



RIYADH MARATHON

ماراثون الرياض

مقدم من
PRESENTED BY  الأول SAB

الرياضة للجميع SPORTS FOR ALL
الاتحاد السعودي للرياضة للجميع
SAUDI SPORTS FOR ALL FEDERATION

TRAINING GUIDE FOR RUNNING A



وزارة الرياضة
Ministry of Sport

رؤية
2030
المملكة العربية السعودية
KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

The Marathon Experience!

Challenge yourself on the most legendary distance
42.195 km

The first marathon was introduced during the first modern Summer Olympics in Athens in 1896, when participants ran a 40 KM route around the city in a competition of endurance. In 1908, marathons became famous during the London Summer Olympic Games, when King Edward VII personally planned the marathon route, starting from Windsor Castle to the official London Olympic Stadium, thus creating the first standard 42.195 KM marathon.

Motivation and self-confidence

Starting your first Marathon can raise many questions about your capabilities, physical strength, and motivation. Therefore, self-confidence is an important resource! Remember, we all start somewhere. Take one step today, another tomorrow, and follow through day after day until you reach the top!

Consistency is key to face this challenge

Steady progress through training will ensure you're ready for the challenge. Each run, each mile brings you one step closer to crossing that finish line, no matter the obstacles.

Most importantly, have fun!

Marathons are a great way to enjoy ourselves, breathe in fresh air, let off some steam. You don't need to be a pro to join a run, all you need is a spirit ready for a new challenge!

Fun Fact

only %1 of the population already completed a Marathon.
Join this group of heroes!



All the benefits of running

No doubt that you already know it as a sport lover and regular runner but it's always good to keep it in mind!



Physical benefit

Running is a full-body practice that strengthens your heart, muscles, boost your circulation and helps building endurance. Every step will keep your body agile and ready for life's adventures.

Mental benefit

When you run, something magical happens: your mind clears, stress fades and you are left with a sense of calm and focus. A mental reset in every step.

Reconnect with the world

Running gives you a chance to reconnect with yourself, others and nature. Unplug from the noise and recharge your spirit with what matters to you.

The power of achievement

Every run, whether it's a quick jog or a long-distance challenge, is an accomplishment worth celebrating. Running teaches us resilience, commitment, and the joy of pushing past limits. Join the virtuous circle of running

Running is a form of selfcare

VOGAB LIST

Anti-chafing cream

A protection solution. It protects the skin from irritation or damage caused by friction.

Fartlek

A Swedish word meaning "speed play" a system of training for distance runners in which the terrain and pace are continually varied.

Maximal Aerobic Speed (MAS)

The speed at which you run when your body uses the most oxygen. On average, you can only last 4 to 8 minutes at this speed continuously.

Jogging

Is a Low intensity running exercise, it helps with building stamina. You should experience less breathlessness and muscle fatigue when jogging.

Pace

The average time it takes you to run 1km. Can you run 10km in 1 hour? Therefore, your average pace is 6 minutes per kilometer.

Start area

To avoid congestion at the start (and at the finish line), Runners do not leave at the same time. The start time occurs in waves. This will help avoid congestion at both the start and finish lines.

Personal Best

Personal Best (PB) is used to refer to your best time recorded over a given distance

Energy gels

During intense exercise consuming energy gels provide a fast energy boost. Why? Its contents are immediately available to your muscles.

Glycogen

This is how your muscles and liver store glucose (sugar), which is one of the fuels for exercise. These reserves provide the muscles with some of their energy!

Interval training

A training method which consists in alternating periods of high-intensity exercise (running at a higher speed) with breaks in between. Interval training allows for greater physiological progression and is often practiced on professional tracks.

Hitting the wall

The concept of "Hitting the wall" can occur around the 30km mark. After a certain level of physical exertion, glycogen reserves become depleted. You quite simply run out of muscle fuel.

Stress test

A physical examination where a doctor monitors your heart's electrical activity, either on an exercise bike or treadmill, is essential. Marathoners should get a checkup before the race, especially if they are over 40!

Adapt your training



Know yourself, your strengths and the time you can dedicate to training regularly. From that, you'll know exactly what to expect and the goals you can set.

- Get to know yourself and appreciate your potential. As you train, your pace, stamina and stride will improve.
- Stay humble. Running a long race safely requires foundational experience to help prevent injuries. Start at a comfortable pace and focus on enjoying this experience rather than worrying about the time. Stick to your training plan and resist the urge to push beyond it.

Some tips for time-based performance

- Never underestimate small improvements. Shaving just a few seconds off your personal best is a powerful sign of progress—reflecting your hard work and dedication. Every second counts!
- You are unique and a true champion, so don't compare your performances to anyone else's. Don't run too fast, stick to your routine pace to set your goal while remaining humble and realistic. This mindset will help you adjust your training plan effectively.
- Pace leaders (or pacers) are here to help participants achieve their target times by maintaining a consistent pace throughout the race. Look for them on race day—they'll often carry signs or wear visible markers with their goal time.

Ready to go the extra mile?

If you've already completed a half marathon, the Riyadh Marathon is your next challenge. Here are a few tips to guide you:

Discipline

Create a training plan and stay consistent with your sessions. Balance your workouts throughout the week to build endurance.

Speed & Endurance

Start slow to build endurance, gradually increasing your pace as your body adapts. Consistent practice will naturally improve your speed.

Training Tips

- 1** Run with a partner or group for motivation
- 2** Aim to run 4-2 times a week
- 3** Focus on long-run nutrition with slow-release carbs and balanced recovery snacks
- 4** Change up your routes to adapt to different conditions.
- 5** Dress for the weather and test your race-day gear.
- 6** Incorporate energy gels into your training to get your body used to fueling during long runs
- 7** Increase your distance gradually.
- 8** Track your progress weekly to stay motivated!





The runner's wardrobe

Footwear

Comfortable shoes are essential! Make sure your shoes fit properly and feel good on your feet. Test them out during your training, and don't wear brand-new shoes on race day to avoid discomfort.

Outfit

Choose clothing that keeps you comfortable and moves with you, from the socks to the cap. We've got you covered with the Riyadh Marathon t-shirt, included in your race kit!

Hydration belt

A hydration belt is a runner's best friend, helping you stay hydrated throughout the race. Be sure to test it out during your training.

Food and water

We've got refreshment stations on the course to keep you hydrated, but feel free to bring along your own snacks like fruits, water, and cereal bars to fuel your journey. Keep that energy high!

Race bib

Your race bib is your entry pass to the event! Be sure to collect it in advance and wear it on the race day.

Music

A good playlist can boost your energy and feel invincible. Music and cheers will also follow along the road!



RUN SMART

A dose of humility

Humility is essential when taking on over 42.195 km. This journey will demand patience, strength, and self-awareness. Embrace humility to respect the challenge, pace yourself wisely, and allow both your body and mind to reach the finish line.

A taste for challenge...

A first marathon is an intense and unique experience, demanding both physical and mental preparation. You'll need the strength to stay committed to your goals and carry them through on race day. It's also an opportunity to develop positive new habits. Start a few months in advance by focusing on your diet, sleep, and stress management. In short, a well-rounded approach is key.

... and training

The best way to prepare is by following a structured training plan over 10 to 12 weeks. This timeframe allows your body to gradually adapt to increasing levels of effort. Remember, you are your own coach: plan and stay organized to be ready and steady on race day.



What should be my diet?

Water

Daily Hydration

Aim for at least 35 ml of water per kg of body weight each day. For example, a 75 kg person should drink around 2.6 liters daily.

During Training

Drink 800-500 ml of water per hour, with 4-3 sips every 25-20 minutes to stay hydrated.

Post-Workout

Gradually drink about 3 liters in the hours following exercise to replenish lost fluids. Don't wait until you feel thirsty, as dehydration can affect performance.

Race Day

Stay hydrated and don't skip any water stops, especially early on

Food

Before the Half-Marathon

Test your nutrition and hydration strategy during a long run (over 2 hours) to find what works. In the 3 days before race day, focus on increasing carbs, fats, and proteins to maximize glycogen storage.

Race day

Plan your last meal around the race start time. Consume carbs (gels, chews, fruit) with water, but avoid overeating. Hydrate well before the race and stick to room-temperature water during the race to avoid discomfort.

After the Half-Marathon

Replenish energy with mineral-rich water and easy-to-digest, high-energy foods. Keep muscle mass intact for sustained performance by maintaining glycogen stores.



FOLLOW your diet

Here is a chart for you to use as a guide during your preparation

The principle is simple

Try to tick all the boxes during your training! Start by trying to tick 4 boxes at a time

Guideline	
Drink at least two liters of water every day + 500 ml per hour of sport.	
Never skip the three main meals.	
If you need a snack, eat the portion of fruit initially planned for the following meal.	
Meals should last at least 20 minutes: the time needed to feel full. Include a starter (e.g. soup).	
Reduce the amount of sugary drinks you consume (fizzy drinks, sweetened hot drinks, fruit juice, squash).	
Cut down on sparkling water as it contains salt except after a session lasting more than 1.5 hours.	
Daily Hydration	
Eat mostly whole grains: pasta, rice, bulgur, wheat, wholemeal/sourdough/granary bread.	
In the evening, consume half the quantity of grains, unless it is the night before a session lasting more than 1.5 hours.	

<h2>Grain</h2>	
<p>Your plate should always contain more vegetables than starchy foods.</p>	
<p>Do not combine bread and starchy foods in the same meal. Always keep a grain product, as these are real sources of fuel.</p>	
<p>During breakfast, avoid crackers and biscuits as they do not satisfy your hunger for long.</p>	
<p>Choose sugar-free muesli (with nuts and dried fruits or chocolate chips) rather than sweetened, processed, shaped or extruded cereals.</p>	
<h2>BALANCED MEALS</h2>	
<p>Add a starter of raw vegetables if your main course does not contain any vegetables.</p>	
<p>Consume a product rich in calcium (almonds, tofu, spinach, beans, fruits) with every meal (three times a day). Ideally, move it to being a post-workout snack.</p>	
<p>Eat a portion of fresh fruit with every meal (so three times a day).</p>	
<p>Replace the cream, butter and frying oil in your main meals with a tablespoon of olive oil per meal.</p>	

3 Little Treats

Crisps, chips, a slice of cake, a glass of juice... you're allowed up to three treats a week but try not to exceed this limit!

3 Main Meals

Throughout training and after the marathon, make sure to eat all three main meals each day. Skipping meals can hinder recovery and performance.

20 Minutes

That's the minimum time it takes after a meal to start feeling full, so take your time eating to avoid overeating.



The ABC's of pace

Your pace typically decreases by about 1 km/h between a half marathon and a full marathon. For example, if you run a half marathon at 12 km/h, a marathon goal of 11 km/h is a solid target.

Quotes from Runners

"Not every marathon turns out the way you want. But I've learned with every injury & obstacle to always trust the process and, most importantly, to train smart."

Naif Abdullah Alobaidallah

"It feels so good to be a marathoner."

Ibrahim Abdulaziz

"I run to discover myself."

Fatemah Almalki



Key to success

Step-by-step training

Consistency is key in training, with both highs and lows along the way. While you'll experience moments of joy and determination, fatigue and doubt may creep in too. Stay focused, don't skip sessions, and aim for steady progress each day.

Increasing intensity

Your body will adapt and grow stronger as you progress. Be patient, avoid rushing, and stick to the training plan to build endurance and strength gradually.

What does basic speed mean?

Focus on maintaining a steady marathon pace, similar to your early training rhythm. This is the pace you aim to hold for hours on race day.

The three types of sessions

1. The long run

Long runs help build stamina by training your body to sustain effort for extended periods. Their goal is to prepare you for running over four hours. Schedule these runs for weekends and consider joining friends at a similar fitness level.

Benefits

Pace memorization

Long runs help you find a sustainable pace that allows you to run comfortably for long stretches. This pace should feel easy enough to maintain while holding a conversation.

Gradual increase

Increase the duration of each long run progressively to build endurance.

Stamina building

Consistent practice will improve your stamina, and your pace will naturally improve as you progress.

Equipment testing

Use long runs to test your shoes, clothes, and nutrition strategy, avoiding any new gear or routines on race day.



2. Jogging

Endurance jogging sessions last between 45 minutes and 1 hour 15 minutes. These low-intensity workouts help build stamina and support recovery from more intense training.

Benefits

Easy to fit in

Jogging can easily be incorporated into your weekly training schedule.

Improves endurance

It enhances both cardiovascular and muscular endurance.

Energy efficiency

Once a week, you can do a fasted jog (on an empty stomach, under an hour) to improve your body's ability to use energy reserves towards the end of the marathon.

3. Interval training

Interval training involves alternating between high-effort and recovery periods, helping boost cardiovascular fitness, running technique, and energy management. This type of training is crucial for marathon preparation, pushing you beyond your comfort zone and improving pacing skills.

Benefits

Varied paces

Interval training challenges you to work at different speeds, enhancing overall physical capacity

Improved efficiency

It fine-tunes your stride and technique, conserving energy for race day.

Precautions

Stress test

If over 40, consider a stress test before starting high-intensity interval training.

Avoid overtraining

Don't schedule interval sessions two days in a row; balance with long runs and jogs for optimal results



EXAMPLES OF INTERVAL SESSIONS

The 30/30

This is the most basic interval training technique. It consists of a repetition of sets: 30 seconds fast, 30 seconds slow (slow jog rather than walking), with the advantage of being possible on all types of terrain. Beginners should try to achieve a first set of 10 repetitions of 30/30 before thinking about intervals over longer durations (and therefore distances).

10 x 400M

This classic interval training session requires good management of repetitions. Run 400 m fast then jog 200 m and start again. Make sure you keep the same pace, both in the 400 m of intense exercise and in the 200 m of recovery.

6 x 1,000M

A demanding set that requires a minimum of experience. It can be split into two separate blocks (2 x 3 x 1,000 m) with a recovery period of 2 minutes between each 1,000 m, and 4 minutes between the two blocks. To save the energy that will enable you to get to the end of the set, don't push yourself too hard during the first three sets. Do not be surprised if you find it hard: everyone finds it hard!

3 x 10 Minutes

This is a long interval training session. This type of workout, run at a pace that might be close to the speed at which you could run 10 km in a competition, teaches you to master a higher speed than that used during endurance sessions and thus be able to last at a high level of intensity. Recovery is at least three minutes of slow jogging. Take care, if you are too tired or short of breath, it is best to slow down or even cut the session short.



MIX THINGS UP CROSS TRAINING

Cross-training involves incorporating activities other than running, such as swimming, cycling, or strength training, into your training plan. It's particularly beneficial for injury prevention, such as for tendinitis, as it allows you to build endurance without the impact from running on hard surfaces

Benefits

1 Variety

Adds diversity to your training routine.

2 Recovery

Aids in recovery by offering low-impact endurance training

3 Increased volume

Helps gradually increase training volume without overloading the body.

4 Strengthens neglected muscles

Targets muscles not typically used in running

5 Injury prevention

Reduces the risk of overuse injuries by balancing different physical activities.

Keep the balance

Running should remain the focus of your marathon training. Cross-training is an excellent complement but should not replace your running sessions.

Stay motivated

The concept of rebound

More training doesn't always equal more improvement. Every athlete has limits. To avoid overtraining, make sure to incorporate rest days or lighter weeks into your program, generally one per month. This recovery is crucial for long-term progress.

Mind over matter

As you progress through your marathon training, mental strength becomes just as important as physical conditioning. During the race, break the distance into smaller, manageable sections rather than focusing on the full marathon. Remember to stay fueled and hydrated.

Trust yourself

Doubts are natural during preparation but keep pushing forward. You've got the support of loved ones who believe in your abilities. When in doubt, remind yourself, "Yes, I can do it! And people believe in you!"





Restorative sleep find the right balance

Preparing for a marathon is physically demanding, and rest is crucial for replenishing energy and repairing the damage done during training. Aim for at least 8 hours of sleep per night to reduce the risk of injury and avoid illness. Skipping recovery, such as ignoring rest days or recovery weeks, can negatively affect performance.

Every four weeks, schedule a "light" week with reduced mileage to allow your body to fully recover. Consider cross-training with activities like swimming or cycling to reduce the repetitive strain on your joints. For example, a 75kg runner's joints absorb 300kg of pressure with each stride, so variety is key to preventing overuse injuries.

countdown

7 days to go

7 days to go

Drink two to three liters of water a day every day before the race. Stick to set mealtimes. And don't go being an adventurous eater a few days before the marathon: eat healthy and simple foods.

3 Days to Go

A short 20-to-30-minute run to keep fit, but no more! Rest more often than you tire yourself out. Find the exact meeting point and figure out how you are going to get there.

2 Days to Go

Increase your glycogen reserves by eating slow-release carbohydrates and protein. Don't go overboard on the pasta and rice though!

1 Day to Go

Choose your outfit for the race according to the weather conditions. Also include something to keep you warm before the start.

Water only! Don't go anywhere without your little bottle of water and drink a few sips every hour. Your urine needs to remain clear!

Relax and avoid any stressful situations. The ideal schedule? A chilled-out afternoon at home, complete with a nap!

97%

the percentage of finishers
in the 2024 Paris Marathon

Race day checklist

1 A Balanced Breakfast

Stick to your good eating habits; don't go over the top! Nothing too complicated, you just need to replenish your energy reserves.

Avoid

- Too much coffee or juice.
- Ready meals.
- Fatty food.
- Large portions of sweetened cereal.
- Poorly tolerated dairy products.

Go For

- Energy bars.
- Whole meal bread.
- Plain müsli.
- Green tea.
- Water.

2 Take Care of Your Sensitive Areas!

Protect sensitive areas of your body where friction can cause skin irritation. Stick plasters on your skin at friction points with your clothing and runners. Apply a thick layer of anti-chafing cream to skin folds and areas where the skin can be irritated by prolonged friction while running.

3 Double or Triple Knot

Tighten your laces, but not too tight because your feet swell during exercise. Whether you tie a double or triple knot is up to you.

4 Right on Time

At least 20 minutes before the start time, go to the start zone defined according to your target time, and warm up to music.

5 Happy and Positive!

Don't forget, we are also here to enjoy ourselves! In a few hours you will be a finisher.

During the race

1 Hydration

Sip water regularly during the race, especially in hot weather, rather than waiting for thirst. Large amounts can cause stomach discomfort.

3 Pace setter

Using a pace setter is a personal choice. While it can help manage your race, stay focused on your own body's signals.

5 Hydration stations

Drink at every station to avoid dehydration and cramps, starting from the first station

7 Warm-up

A light warm-up is enough, as the first few kilometers will also serve to wake up your muscles.

2 Recycling

After finishing your bottle, dispose of it in the designated containers and pour any remaining liquid on the ground.

4 Focus on finishing

For your first marathon, aim to finish, not to achieve a specific time.

6 Start slow

Avoid going out too fast to conserve energy for the later miles. The time saved early can cost you later.

8 Nutrition strategy

Don't try new energy gels or products on race day; plan your nutrition strategy during training.

After the Marathon

Just after the race

To replenish your glycogen reserves, eat foods such as bananas, energy bars and those with a low glycemic index, such as bread, pasta or rice. Carry on drinking water throughout the day.

3-1 days later

It's time to recover! So take it easy. Rest up and eat a balanced diet. Complex carbohydrates and proteins such as quinoa and beans can help repair muscle fibers.

10 days later

After a 7 to 10 day break, your first recovery jog might be in order! Start off very slowly over a distance of 5 km maximum. If you feel any abnormal pain, stop everything! Go and see your physiotherapist to get advice on the best course of action.

14-1 days later

Muscles can ache for up to two weeks after a marathon! Walking, however, can help eliminate toxins. And don't forget to stick to your good habits with nights of more than 8 hours of sleep.

On the 8th of February, it will your turn to run the city and be the hero!

Download SFA's official app for more information about the event and the training group sessions

