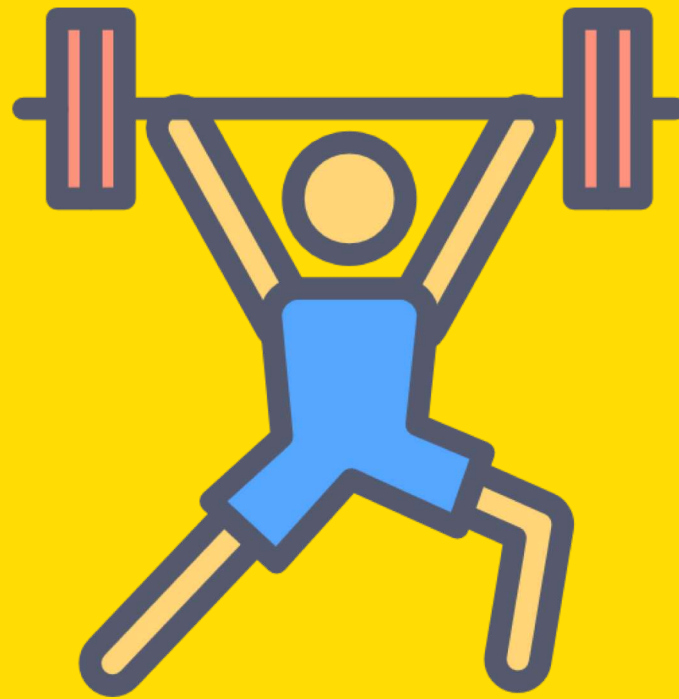


7 GREAT RESISTANCE TRAINING EXERCISES FOR MARATHON RUNNERS



with Thomas Watson

PRINCIPLES



1. Safety. The exercise should be designed for your capabilities, and form should be correct. If in doubt, get assistance.

2. Purpose. Have a clear purpose for each resistance exercise you do, and how it improves your marathon fitness.

Note: the instructional videos linked to are for illustration purposes, and are not content associated with Marathon Handbook.

THE DEAD LIFT



Purpose: Builds glute and core strength, aids strengthening / flexibility of the hamstrings.

Requirements: Dumbbells. Start light and over time increase the load.

THE DEAD LIFT



1. Start in a standing position, dumbbells and your sides and feet under your shoulders.
2. Push hips down and back; as your body lowers, keep the chest up and forward while keeping your shoulders back.
3. Descend until hamstring tightness kicks in.
4. Ascend in the reverse



[Click here for an instructional video on Youtube](#)

THE SQUAT



Purpose: Trains the core, glutes, hamstrings, and quadriceps.

Requirements: nothing. You can hold one dumbbell in each hand to add load.



THE SQUAT



1. Start with feet shoulder-width apart, slightly pointed outwards.
2. Tilt your pelvis back, keeping the body weight over your heels.
3. Maintain a straight back and face forward as you lower.
4. Descend until hamstrings tighten; ideally this with a 90 degree knee angle.
5. Ascend in the reverse.



[Click here for an instructional video on Youtube](#)

FRONT SQUAT



A front squat is a squat with added load.

1. Same movement as squat, with added dumbbells.
2. Dumbbells should be held level with the clavicle bone.



[Click here for an instructional video on Youtube](#)

OVERHEAD SQUAT



Squat with arms held overhead. A great exercise for core and back extensor muscles.

1. Start with no weight, use a towel or shirt to hold arms in slight tension.
2. Add weight (dumbbells) if ready.



[Click here for an instructional video on Youtube](#)

THE PLANK



Purpose: strengthens abs and lower back muscles.

Form:

Make ground contact with your toes and elbows.

Ensure shoulders are over your elbows.

Aim for a flat, straight posture.

Hold for 1 minute, repeat 3 – 5 times.



[Click here for an instructional video on Youtube](#)

PUSH-UPS



Purpose: strengthens upper body: chest, shoulders, triceps, and inner core.

Form:

Think of the push-up as a vertically moving plank.

Place the hands slightly wider than your shoulders.

Lower your body until your elbows reach 90 degrees.

Push back up gradually to starting position.

[Click here for an instructional video on Youtube](#)



LUNGES



Purpose: strengthens leg and core muscles, stretches hip flexors, improves balance.

Form:

Start in a standing position.

Step backward with one leg, your front leg will bend to 90 degrees.

Maintain upper body as vertical as possible.

Stand back up, pushing with the back leg.

Repeat with the opposite leg.

(add dumbbells in each hand if required).



[Click here for an instructional video on Youtube](#)

RESISTANCE TRAINING GUIDE



BECOME A MORE POWERFUL

AND INJURY-FREE RUNNER

Resistance Training.

The name alone has so many runners heading for the door!

Yet some form of strength training is almost guaranteed to up your running game.

When we talk about resistance training, we're essentially talking strength training – it involves putting a muscle under some load, to create resistance.

This can be done using body weight exercises, gym equipment, or stretching.

Resistance training is awesome for runners because you can be **hyper-specific**.

Unlike yoga or general work-out plans, with resistance training you can target the muscles and areas you really want to work on.

For runners, there are **two primary benefits** to resistance training:

1. Injury prevention.

The majority of runner's injuries develop through the kinetic chain of the lower body, often caused by muscular imbalances. Tight glutes and hips are primary contributors.

2. Increased Power.

Strengthening both the lower and upper body **improves your running economy** – in other words, the miles per gallon you get from your body. You'll find yourself **getting less fatigued, maintaining good form for longer, and running faster.**

How to use this guide

Runners should target 1 – 2 resistance training sessions per week.

Either run through each exercise in one workout, or if doing two workouts per week, do all lower body exercises on both workouts, and the upper body workouts once per week.



LOWER BODY EXERCISES



SQUATS

Area Targeted:

Lower body (glutes, hips, quads, hamstrings, lower back) and core.

Squats are an awesome lower body strengthener; if there is one lower body exercise you should perform in order to minimise injury risks, it's squats!

How To Perform:

Begin in a relaxed stance with your feet facing straight and slightly wider than hip width apart.

Keeping your upper body upright, lower your lower body by bending at the knees and hip. Focus on keeping your knees equal-width apart.

Lower to your comfort level – your target is to create a right-angle so your hips are level with your knees.

Gradually push back up to the starting stance.

Form is crucial with squats, so start with simply your body weight and a low number of reps (10-20, 3 sets).

As you develop your confidence, increase the number of reps. As an added option, hold light dumbbells or kettlebells in each hand.



LUNGES

Area Targeted:

Lower body (hips, glutes, quads, hamstrings, lower back) and core.

Lunges are another great lower body exercise, especially for targeting your hips.

How To Perform:

Begin in a relaxed stance with your feet facing straight and slightly wider than hip width apart.

Keeping your upper body upright, lower your lower body by bending at the knees and hip. Focus on keeping your knees equal-width apart.

Lower to your comfort level – your target is to create a right-angle so your hips are level with your knees.

Gradually push back up to the starting stance.

Form is crucial with squats, so start with simply your body weight and a low number of reps (10-20, 3 sets).

As you develop your confidence, increase the number of reps. As an added option, hold light dumbbells or kettlebells in each hand.



DEAD LIFT

Area Targeted:

The entire posterior chain - lower back, glutes, and hamstrings – and core.

Dead lifts are one of two exercises in our guide which requires weights, but it is such a comprehensive lower-body workout we couldn't miss it out.

How To Perform:

Stand with your feet hip-width apart, your shoulder relaxed and rolled back, and your hands holding dumbbells at hip level – palms facing your thighs.

Squeezing your shoulder blades together to keep spine in a neutral position inhale. Fold forward at the hips then bend the knees to lower dumbbells along the front of your legs – pause when your back is parallel to the ground.

Exhaling, push down on your feet to come back to the beginning, maintaining a neutral spine and keeping those dumbbells close your body. At the top of the pose, squeeze your glutes together.

Note: this exercise requires dumbbells – start very light, and gradually build up.

Aim for 3 sets of 12 – 15 reps.



SINGLE LEG BRIDGE

Area Targeted:

Hips! Glutes! Knees, quads, and core.

This variation on a regular bridge deeply activates the hips and glutes – an awesome injury-prevention exercise!

How To Perform:

Lie on your back with your knees folded, feet flat on the floor or mat. Place the palms of your hands down for stability.

Extend your left leg so it's straight, and a little off the floor.

Pressing your right heel into the floor, lift up your pelvis so your body rises into a strong bridge position.

Hold for 30 seconds, then slowly lower your body back to the floor.

Switch legs and perform the bridge on the other side.

Repeat 3 – 5 times for each side.



PIDGEON POSE

Area Targeted:

Hips and glutes.

We're borrowing from the world of yoga with this stretch – it is perhaps the most effective way of deeply opening and stretching your hip and glute region.

How To Perform:

Begin on all fours – the downward dog position, if you know it.

Swing your right leg forward and under your chest, and then fold it so the shin is in a straight line under your shoulders.

Lean down into the pose, extending your back leg, keeping your chest upright, and relaxing the hips as much as possible.

If you can, gradually lean your torso forwards until it's rested on the folded leg, your hands splayed out on the mat in front of you.

Hold for 20-30 seconds then change sides. Repeat 3 – 5 times per leg.



UPPER BODY AND CORE EXERCISES



PUSH-UPS

Area Targeted:

Upper Body: chest, shoulders, core, triceps

Push-ups are a quintessential resistance training exercise – almost anyone can do them, they work most of your upper body, and they require no fancy equipment.

How To Perform:

From a lying down position, place the palms of your hands shoulder-width apart and lift off to the start position.

Push up until your arms are fully extended, then lower your body to the start position in a controlled manner.

Use a mirror or get help to ensure your body remains flat during this exercise.

If you are a beginner, perform this exercise with your knees on the floor.

Aim to repeat 3 sets of push-ups. Each set should be at least 10 reps, aim to build up to 3 sets of 20 reps.



THE PLANK

Area Targeted:

Core, lower back, and shoulders.

The plank is an all-time classic, focussing on your core as well as improving your balance and general posture.

How To Perform:

Starting on all fours, lower your elbows to the floor or mat – position them directly underneath your shoulders.

Place your palms flat out in front of you, and raise off the rest of your body, leaving only your forearms and toes on the floor.

Maintain a straight posture as far as possible – focus on having your hips tucked in, and not shrugging your shoulders.

Hold the plan for 30 – 60 seconds, depending on your comfort levels.

Repeat 3 times.



LYING LEG RAISES

Area Targeted:

Core (lower abs), hips, lower back.

Lying leg raises are great for targeting your core, and strengthening the musculature which helps keep your body in equilibrium.

How To Perform:

Lying on your back, place your arms at your side with palms gently pressed into the floor or mat.

Raise your legs together – even if you can't get them pointing right to the ceiling, focus on keeping them as straight as possible, while minimising knee bend.

Lower the legs in a slow, controlled manner – focus on good form.

Your upper body (back, chest) shouldn't move during this exercise.

Shoot for 3 sets of 10 reps.



KETTLEBELL SWING

Area Targeted:

Lower and Upper Body - hips, glutes, hamstrings, lats, abs, shoulders, pecs and grip.

Kettlebells are popular for one reason – they’re so effective. This simple swing is essentially a full-body workout, targeting exactly the places runners need to focus on.

How To Perform:

Start with the kettlebell on the floor, between your feet and slightly in front of you. Your feet should be slightly wider than shoulder-width apart.

Hinging forward at the hip with only a slight knee bend, grab the kettlebell – remember a neutral back is important.

Take a couple of mini-swings to build momentum, then bring the kettlebell up in front of you by driving your hips forward, straightening the knees and back, and squeezing your glutes.

Let the bell swing back between your legs, and repeat.

Aim for 15 reps, 3 sets. Start of with a lightweight kettlebell and only increase when you feel ready.



BURPEES

Area Targeted:

Full body!

Burpees are a classic full-body exercise – they get the heart pumping so can be effective as cardio and as a warm-up tool too.

How To Perform:

From a neutral standing position, lower yourself down into a plank.

Perform one regular push-up, then jump your legs forward close to your feet.

Stand up and jump, raising your arms above your head into a clap at the peak of the jump!

Repeat!

Do one set per workout – start with 3-5, and every workout add in a few. Try to get to 15 continuous burpees!

