

Ultra Training Plans

50K, 50 Mile, and 100K | 16-20 Week Programs

Ultra running requires a different approach to training than road marathons. These plans emphasize time on feet, back-to-back long runs, elevation training, and race-specific nutrition practice. Adjust based on your goal race terrain.

50K Training Plan (16 Weeks)

Goal: Complete your first 50K (31 miles) | **Peak weekly volume:** 45-55 miles | **Prerequisite:** At least one marathon completed

Weeks 1-4: Marathon-Plus Base

Day	Workout	Distance
Mon	Rest or yoga	
Tue	Easy trail run	5-6 mi
Wed	Hill repeats: 6-8x 2 min uphill	5-6 mi total
Thu	Easy run	5-6 mi
Fri	Rest	
Sat	Long trail run (conversational)	12-16 mi
Sun	Back-to-back: easy run on tired legs	4-6 mi

Weeks 5-10: Building Ultra Endurance

Day	Workout	Distance
Mon	Rest or cross-train (hiking counts!)	
Tue	Easy run + strides	6-7 mi
Wed	Tempo run on rolling terrain (25-30 min)	6-7 mi total
Thu	Easy run	5-6 mi
Fri	Rest	
Sat	Long run (focus: time on feet, 2.5-4 hrs)	16-24 mi
Sun	Back-to-back: easy trail run	5-8 mi

Weeks 11-13: Peak & Race Simulation

Day	Workout	Distance
Mon	Rest	
Tue	Easy run	6 mi
Wed	Hill/trail tempo	7 mi total
Thu	Easy run	5 mi
Fri	Rest	
Sat	Long run (peak: 26-28 mi or 4.5+ hrs)	22-28 mi
Sun	Back-to-back: easy hike/run	5-8 mi

Weeks 14-16: Taper & Race

Day	Workout	Distance
Mon	Rest	
Tue	Easy run	4-5 mi
Wed	Short trail tempo	4 mi
Thu	Easy run	3-4 mi
Fri	Rest	
Sat	Long run (16, 10, RACE)	Varies
Sun	Rest or easy walk	

50 Mile Training Plan

20-Week Program for Your First 50 Miler

Goal: Complete 50 miles | **Peak weekly volume:** 55-70 miles | **Prerequisite:** At least one 50K or marathon with ultra-specific training

Weeks 1-6: Deep Aerobic Base

Day	Workout	Distance
Mon	Rest or yoga/stretching	
Tue	Easy trail run	6-8 mi
Wed	Hill work: 8-10x 3 min uphill, jog down	7-8 mi total
Thu	Easy run	6-7 mi
Fri	Rest or easy cross-train	
Sat	Long trail run (focus: consistent effort)	14-20 mi
Sun	Back-to-back long run	6-10 mi

Weeks 7-14: Ultra-Specific Endurance

Day	Workout	Distance
Mon	Rest	
Tue	Easy run + strength	7-8 mi
Wed	Sustained climb run or tempo on trails	7-8 mi
Thu	Easy run	6-7 mi
Fri	Rest	
Sat	Long run (build to 5-6 hours time on feet)	20-32 mi
Sun	Back-to-back: moderate trail run	8-12 mi

Weeks 15-17: Peak & Race Simulation

Day	Workout	Distance
Mon	Rest	
Tue	Easy run	6 mi
Wed	Trail tempo or race-pace effort	7 mi

Thu	Easy run	5 mi
Fri	Rest	
Sat	Peak long run (30-35 mi or 6+ hrs with aid station practice)	30-35 mi
Sun	Back-to-back hike/easy jog	6-8 mi

Weeks 18-20: Taper & Race

Day	Workout	Distance
Mon	Rest	
Tue	Easy run	5 mi
Wed	Easy trail run	4 mi
Thu	Easy run with strides	3-4 mi
Fri	Rest	
Sat	Long run (18, 10, RACE)	Varies
Sun	Rest	

100K Training Plan

20-Week Program for the 100K Distance

Goal: Complete 100K (62 miles) | **Peak weekly volume:** 60-80 miles | **Prerequisite:** At least one 50-mile finish

The 100K plan follows a similar structure to the 50-mile plan but with higher peak volumes, longer back-to-back weekends, and more emphasis on night running practice and crew/pacer logistics. The key adaptations include:

- **Peak long runs:** 35-40 miles or 7+ hours (Weeks 14-16)
- **Back-to-back weekends:** Saturday 25-35 mi + Sunday 10-15 mi during peak phase
- **Night running:** Practice 1-2 long runs with headlamp in the dark
- **Aid station simulation:** Practice race-day nutrition every 30-45 minutes
- **Crew logistics:** If your race allows pacers/crew, do a practice run with them
- **Cutback weeks:** Every 3rd week, reduce volume by 30%
- **Taper:** 3-week taper with volume reduction of 40%, 60%, 80%

Ultra nutrition guidelines: Aim for 200-300 calories per hour during races over 50K. Practice with real food (PB&J, potatoes, rice balls) in addition to gels. Electrolyte intake is critical - aim for 500-700mg sodium per hour in warm conditions. Have a backup plan for when your stomach rebels (broth, ginger, flat cola).