra (tested for 16+ km comfort)
- Anti-chafe balm (apply inner thighs, underarms, toes)
- Race number + safety pins (4 pins)
- GPS watch or running app (charged to 100%)
- Earphones (if used in training — not both ears)
- Sunscreen (SPF 30+, sweat-resistant)
- Cap or visor (if sunny)

NUTRITION & HYDRATION

- Energy gels x3 (brand used in training)
- Electrolyte tablets or sachets
- Small water bottle (first 3 km if no early water point)
- Race-morning breakfast (familiar + carb-based)
- Coffee if it's part of your routine (do NOT skip)

LOGISTICS & ADMIN

- Race registration confirmation / timing chip
- Transport plan to start line (arrive 60 min early)
- Bag check bag packed (warm layer, dry clothes)
- Post-race recovery snack in bag check bag

NIGHT BEFORE RACE-DAY CHECKLIST

- Kit laid out completely (including shoes, number pinned, gels loaded into belt or pockets)
- Alarm set (race start minus 2.5 hours to allow for breakfast, travel, warm-up, and bag drop)
- Race route reviewed — know your water points, gel stations, and finish location
- Familiar dinner eaten by 7 pm. No alcohol. In bed by 9:30 pm. You are ready. You have done the work.

SHOE GUIDE: Replace running shoes every 500–700 km.

If your shoes are over 12 months old and you've been training consistently, get a new pair at least 6 weeks before race day.

Break them in on 3–4 easy runs before the race. Never race in brand new shoes. Visit a specialist running store for a gait assessment.

WOMEN'S HALF

she goes the distance

21K TRAINING SCHEDULE FOR FIRST-TIME HALF MARATHONER

21K
1st Time

16 Weeks · Road Running · Goal: Cross the finish line

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LEVEL	PEAK VOLUME	LONG RUN PEAK	QUALITY SESSIONS	REST DAYS	GOAL
First-Time Half Marathoner	42 km / week	16 km (Week 12)	1 per week from Week 4	Monday (full) + Saturday (mandatory)	Completion — finish line focus

SECTION 1 — WEEKLY TRAINING STRUCTURE

DAY	SESSION	DETAIL & RATIONALE
SUN	LONG RUN — Day 1	Road long run — cornerstone of the week. Run on road inside edge where safe. Walk breaks allowed.
MON	FULL REST	Complete rest — no running. Walk, stretch, or do nothing. First-timers need this day.
TUE	EASY RUN	Short, easy run. Conversational pace — if you cannot speak, slow down.
WED	EASY RUN or WALK	Optional easy run or brisk walk. If tired, walk 30 min instead. Listen to your body.
THU	QUALITY SESSION	Wks 1-3: Easy run only. Wks 4+: Fartlek or gentle hill reps. Never brutal — just a little faster.
FRI	EASY RUN	Short easy run to top up the week. Keep it relaxed — big day Sunday.
SAT	REST — MANDATORY	Full rest. No running. Prepares you physically and mentally for Sunday's long run.

SECTION 2 — 16-WEEK TRAINING SCHEDULE (Sunday – Saturday)

PHASE 1 — RUN HABIT WKS 1-4			PHASE 2 — ENDURANCE WKS 5-11			PHASE 3 — RACE PREP WKS 12-16			
WK	PHASE	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	KM
1	HABIT	8 km Easy	REST	6 km+6x400m	4 km Easy	Rd Fartlek 4km	4 km Easy	REST	26
2	HABIT	6 km Easy(W)	REST	4 km Easy	4 km Easy	4 km Easy	4 km Easy	REST	22
3	HABIT	7 km Easy(W)	REST	4 km Easy	4 km Easy	4 km Easy	4 km Easy	REST	23
4	HABIT	6 km Easy	REST	4 km Easy	3 km Easy	3 km Easy	3 km Easy	REST	19
5	ENDUR	9 km Easy(W)	REST	5 km Easy	5 km Easy	Rd Fartlek 5km	4 km Easy	REST	28
6	ENDUR	10 km Long	REST	5 km Easy	5 km Easy	6x60s Rd Surges	5 km Easy	REST	31
7	ENDUR	11 km Long	REST	5 km Easy	5 km Easy	Rd Fartlek 5km	5 km Easy	REST	31
8	ENDUR	9 km Easy	REST	4 km Easy	4 km Easy	4 km Easy	4 km Easy	REST	25
9	ENDUR	13 km Long	REST	6 km Easy	5 km Easy	6x60s Rd Surges	5 km Easy	REST	35
10	ENDUR	14 km Long	REST	6 km Easy	5 km Easy	Rd Fartlek 5km	6 km Easy	REST	36
11	ENDUR	16 km Long	REST	6 km Easy	5 km Easy	6x60s Rd Surges	6 km Easy	REST	39
12	RACE	16 km Long	REST	6 km Easy	5 km Easy	Rd Fartlek 5km	6 km Easy	REST	42
13	RACE	14 km Long	REST	5 km Easy	5 km Easy	5x60s Rd Surges	5 km Easy	REST	37
14	RACE	12 km Long	REST	5 km Easy	4 km Easy	4 km+strides	4 km Easy	REST	29
15	RACE	8 km Easy	REST	4 km Easy	3 km Easy	3 km Easy	3 km Easy	REST	21
16	RACE	3 km V.Easy	REST	3 km Easy	REST	2 km jog	REST	RACE DAY	21.1

SECTION 3 — RACE WEEK (Week 16: Sunday – Saturday)

Day	Session	Guidance
SUN	8 km Easy	Final long run. Easy pace. Walk breaks fine.
MON	FULL REST	Complete rest. You have earned it.
TUE	20 min Easy + strides	Easy jog + 3x20-sec pickups. Legs should feel good.
WED	20 min Easy or REST	Optional easy run. Both choices are correct.
THU	FULL REST	Feet up. Hydrate.
FRI	5 km jog	Short and easy. Lay out kit tonight. Familiar food. Sleep early. You are ready.
SAT	RACE DAY	Start slower than you think. Walk at water points. Smile at km 10. Finish proud.

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First-Timer Half Marathon Programme · Road Running · 16 Weeks · Goal: Complete · Week: Sunday–Saturday

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21K TRAINING SCHEDULE

AVID REGULAR HALF MARATHONER

16 Weeks · Road Running · Goal: 1:45 – 2:10 · Two quality sessions/week

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LEVEL	PEAK VOLUME	LONG RUN PEAK	QUALITY SESSIONS	REST DAYS	GOAL
AVID RUNNER	60 km / week	19 km (Week 11-12)	2 per week Tues + Thu	Saturday mandatory	1:45 -2:10m Finish

SECTION 1 — WEEKLY TRAINING STRUCTURE

DAY	SESSION	DETAIL & RATIONALE
SUN	LONG RUN — Day 1	Road long run. Vary route to avoid camber. Phase 3: final 3–4 km at HMP.
MON	EASY RUN	Active recovery. 30–40 min conversational pace. Flush legs from Sunday.
TUE	PRIMARY QUALITY	Phase 1: Intervals (400m–800m). Phase 2: Tempo 5–8 km. Phase 3: Race Simulation.
WED	EASY RUN	Easy buffer between quality days. 40–50 min at effort 3–4/10.
THU	SECONDARY QUALITY	Phase 1: Hill reps. Phase 2: Tempo / Progression run. Phase 3: HMP pace work.
FRI	EASY RUN MODERATE	Slightly longer than Mon/Wed. 50–60 min. Comfortable effort — not junk, not hard.
SAT	REST — MANDATORY	Full rest. No running. Body consolidates the week and prepares for Sunday.

SECTION 2 — 16-WEEK TRAINING SCHEDULE (Sunday – Saturday)

PHASE 1 — BASE WKS 1–5				PHASE 2 — DEVELOPMENT Wks 6–11			PHASE 3 — RACE PREP WKS 12–16		
WK	PHASE	SUN Long Run	MON Easy	TUE Quality	WED Easy	THU Quality	FRI Easy/Mod	SAT REST	KM
1	BASE	8 km Easy	5 km Easy	6km+6×400m rd	5 km Easy	6×60s Rd Surges	6 km Easy	REST	33
2	BASE	10 km Easy	5 km Easy	6km+8×400m rd	5 km Easy	8×60s Rd Surges	6 km Easy	REST	35
3	BASE	9 km Easy	4 km Easy	5kmE+6×400m	4 km Easy	6×60s Rd Surges	5 km Easy	REST	30
4	BASE	12 km Easy	6 km Easy	7kmE+8×400m	6 km Easy	8×90s Rd Surges	6 km Easy	REST	40
5	BASE	14 km Easy	6 km Easy	7kmE+10×400m	6 km Easy	10×90s Rd Surges	7 km Easy	REST	46
6	DEVEL	14 km Long	6 km Easy	WU+5kmT+CD	6 km Easy	6×800m	7 km Easy	REST	47
7	DEVEL	16 km Long	6 km Easy	WU+6kmT+CD	6 km Easy	5×1km	7 km Easy	REST	51
8	DEVEL	13 km Long	5 km Easy	WU+5kmT+CD	5 km Easy	6×800m	5 km Easy	REST	40
9	DEVEL	17 km Long	7 km Easy	WU+7kmT+CD	7 km Easy	6×1km	7 km Easy	REST	55
10	DEVEL	10km RACE	6 km Easy	Prog 10 km	6 km Easy	8×800m	6 km Easy	REST	46
11	DEVEL	19 km Long	7 km Easy	WU+8kmT+CD	7 km Easy	6×1km	8 km Easy	REST	58
12	RACE	19 km Long	7 km Easy	RS 16km	7 km Easy	6×600m	8 km Easy	REST	60
13	RACE	17 km Long	6 km Easy	RS 14km	6 km Easy	5×800m	7 km Easy	REST	51
14	RACE	13 km Long	5 km Easy	WU+5kmT+CD	5 km Easy	6×400m	5 km Easy	REST	38
15	RACE	9 km Easy	4 km Easy	3kmE+ 4×400m	4 km Easy	3kmE+ strides	4 km Easy	REST	27
16	RACE	5km V.Easy	4 km Easy	4 km Easy	REST	REST	5K EASY	RACE DAY	21.1

SECTION 3 — RACE WEEK (Week 16: Sunday – Saturday)

Day	Session	Guidance
SUN	9 km Easy	Final long run. Easy pace. Walk breaks fine.
MON	30min Easy	Complete rest. You have earned it.
TUE	30 min Easy	Easy jog + 3×20-sec pickups. Legs should feel good.
WED	20 min Easy or REST	Optional easy run. Both choices are correct.
THU	FULL REST	Feet up. Hydrate.
FRI	2 km jog + strides	Short and easy. Lay out kit tonight. Familiar food. Sleep early. You are ready.
SAT	RACE DAY	First 3 km: 5–10 sec/km slower than HMP. Build from km 5. Race from km 15.

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Avid Runner Half Marathon Programme · Road Running · 16 Weeks · Goal: 1:45–2:10 · Week: Sunday–Saturday

WOMEN'S HALF



21K TRAINING SCHEDULE PB CHASER - SUB-ELITE PERFORMANCE

16 Weeks · Road Running · Goal: 1:30 – 1:50 · Two quality sessions/week

www.womenshalf.co.za

LEVEL	PEAK VOLUME	LONG RUN PEAK	QUALITY SESSIONS	REST DAYS	GOAL
PB CHASER	80 km / week	22 km	2-3 per week	Saturday mandatory	1:30 -1:50m Finish

SECTION 1 – WEEKLY TRAINING STRUCTURE

DAY	SESSION	DETAIL & RATIONALE
SUN	LONG RUN – Day 1	Ph1: Easy road long run. Ph2: Road LR 4–6 km@HMP. Ph3: Race sim on race-route roads.
MON	EASY RUN	Easy 40–50 min + 6×20-sec strides from Wk 6. Neuromuscular sharpness without fatigue.
TUE	PRIMARY QUALITY	Ph1: 10–12×75s hard/75s jog efforts. Ph2: 8–10 km road tempo. Ph3: Timed race-pace efforts.
WED	EASY RUN	Genuine easy. 45–55 min. Effort 3/10. Critical buffer between quality sessions.
THU	SECONDARY QUALITY	Ph1: 10–12 hill reps. Ph2: Progression run or broken tempo. Ph3: 5 km HMP sharpener.
FRI	MODERATE	60 min comfortable effort. 4 strides in final km from Wk 8. Last volume before rest.
SAT	REST – MANDATORY	Full rest. Ice, roll, sleep. Prepares you for Sunday's cornerstone long run.

SECTION 2 – 16-WEEK TRAINING SCHEDULE (Sunday – Saturday)

PHASE 1 – BUILD WKS 1-5			PHASE 2 – PUSH LIMIT Wks 6-11			PHASE 3 – CHASE TIME WKS 12-16			KM
WK	PHASE	SUN Long/Race Sim	MON Easy	TUE Quality	WED Easy	THU Quality	FRI Moderate	SAT REST	KM
1	BUILD	12 km Easy	6km+Easy	10×300m	8km+Easy	10×75s Rd Surges	8km+Easy	REST	50
2	BUILD	14 km Easy	7km+Easy	12×300m	8km+Easy	12×75s Rd Surges	8km+Easy	REST	57
3	BUILD	12 km Easy	6km+Easy	8×300m	7km+Easy	8×75s Rd Surges	7km+Easy	REST	49
4	BUILD	16 km Easy	8km+Easy	12×300m	8km+Easy	12×90s Rd Surges	8km+Easy	REST	62
5	BUILD	17 km Easy	8km+S	8×400m	8km+Easy	10×90s Rd Surges	8km+S	REST	66
6	PUSH	17km	8km+S	WU+8kmTempo+CD	8km+Easy	Prog Run 12km	9km+S	REST	67
7	PUSH	19km	8km+S	WU+9kmTempo+CD	8km+Easy	6×800m	9km+S	REST	71
8	PUSH	15 km Easy	7km+S	WU+7kmTempo+CD	7km+Easy	5×800m	7km+Easy	REST	55
9	PUSH	20km	8km+S	WU+10kmTempo+CD	8km+Easy	Prog Run 14km	9km+S	REST	76
10	PUSH	15km RACE	8km+S	Prog Run 12km	8km+Easy	8×600m	8km+S	REST	64
11	PUSH	22km	8km+S	WU+10kmTempo+CD	8km+Easy	5×800m	10km+S	REST	80
12	RACE	20km	8km+S	WU+8kmTempo+CD	8km+Easy	8×400m	9km+S	REST	78
13	RACE	18km	7km+S	WU+6kmTempo+CD	7km+Easy	6×600m	8km+Easy	REST	63
14	RACE	14km	6km+S	WU+5kmTempo+CD	6km+Easy	8×300m	6km+Easy	REST	46
15	RACE	12 km Easy	5km+S	6×300m	4km+Easy	4kmE+strides	4km+Easy	REST	31
16	RACE	12 km Easy	6KM	5KM	REST	REST	5K Easy	RACE DAY	21.1

SECTION 3 – RACE WEEK (Week 16: Sunday – Saturday)

Day	Session	Guidance
SUN	12 km V. Easy	Gentle flush. Legs may feel heavy — that is taper. If passes.
MON	6K Easy	Easy Jog
TUE	6K Easy	Short, sharp, done. Reminds legs what fast feels like
WED	REST	Feet up. Hydrate.
THU	REST	Feet up. Hydrate.
FRI	6KM Easy	Final activation. Race kit ready. Race nutrition packed. Bed by 9:30pm.
SAT	RACE DAY	Km 1–3: Discipline. Km 4–10: Settle. Km 11–16: Build. Km 17–20: Race. Km 21.1: Leave nothing.

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PB CHASER Half Marathon Programme · Road Running · 16 Weeks · Goal: 1:30–1:50 · Week: Sunday–Saturday

NO ONE TOLD YOU THESE. THEY SHOULD HAVE.

01

RUN WITH YOUR PEOPLE.

Picture it: 6am, still dark, cold enough to see your breath — and your people are already at the corner, waiting. That feeling will get you out of bed on every morning that willpower alone never could. Find your tribe. It is the oldest, most powerful training tool in existence. Everything else is just shoes.

02

NEVER STOP HAVING FUN.

Dance at water points. High-five strangers. Run routes that make you smile. The second running becomes only obligation, you have already lost the best part of it. Joy is the reason you come back. Protect it.

04

SLOW DOWN TO SPEED UP.

Run your easy runs embarrassingly slow. Your aerobic base — the engine of everything — is built at conversational pace. Most runners ruin this by running every session too fast. Protect your easy pace like it is everything. It is.

06

LISTEN BEFORE IT BREAKS.

Your body speaks before it snaps. Learn the difference between the ache of effort and the signal of injury. A rest day taken early costs you one session. Ignoring the signal costs you six weeks. Choose wisely. Always.

08

MAKE PEACE WITH HARD DAYS.

Some runs will feel terrible. Go anyway. The run that felt the worst is often the one that built you the most. Hard days do not mean the training is broken. They mean it is working at a level deeper than your legs can feel yet.

03

GET 1% BETTER. ALWAYS.

Not transformation. Just one more kilometre. Ten seconds faster. One hill you didn't walk last week. Compounded over months, 1% better becomes a runner you once thought was someone else entirely. She was you, all along.

05

SLEEP IS YOUR BEST SESSION.

You do not get fitter when you run. You get fitter when you sleep — that is when your body rebuilds. 8 hours is not a luxury for a runner in training. It is the most important session of the week. Treat it exactly like one.

07

FEED THE WOMAN WHO RUNS.

Your body is doing something remarkable every single day. Honour it. Carbohydrates are not the enemy — they are the engine. A woman who runs on empty is not disciplined. She is simply running on borrowed time. Eat. Fuel. Go.

09

CELEBRATE. EVERY. WIN.

Women are extraordinary at downplaying their own victories. Stop it. Tell someone. Screenshot the run. Mark the milestone. The wins you celebrate become the belief you carry into the next hard thing. You earned it. Own it.

10

KNOW WHY YOU RUN.

Write it down. One sentence. Your why will carry you through every kilometre your legs want to quit — through the dark mornings, the hard weeks, the moment at km 17 when everything hurts and the finish line feels like a rumour. Return to it. It will never, not once, let you down.

THE FINISH LINE DOESN'T MAKE YOU A RUNNER. THE DECISION TO START DOES.

One more thing — and this one is not a tip, it is a truth: every woman on this page, at every pace, at every level, started exactly where you are standing right now. The distance between who you are and who you are becoming is not talent. It is not time. It is one decision, made today, to begin.