



Marathon countdown



Thorough preparation is as important for the person who hopes to finish in six hours as the runner hoping to clock 2:30.

Coach Brendan O'Shea – a veteran of over 100 marathons – looks at the enduring appeal of the classic distance and maps out the training schedules that will help get you over the finish line in Dublin on October 31.

Whatever your target or motivation, remember that the marathon is a rough and tough event. It is not for the faint hearted. If it were easy it would be no challenge. I view it as the runner's Mount Everest. If you do decide to have a go it is important that you prepare well for it. This applies as much to the person who hopes to finish in six hours as the person hoping to clock 2:30.

In an ideal world, all aspiring marathoners would have their own coach who would prepare a customised schedule for them based on their particular needs and abilities. Most can't afford that luxury, but Irish Runner will help you prepare for this year's marathon with a set of schedules and advice which should be of help.

You should pick the schedule that most suits your goal and expectations. Be realistic: don't try for 2:30 if realistically you should be aiming for 4:00. The structure of the schedules is important, but you may increase or decrease the mileage as suits you.

For example, if you hope to do a time at the fast end of a schedule, try to stick to the mileage given here. If you are aiming for a time at the slow end of a schedule take a mile or two off for each day.

Our schedules are calibrated primarily for runners in the three hours plus category, although they will also prove useful for runners looking to break the three hour mark.

Before we move onto the schedules I want to emphasis two very important points.

Visit Your GP

All who intend training and competing in a marathon should consult their GP. It is irresponsible and plain stupid not to do so. I cannot emphasis this point enough. When I was running sub 2:20 as a young man back in the 1970s I always had an annual check up.

In fact it was mandatory then to provide a letter from a GP when entering for a marathon. I always insist on a letter from GP when I coach an individual athlete. Apart from protecting the athlete, a thorough medical check-up may improve your performance and general health by highlighting the need for some nutritional supplements.

For example, your haemoglobin level might be low which would lower your energy levels but taking an iron supplement and perhaps some vitamins would be of great benefit. It is quite common to be low in iron.

Avoid training on sand or concrete

You should try to do at least 50% of the training each week on grass or soft paths. The fartlek session should always be done on grass or on a soft surface but not on a beach. The long run should be done on road. Minimise running on concrete as this is very severe on the legs and the back. It is best to use light racers or trainers when running on grass. These tips do not apply to walkers who can train on any surface except on a beach. Running or walking on soft sand can cause Achilles tendonitis.

Best foot forward

Make sure that you have a good pair of trainers. If you already have a pair that are more than a year old, you should get a new pair as the shock absorbency is diminished after a year, probably even after six months.

I recommend that you opt for an established brand. I prefer medium weight trainers, but the salesperson should be able to advise you on what's best for your size and gait. It's worth remembering that the trainer should generally be a half size bigger than your normal shoe as your feet will tend to swell a little when your exercise.

MARATHON SCHEDULES

These schedules are for 16 weeks starting on July 11. All runs are at a relaxed pace unless otherwise stated. By relaxed I mean the runner is able to converse without difficulty if running with a companion. A fartlek is a run where the runner starts at a relaxed pace but then periodically runs at a faster pace for some distance before returning to the relaxed pace for a while and then running at a faster pace again for some arbitrary distance until the end of the run. The runner does not stop until the end of the session.

2:30 TO 3:15 MARATHON

WEEK 1 (starting July 11)

Monday	6m
Tuesday	8m
Wednesday	6m
Thursday	8m easy with a few strides in the middle
Friday	rest
Saturday	10m
Sunday	13m

WEEK 2 (July 18)

Monday	6m
Tuesday	8m easy fartlek
Wednesday	6m
Thursday	15m
Friday	rest
Saturday	5m race (adidas 5m or other)
Sunday	10m

WEEK 3 (July 25)

Monday	8m
Tuesday	8m fartlek
Wednesday	8m
Thursday	10m fartlek
Friday	rest
Saturday	10m
Sunday	18m

WEEK 4 (August 1)

Monday	8m
Tuesday	10m fartlek
Wednesday	8m
Thursday	2m warm up, 4x1 mile hard with 3 min recovery, 2m warm down
Friday	rest
Saturday	10m
Sunday	20m

WEEK 5 (August 8)

Monday	8m
Tuesday	10m fartlek
Wednesday	8m
Thursday	10m steady with some strides
Friday	rest Week 2 starting 12th July
Saturday	10m
Sunday	22m

WEEK 6 (August 15)

Monday	8m
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Tuesday	8m
Wednesday	8m
Thursday	8m easy fartlek
Friday	rest
Saturday	10m
Sunday	18m

WEEK 7 (August 22)

Monday	8m
Tuesday	10m fartlek
Wednesday	8m
Thursday	10m
Friday	rest
Saturday	10m race (Frank Duffy or other)
Sunday	8m

WEEK 8 (August 29)

Monday	8m
Tuesday	10m fartlek
Wednesday	8m
Thursday	2m warm up, 4m hard, 2m warm down
Friday	rest
Saturday	10m
Sunday	20m

WEEK 9 (September 5)

Monday	8m
Tuesday	10m fartlek
Wednesday	8m
Thursday	10m easy fartlek
Friday	rest
Saturday	10m
Sunday	20m

WEEK 10 (September 12)

Monday	8m
Tuesday	10m fartlek
Wednesday	8m
Thursday	2m w/u, 4m hard, 2m w/d
Friday	rest
Saturday	10m
Sunday	20m

WEEK 11 (September 19)

Monday	8m
Tuesday	10m fartlek
Wednesday	8m
Thursday	10m easy fartlek
Friday	rest
Saturday	10m
Sunday	22m

Jerry Kiernan

(sixth fastest all-time Irish marathon time- 2:12:20 and Dublin Marathon winner 1982 & 1992)



I think that the marathon is within everyone's reach once the necessary training has been completed. You must be a consistent trainer and learn to live by the motto: Hasten Slowly, which is also very sound advice for most situations in life. The satisfaction of finishing the marathon makes all the hard training very much worthwhile.

WEEK 12 (September 26)

Monday	8m
Tuesday	10m fartlek
Wednesday	8m
Thursday	10m easy fartlek
Friday	rest
Saturday	race (Dublin half marathon or other)
Sunday	5m

WEEK 13 (October 3)

Monday	8m
Tuesday	10m easy fartlek
Wednesday	8m
Thursday	10m easy fartlek
Friday	rest
Saturday	10m
Sunday	20m

WEEK 14 (October 10)

Monday	8m
Tuesday	10m fartlek
Wednesday	8m
Thursday	15m fartlek
Friday	rest
Saturday	10m
Sunday	20m

WEEK 15 (October 17)

Monday	8m
Tuesday	10m fartlek
Wednesday	8m
Thursday	2m w/u, 2m hard, 2m w/d
Friday	rest
Saturday	10m
Sunday	15m

WEEK 16 (October 24)

Monday	6m
Tuesday	5m
Wednesday	4m
Thursday	3m
Friday	2m
Saturday	1m
Sunday	rest

3:15 TO 4:00 MARATHON

WEEK 1 (starting July 11)

Monday	4m
Tuesday	4m
Wednesday	4m
Thursday	4m easy with a few strides in the middle
Friday	rest
Saturday	6m
Sunday	8m

WEEK 2 (July 18)

Monday	5m
Tuesday	6m easy fartlek
Wednesday	5m
Thursday	8m
Friday	rest
Saturday	5m race (adidas 5m or other)
Sunday	6m

WEEK 3 (July 25)

Monday	6m
Tuesday	6m fartlek
Wednesday	6m
Thursday	6m fartlek
Friday	rest
Saturday	8m
Sunday	12m

WEEK 4 (August 1)

Monday	6m
Tuesday	6m fartlek
Wednesday	6m
Thursday	2m warm up, 2x1 mile hard with 3 min recovery, 2m warm down
Friday	rest
Saturday	8m
Sunday	14m

WEEK 5 (August 8)

Monday	6m
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Tuesday	8m fartlek
Wednesday	6m
Thursday	8m steady with some strides
Friday	rest
Saturday	8m
Sunday	16m

WEEK 6 (August 15)

Monday	6m
Tuesday	6m
Wednesday	6m
Thursday	6m easy fartlek
Friday	rest
Saturday	8m
Sunday	14m

WEEK 7 (August 22)

Monday	6m
Tuesday	8m fartlek
Wednesday	6m
Thursday	8m
Friday	rest
Saturday	10m race (Frank Duffy or other)
Sunday	6m

WEEK 8 (August 29)

Monday	6m
Tuesday	8m fartlek
Wednesday	6m
Thursday	2m warm up, 3m hard, 2m warm down
Friday	rest
Saturday	8m
Sunday	16m

WEEK 9 (September 5)

Monday	6m
Tuesday	8m fartlek
Wednesday	6m
Thursday	8m easy fartlek
Friday	rest
Saturday	8m

Sunday	18m
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WEEK 10 (September 12)

Monday	6m
Tuesday	8m fartlek
Wednesday	6m
Thursday	2m w/u, 3m hard, 2m w/d
Friday	rest
Saturday	8m
Sunday	20m

WEEK 11 (September 19)

Monday	6m
Tuesday	8m fartlek
Wednesday	6m
Thursday	8m easy fartlek
Friday	rest
Saturday	8m
Sunday	20m

WEEK 12 (September 26)

Monday	6m
Tuesday	8m fartlek
Wednesday	6m
Thursday	8m easy fartlek
Friday	rest
Saturday	race (Dublin half marathon or other)
Sunday	5m

WEEK 13 (October 3)

Monday	6m
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Tuesday	8m easy fartlek
Wednesday	6m
Thursday	10m easy fartlek
Friday	rest
Saturday	8m
Sunday	18m

WEEK 14 (October 10)

Monday	6m
Tuesday	8m fartlek
Wednesday	6m
Thursday	8m fartlek
Friday	rest
Saturday	10m
Sunday	20m

WEEK 15 (October 17)

Monday	6m
Tuesday	8m fartlek
Wednesday	6m
Thursday	8m easy fartlek
Friday	rest
Saturday	6m
Sunday	14m

WEEK 16 (October 24)

Monday	6m
Tuesday	5m
Wednesday	4m
Thursday	3m
Friday	2m
Saturday	1m
Sunday	rest



Martin Kelly

(youngest person to have run all 31 Dublin Marathons)

I would recommend that all runners try some interval training a few months into their training schedules. It is only recently that I started to add some 400m interval runs with 90-second rest periods to my weekly schedule. These interval runs at a steady pace are of great help.

Paddy Craddock

(oldest man to have run 30 Dublin Marathons)



Don't try to do too much too soon. Take it a day at a time and even if you feel really good do not depart from the training schedule that you are using. It takes discipline to stick rigidly to a schedule and you must also have the discipline to take rest days and let the body recover. It is all about patience and the same applies to how you run the marathon in October.

'Get as much rest as possible'

There is no magic bullet for success in marathon running, says Catherina McKiernan.

The first time I tackled the marathon – Berlin 1997 – I was hopping off the road at 20 miles. A year later, in London, I ran my second marathon and even though I won, I had stomach cramps and struggled over the final miles.

Newcomers and novices can maximise their chances of completing and even enjoying the marathon if they stick to some commonsense preparation in the week or two leading

up to the race.

Rule Number One is to get as much rest as possible. Long runs in the two weeks before a marathon are more detrimental than beneficial, but by all means keep your training ticking over without doing anything that will take from your performance on the race day. The day before the race I would recommend getting out for 15 or 20 minutes of a light run to keep the body ticking over and limbered up.

SCHEDULE FOR 4:00 TO 4:45 MARATHON

WEEKS 1 & 2 (starting July 11)

Monday	3m
Tuesday	4m
Wednesday	3m
Thursday	4m easy with a few strides in the middle
Friday	rest
Saturday	4 m on 10th July, jog 5m adidas race or other race on 17th. Alternatively jog 5m
Sunday	4m

WEEKS 3 & 4 (July 25)

Monday	4m
Tuesday	4m easy fartlek
Wednesday	4m
Thursday	6m
Friday	rest
Saturday	5m
Sunday	4m

WEEKS 5 & 6 (August 8)

Monday	5m
Tuesday	6m easy fartlek
Wednesday	5m
Thursday	6m easy fartlek
Friday	rest
Saturday	5m
Sunday	8m

WEEKS 7 & 8 (August 22)

Monday	5m
Tuesday	6m easy fartlek
Wednesday	5m
Thursday	6m fartlek
Friday	rest
Saturday	5m
Sunday	12m

WEEKS 9 & 10 (September 5)

Monday	5m
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Tuesday	6m fartlek
Wednesday	5m
Thursday	6m steady with some strides
Friday	rest
Saturday	5m
Sunday	15m

Jimmy Deenihan

(Government Minister, former All-Ireland winning captain with Kerry and first time marathoner in 2009)



Anyone serious about completing the Dublin Marathon should start their training no later than the first week in July. I had only a few weeks training under my belt when I ran my first Dublin Marathon at age 57 in 2009. Last year I started my training in January as I know now that you need a long and consistent build up of training if you are to maximise your potential.

WEEK 11 (September 19)

Monday	5m
Tuesday	6m easy fartlek
Wednesday	5m
Thursday	6m easy fartlek
Friday	rest
Saturday	5m
Sunday	18m

WEEK 12 (September 26)

Monday	5m
Tuesday	6m

Wednesday	5m
Thursday	6m easy fartlek
Friday	rest
Saturday	run Dublin Half Marathon at very easy half pace
Sunday	4m

WEEK 13 (October 3)

Monday	5m
Tuesday	6m fartlek
Wednesday	5m
Thursday	6m fartlek
Friday	rest
Saturday	5m
Sunday	20m

WEEK 14 (October 10)

Monday	5m
Tuesday	6m fartlek
Wednesday	5m
Thursday	8 m easy fartlek
Friday	rest
Saturday	5m
Sunday	15m

WEEK 15 (October 17)

Monday	5m
Tuesday	6m fartlek
Wednesday	5m
Thursday	6m easy fartlek
Friday	rest
Saturday	5m
Sunday	10m

WEEK 16 (October 24)

Monday	6m
Tuesday	5m
Wednesday	4m
Thursday	3m
Friday	2m
Saturday	1m
Sunday	rest

SCHEDULE FOR 4:45 TO 5:30 MARATHON

WEEKS 1 & 2 (starting July 11)

Monday	3m
Tuesday	rest
Wednesday	3m
Thursday	3m
Friday	rest
Saturday	3m
Sunday	4m

WEEK 3 & 4 (July 25)

Monday	4m
Tuesday	rest
Wednesday	4m
Thursday	4m
Friday	rest
Saturday	4m
Sunday	4m

WEEKS 5 & 6 (August 8)

Monday	4m
Tuesday	rest
Wednesday	4m
Thursday	4m easy
Friday	rest
Saturday	5m
Sunday	6m

SCHEDULE FOR 5:30 TO 8:00

Pace is not an issue for competitors in this category, but some will combine walking and jogging. Those at the slower end will walk the bulk of the distance. The faster competitors should try to mix walking and jogging in their training. Those who intend walking the marathon should combine normal walking with some power walking. It is best if sessions are based on time rather than miles. These athletes will benefit from trying to fit their preparation into a regular schedule of exercise also. The better prepared they are the more they will enjoy the experience. Each session should be walked or jogged as suits. Each session is measured in mins.

WEEKS 1 & 2 (starting July 11)

Monday	20 mins walk or jog or mixture
Tuesday	rest
Wednesday	20 mins
Thursday	20 mins
Friday	rest
Saturday	20 mins
Sunday	30 mins

WEEK 3 & 4 (July 25)

Monday	30 mins
Tuesday	rest
Wednesday	30 mins
Thursday	30 mins
Friday	rest
Saturday	40 mins
Sunday	40 mins

WEEKS 5 & 6 (August 8)

Monday	40 mins
Tuesday	rest
Wednesday	40 mins

WEEKS 7 & 8 (August 22)

Monday	4m
Tuesday	rest
Wednesday	4m
Thursday	4m easy
Friday	fartlek
Saturday	5mm
Sunday	8m

WEEKS 9 & 10 (September 5)

Monday	4m
Tuesday	rest
Wednesday	5m
Thursday	6m steady with some strides
Friday	rest
Saturday	5m
Sunday	12m

WEEK 11 (September 19)

Monday	4m
Tuesday	rest
Wednesday	5m
Thursday	5m easy
Friday	rest

Thursday	40 mins to include jogging or power walking as the athlete feels.
Friday	rest
Saturday	50 mins
Sunday	60 mins

WEEKS 7 & 8 (August 22)

Monday	40mins
Tuesday	rest
Wednesday	40 mins
Thursday	40 mins with some jogging or power walking
Friday	rest
Saturday	50 mins
Sunday	80mins

WEEKS 9 & 10 (September 5)

Monday	40mins
Tuesday	rest
Wednesday	50 mins

Saturday	5m
Sunday	14m

WEEK 12 (September 26)

Monday	4m
Tuesday	rest
Wednesday	5m
Thursday	5m easy
Friday	rest
Saturday	jog or run very easy Dublin Half Marathon
Sunday	4m

WEEK 13 (October 3)

Monday	4m
Tuesday	rest
Wednesday	5m
Thursday	5m easy
Friday	rest
Saturday	5m
Sunday	18m

WEEK 14 (October 10)

Monday	4m
Tuesday	rest

Thursday	60 mins with some jogging or power walking
Friday	rest
Saturday	50 mins
Sunday	120 mins

WEEK 11 & 12 (September 19)

Monday	40 mins
Tuesday	rest
Wednesday	50 mins
Thursday	50 mins with some jogging or power walking
Friday	rest
Saturday	50 mins
Sunday	150 mins

WEEKS 13 & 14 (October 3)

Monday	40 mins
Tuesday	rest
Wednesday	50 mins.

Wednesday	5m
Thursday	5m easy
Friday	rest
Saturday	5m
Sunday	15m

WEEK 15 (October 17)

Monday	5m
Tuesday	rest
Wednesday	5m
Thursday	4m easy
Friday	rest
Saturday	5m
Sunday	10m

WEEK 16 (October 24)

Monday	4m
Tuesday	rest
Wednesday	3m
Thursday	2m
Friday	1m
Saturday	rest
Sunday	rest

Thursday	50 mins with some jogging or power walking
Friday	rest
Saturday	50 mins
Sunday	170 mins

WEEK 15 (October 17)

Monday	50 mins
Tuesday	rest
Wednesday	50 mins
Thursday	40 mins with some jogging or power walking
Friday	rest
Saturday	50 mins
Sunday	100 mins

WEEK 16 (October 24)

Monday	40 mins
Tuesday	rest
Wednesday	30 mins
Thursday	20 mins
Friday	20 mins
Saturday	rest
Sunday	rest

Mary Nolan Hickey

(only woman to have run all 31 Dublin Marathons)



Do not neglect the long run once you have progressed to that part of the training schedule. Do not worry too much about the pace of the run - it is the time on your feet that really counts. You will get to the stage where the long run will be something to be looked forward to. Then you know for sure that you are getting fit.



Jenny Lee Masterson and Michelle McGrath at the launch of the National Lottery's sponsorship agreement with the Dublin Marathon and Race Series. The Irish 5-Mile Road Race, the first event in the Series, takes place on July 16. More info www.dublinmarathon.ie