

# COUCH *to* MARATHON

## 9 - MONTH TRAINING PLAN

Just like a baby needing nine months in the womb before greeting the world, so a new runner should ideally spend at least nine months building up to running their first marathon.

This 2017 Rotorua Marathon plan is designed for the absolute beginner, but it does assume a base level of fitness of currently being able to run 2km without stopping. And if you're already up to 10k (for your longest most recent run), pick up this plan from November. If you're already up to a half marathon, pick up the plan from January.

### DEFINITIONS

**Easy:** Run at a pace at which you could hold a conversation the whole way. So you may need to alternate walking and running to keep your heart rate down.

**Strides:** Short, controlled bursts of faster running (NOT sprinting) designed to develop good technique. Do these towards the end of a run and follow each with a very easy 90 second jog.

**Fartlek:** A Swedish word meaning "speed play". Warm up with 10-20min jogging, then run intermittent bursts at a comfortably hard pace (one gear above easy pace) for a given period of time (jogging in-between efforts).

**Intervals:** Just like a fartlek run, you'll start the faster running only after 10-20min of jogging to warm up. Intervals in this plan are performed at your estimated 10k race pace and followed by a short period of jogging to recover.

**Tempo Run:** An extended period of faster running designed to develop speed endurance and to increase your lactate threshold. Always warm up with 10-20mins of light jogging beforehand.

**Hills:** When running easy over hilly terrain aim to keep your heart rate to where it is when running on the flat. When performing hill reps run harder uphill, but jog very lightly back down for recovery.

**Rest:** Take the day off from vigorous, load-bearing exercise. This is a good day for a gentle walk, yoga or pilates.

**X-train:** Some form of non-running exercise that will help develop cardio fitness, strength and/or agility. E.g. swimming, weights, walking, cycling, team sports, aerobics etc.

## AUGUST >> GOAL: RUN 5KM

Congratulations on embarking on this marathon journey! This month is all about consistency and creating the habit of getting out the door with your trainers on. Run with friends in scenic locations and be sure to celebrate your first 5k run.

WEEK STARTING	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
1 AUGUST	2k easy	Rest	X-train	Optional 1-2k	Rest	3k easy	X-train
8 AUGUST	2k easy	Rest	X-train	Optional 1-2k	Rest	4k easy	X-train
15 AUGUST	3k easy	Rest	X-train	Rest or X-train	Rest	5k easy	X-train
22 AUGUST	3k easy	Rest	X-train	2k easy	Rest	3k easy w/ 3x10sec strides	X-train
29 AUGUST	4k easy	Rest	X-train	SEE SEP	SEE SEP	SEE SEP	SEE SEP

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# SEPTEMBER >> GOAL: RACE 5KM

Before starting to run super long, we're going to spend a little time getting stronger and faster. This will help prevent injuries and make your future long runs more manageable. Find a 5k race (you may need to shuffle around the schedule to suit) and see how fast you can go.

WEEK STARTING	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
29 AUGUST	SEE AUG	SEE AUG	SEE AUG	3k easy w/ 3x15sec strides	Rest	6k easy	X-train
5 SEPTEMBER	4k easy	Rest	X-train &/or 2k easy	3k fartlek (4x1min; 1min recovery jogs)	Rest	7k easy	X-train
12 SEPTEMBER	5k easy	Rest	X-train &/or 2k easy	4k fartlek (4x2min; 1min recovery jogs)	Rest	8k easy	X-train
19 SEPTEMBER	5k easy	Rest	X-train	3k easy w/ 3x15sec strides	Rest	<b>RACE: 5k</b>	X-train
26 SEPTEMBER	5k easy	Rest	X-train &/or 4k easy	5k fartlek (4x2min; 1min recovery jogs)	Rest	SEE OCT	SEE OCT

# OCTOBER >> GOAL: RUN 10KM

You've laid a great foundation and now is the time to step up the distance by running your first 10k. With the increased distance comes an increased risk of injury. So listen to your body for signs of fatigue and niggles. Be prepared to take the odd extra rest day or opt for swimming and/or aqua jogging instead of running when needed.

WEEK STARTING	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
26 SEPTEMBER	SEE SEPT	SEE SEPT	SEE SEPT	SEE SEPT	SEE SEPT	9k easy	X-train
3 OCTOBER	6k easy	Rest	X-train &/or 4k easy	6k easy (over hills)	Rest	10k easy	X-train
10 OCTOBER	6k fartlek (4x2min; 1min recovery jogs)	Rest	X-train	5k easy w/ 3x30sec strides	Rest	<b>RACE: 5k</b>	X-train
17 OCTOBER	7k easy	Rest	X-train &/or 5k easy	7k easy w/ 6x10sec strides	Rest	10k easy	X-train
24 OCTOBER	7k easy	Rest	X-train &/or 5k easy	7k fartlek (4x3min; 1min recovery jogs)	Rest	11k easy	X-train
31 OCTOBER	7k easy	SEE NOV	SEE NOV	SEE NOV	SEE NOV	SEE NOV	SEE NOV

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# NOVEMBER >> GOAL: HEAD FOR THE HILLS

The hills of the Rotorua Marathon are notorious for making runners hit the wall, so now is a great time to start introducing these into your training. The other benefit of running hills now is that it will help to strengthen your legs to enable them to run further and faster.

WEEK STARTING	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
31 OCTOBER	SEE OCT	Rest	X-train &/or 5k easy	7k easy (over hills)	Rest	12k easy	X-train
7 NOVEMBER	7k interval run: 4x2min @ 5k race pace; 1min recoveries.	Rest	X-train	5k easy w/ 3x30sec strides	Rest	<b>RACE: 5k</b> (plus 2k jog warm up)	X-train
14 NOVEMBER	8k easy	Rest	X-train &/or 5k easy	7k easy w/ 6x20sec uphill strides	Rest	13k easy	X-train
21 NOVEMBER	8k easy (over hills)	Rest	X-train &/or 6k easy	7k fartlek (5x3min; 1min recovery jogs)	Rest	14k easy (over hills)	X-train
28 NOVEMBER	8k interval run: 4x3min @ 5k race pace; 2min recoveries	Rest	X-train	SEE DEC	SEE DEC	SEE DEC	SEE DEC

# DECEMBER >> GOAL: BUILD MILEAGE

Next month you'll be soaring to the heights of regularly running over 20k, so spend December laying the foundations by gradually increasing mileage. Consistency is key. Listen to your body and reward yourself with a massage or two. Plus, use the final 5k race of the year to gauge your fitness gains—you will surprise yourself!

WEEK STARTING	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
28 NOVEMBER	SEE NOV	SEE NOV	SEE NOV	6k easy w/ 3x30sec strides	Rest	<b>RACE: 5k</b> (+ 2k warm up, 1k warm down)	X-train
5 DECEMBER	9k easy	Rest	5k easy	8k easy (over hills)	Rest	15k easy	X-train &/or 4k easy
12 DECEMBER	9k hill reps run: 4x2min on gentle uphill	Rest	X-train &/or 5k easy	8k easy w/ 4x10sec strides	Rest	16k easy (over hills)	X-train &/or 3k easy
19 DECEMBER	9k fartlek (5x3min; 1min recovery jogs)	Rest	9k easy	6k easy	Rest	17k easy (Christmas dinner burner!)	X-train
26 DECEMBER	8k easy (over hills)	Rest	X-train &/or 5k easy	9k interval run: 4x3min @ 5k race pace; 2min recoveries	Rest	9k easy (over hills)	SEE JAN

# JANUARY >> GOAL: RUN HALF MARATHON

Running a half marathon is an accomplishment that very few people ever experience. This month is your chance to pass this major milestone. Enjoy it! Map out a scenic route for your half marathon and take fluids, gels, friends and whanau with you.

WEEK STARTING	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
26 DECEMBER	SEE DEC	SEE DEC	SEE DEC	SEE DEC	SEE DEC	SEE DEC	X-train
2 JANUARY	9k hill reps run: 4x2min on gentle uphill	Rest	10k easy (steady pace for middle 3k)	6k easy	Rest	18k easy	X-train &/ or 5k easy
9 JANUARY	9k easy w/ 6x10sec strides	Rest	11k easy (steady pace for middle 4k)	6k easy	Rest	20k easy (include some hills)	X-train &/ or 4k easy
16 JANUARY	10k fartlek (5x3min; 2min jogs)	Rest	12k easy	6k easy w/ 6x10sec strides	Rest	21k easy	Light x-train
23 JANUARY	6k easy	Rest	X-train &/or 5k easy	10k easy (steady pace for middle 5k)	Rest	13k easy (over hills)	X-train

# FEBRUARY >> GOAL: RACE 10K

Running a 10k race as fast as you can is a great way to estimate how fast you might be able to run a marathon. Use the calculator at [tempofit.org/running-resources/calculator](http://tempofit.org/running-resources/calculator) to project your race times and lactate threshold (L pace). The L pace is designed to teach your body to flush out fatigue while running at a hard, but comfortable, pace (it's also a great test of mental strength!).

WEEK STARTING	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
30 JANUARY	10k easy w/ middle 3k at L pace	Rest	12k easy	6k easy w/ 4x15sec strides	Rest	23k easy	X-train &/ or 5k easy
6 FEBRUARY	10k easy w/ middle 4k at L pace	Rest	13k easy (with hills)	6k easy	Rest	25k easy	X-train &/ or 5k easy
13 FEBRUARY	10k easy	Rest	14k easy w/ middle 6k at L pace	7k easy	Rest	26k easy (with hills)	X-train &/ or 4k easy
20 FEBRUARY	8k interval run: 4x3min @ 10k race pace; 2min jogs)	Rest	X-train &/or 5k easy	6k easy w/ 3x30sec strides	Rest	<b>RACE: 10k</b> (+ 2k warm up & warm down)	Light x-train
27 FEBRUARY	6k easy	Rest	SEE MAR	SEE MAR	SEE MAR	SEE MAR	SEE MAR

# MARCH >> GOAL: GO LONG

The long run will be sent into the stratosphere this month. It's important to stay hydrated and fuelled on these runs and also to keep the pace easy but your running technique tall and strong. Also, you'll find that your fridge gets an extra workout this month with all the calories you'll be burning; replace them with plenty of fresh, colourful fruits and vegetables. And if you have a foam roller at home, use it!

WEEK STARTING	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
27 FEBRUARY	SEE FEB	Rest	12k easy	6k easy w/ 4x15sec hill strides	Rest	28k easy	X-train &/ or 6k easy
6 MARCH	6k easy	Rest	15k easy (with hills)	7k easy w/ 4x15sec strides	Rest	30k easy	X-train &/ or 6k easy
13 MARCH	10k easy w/ middle 3k @ marathon pace + 3k @ L pace	Rest	14k easy	8k easy w/ 4x15sec strides	Rest	20k easy w/ 2 x 3k @ marathon pace	X-train &/ or 7k easy
20 MARCH	9k easy	Rest	16k easy (with hills)	6k easy	Rest	32k easy	X-train &/ or 4k easy
27 MARCH	8k interval run: 4x3min @ 10k race pace; 2min jogs)	Rest	X-train &/or 6k easy	8k easy w/ 4x30sec strides	Rest	<b>RACE: 10k</b> (+ 2k warm up & warm down)	Light x-train

# APRIL >> GOAL: TAPER & ROTORUA MARATHON!

All your training is like money in the bank now. So, to make sure you can withdraw these training funds when you need them, all you have to do in April are a couple of long runs, some marathon-paced running (to familiarise your body and mind with the pace), and a lower mileage period (taper) to allow your body to freshen up before race day. Enjoy!

WEEK STARTING	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
3 APRIL	10k easy	Rest	17k easy	8k easy w/ 4x10sec strides	Rest	35k easy (3hours 30mins max.) practice what you'll wear, eat & do on race day	X-train &/ or 6k easy
10 APRIL	10k easy w/ middle 3k @ marathon pace + 3k @ L pace	Rest	18k easy	8k easy	Rest	30k easy w/ final 10k @ marathon pace (include some hills)	X-train &/ or 7k easy
17 APRIL	9k easy	Rest	14k w/ hills (running steady uphill + 4x10sec strides)	8k easy	Rest	21k easy w/ middle 8k @ marathon pace + final 2k @ L pace	X-train &/ or 6k easy
24 APRIL	8k easy (with hills)	Rest	10k interval run: 5x3min @ 10k race pace; 2min jogs)	8k easy	Rest	13k easy w/ final 4k @ marathon pace	Light x-train
1 MAY	8k easy w/ middle 4k @ marathon pace	Rest	Rest or 6k easy	6k easy w/4x20sec strides	Rest	<b>RACE: ROTORUA MARATHON</b> 42.2k	Soak in any of Rotorua's hot pools!

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