

INTRO

Hey there - Thomas from Marathon Handbook here. Thanks for taking the time to grab a copy of this plan! As the name suggests, this plan has been backwards-engineered around the goal of running a sub 3 hour marathon.

For a full breakdown of the strategy I recommend, check out this article or my Youtube vid covering the sub 3-hr marathon approach:

[How To Train For And Run a Sub 3-Hour Marathon \(article\)](#)

CUSTOMIZING THE PLAN

No two runners are the same, and there's no such thing as a one-size-fits-all plan. That's why I make all my plans easy to customize: use the Google Sheets or Excel version of this plan to move things around to suit your weekly schedule, shorten or extend the plan, and mix up the workouts to suit your ability level.

In order to edit the file, please download it or make a copy (File>Make a Copy)

MEDICAL DISCLAIMER

This plan is for informational purposes only: it is not a certified exercise / health / wellness regime. Partake in run training at your own risk, always consult a doctor before starting a new exercise regime, and don't do anything stupid. Now let's get on with the details...

BREAKDOWN OF TRAINING WORKOUTS

Easy Runs

These are foundational of your training: they build up your weekly mileage, and can help you recover after the harder days.

I recommend running the easy runs at an easy, conversational pace - think around 2-3 / 10 [Rate of Perceived Exertion](#).

Intervals

Speed work is a core part of a training plan with a time-based goal, and intervals are a nice, structured way to do this speed work.

My recommended intervals workout:

Include a 1.5 mile / 2.5 k warm-up and cool-down either side of the speedwork (note these distances are included in the weekly mileage calculation).

Run a fast hard 800m interval (2 laps of a track) at 8-9 out of 10 RPE - not quite full-sprint, but as hard as you can maintain for the 800m.

Cool down with 400m of light jogging or walking.

Repeat as per the plan.

I recommend doing a LEG STRENGTH WORKOUT the same day as, but AFTER, your speed workout for maximal leg training!

Want to try different speedwork sessions?: Here's info on [hill running](#), [fartleks](#), [hill sprints](#), and [Yassos](#).

Strength Training

Many runners simply neglect cross-training - but the benefits have such a huge impact on your running game, it's hard to ignore.

Strength training has a massive impact on your running economy (essentially your miles per gallon as a runner), your speed, and - perhaps most importantly - injury prevention. While "cross-training" can mean almost any form of activity which complements your running, I highly recommend strength training - and specifically weightlifting if you can, it's simply where you get the most bang-for-your-buck as a runner. Can't stand the gym? Then at-home bodyweight workouts, yoga, or pilates are good alternatives.

[Here's our complete guide to weightlifting for runners.](#)

Long Runs

The key to long run success is to go at a slow, easy pace. Don't worry about speed at all - long runs are all about building endurance and getting time on your feet - NOT about speed.

Having said that, it is certainly beneficial to perform the occasional long run at a faster pace. Check out my long run video for more:

[LONG RUNS: Training Tips, Pace, Distance, How To Fuel + More!](#)

Use a long run near race day as a great chance to do a 'dress rehearsal' or [tune-up race](#) to test your gear and strategies prior to your big race day.

Rest Days

Rest means no strenuous activity! Focus on restful and pleasurable activities: walks in nature, time with family, enjoying good food, watching movies.

This may seem indulgent, but these activities send your body into 'rest and recover' mode (vs fight or flight mode) and your body will focus on healing.

TrainingPeaks 3 Hour Marathon Training Plan

Want to get an interactive version of this plan on the TrainingPeaks app, which allows you to track your own runs against the plan and provides further guidance?

[Here is the Sub 3 Hour Marathon Training Plan on TrainingPeaks!](#)

THE MARATHON TRAINING MASTERCLASS

Take your training further with my Marathon Training Masterclass. With over 6 hours of exclusive video tutorials and loads of bonus downloads, I've poured everything I've learned about marathon training over the years into this course. Whether it's injury-prevention, nutrition, or some race day strategies and road-tested tips, I've squeezed everything in here.

[Check Out The Marathon Training Masterclass!](#)

Questions?

[Check out our Marathon Handbook Facebook Group, it's an awesome community of runners sharing their knowledge, frustrations, and wins!](#)

Unfortunately I can't respond to individual queries these days, but the FB group is probably an even better source of running wisdom!

[Share your training and wins with us over on Instagram!](#)