



Birkie Trail Half-Marathon 2015 – General Training Plan and Progression

Overall Training Outline: The general progression of training should be to gradually increase both volume and intensity in the weeks and months leading up to the race, with a two to three week tapering period just prior to the race.

Pacing:

Marathon+ - Long and slow, used for long runs, or recovery runs

Half Marathon – Faster than marathon+, but still not what most would consider fast running

10k – Getting pretty fast (the pace you would run a 10k...)

5k – Fast running, but not sprinting (pace you would run a 5k...)

Sprint – Exactly what it sounds like.

June

Week 1 (6/15/15 – 6/21/15)

Focus: Get back into training

Miles: 10-15

Description: The first week of training should be fairly light, and should be focused on basic aerobic development, and avoiding injury and/or soreness. Mileage should be kept low, and there should be at least two rest days in order to properly recover from the training and prevent injury.

Good Sample Workout: 4-5 mile run at Marathon+ pace

Week 2 (6/22/15 – 6/28/15)

Focus: Continue basic training; add light strength work

Miles: 12-18

Description: This week should be very similar to the previous week, with some basic, easy runs, with the total mileage being slightly higher than last week. Some light strength work should be added this week, and should consist of mostly body weight exercises, with a focus on the lower body and the core. This should be done 2 – 3 times following runs this week.

Good Sample Workout: 4 mile run at Marathon+ pace, followed by a short bodyweight strength routine: 3 x (20 bodyweight squats, 20 calf raises, 30 cruches, 45 second plank, 30 seconds each side planks, 10 side lunges each side).

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July

Week 3 (6/29/15 – 7/5/15)

Focus: Aerobic base training; addition of light intensity

Miles: 15-22

Description: This week, you'll continue with a few easier, shorter runs, but now we'll add in an intensity workout. You'll also want to continue to maintain strength training 2 to 3 times per week. This week, you should also make one of your runs longer, in the 6-7 mile range.

Good Sample Workout: Fartlek intensity workout. This is an intensity workout with the intensity happening at random intervals, for random amounts of time. You should be running about 10k pace during these intervals. A great way to do this on a trail is to find a good, hilly location, and run each hill hard, and then recover on the flats and downhills. Each interval should last at least 3 or 4 minutes, and you should feel fully recovered between each interval. The total distance for a run like this should be in the 4-5 mile range.

Week 4 (7/6/15 – 7/12/15)

Focus: Recovery

Miles: 10-15

Description: Now that you've been building up miles and intensity over the last 3 weeks, we'll take an easy recovery week. Mileage should go back down this week, and intensity should be kept to a minimum also. It would, however, be a good idea to add some 15 second accelerations (approximately 6-8) at the end of some of your shorter runs. This will get your legs moving quickly in preparation for more intensity in the coming weeks without taxing your cardiovascular system too much.

Good Sample Workout: 4 mile run at Marathon+ pace with 7x15 second accelerations at the end of the workout.

Week 5 (7/13/15 – 7/19/15)

Focus: Aerobic training; more intensity

Miles: 20-23

Description: This week you'll want to do two 10k pace intensity workouts. These can either be Fartlek style workouts, or they can be more structured (e.g. 20 minute warm up, 6x4 minutes at 10k pace, 20 minute cool down). In between the intensity workouts, you'll want to continue with easier runs, with one long run this week, that is approximately 8-10 miles.

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Good Sample Workout: 20 minute warm up, 6 times 4 minutes 10k pace on a trail, 20 minute cool down; good stretching following the workout

Week 6 (7/2015 – 7/26/15)

Focus: Intensity/Speed

Miles: 15-18

Description: This week will be intensity and speed focused. You'll want to do at least 2 intensity workouts at 10k pace, and one workout that is mostly an easy run with a few 2-3 minute 5k pace intervals thrown in at random times. In between these harder workouts, you should focus on recovery, and make sure you're running at a nice easy pace, likely no longer than 6 miles.

Good Sample Workout: 4 mile run at Marathon+ pace, after running for at least 20 minutes, do 4 x 2 minutes at 5k pace at random intervals for the rest of the run, making sure you're recovering fully between the intervals.

Week 7 (7/27/15 – 8/2/15)

Focus: Aerobic Training; Longer runs

Miles: 25-30

Description: This week the focus is back to putting in some miles. Your runs should be longer now, and at the end of the week, you should do your longest run of at least 10-12 miles. Strength should come back into focus this week also, and you should do a short, bodyweight strength routine at least 3 times this week following running. There should also be at least one shorter, more intense workout this week to maintain intensity

Good Sample Workout: Sunday of this week (end of the week), 11 mile Marathon+ pace. Find a good trail, enjoy the run, bring water and food with you, and make sure you're staying hydrated as you're running.

August

Week 8 (8/3/15 – 8/9/15)

Focus: Recovery/Speed

Miles 15-20

Description: We'll dial it back this week, allowing the body to recover from the past three hard weeks. Longest run this week should be 9 miles or less, and accelerations should be done after easy runs at least 2 times this week.

Good Sample Workout: 4 mile run at marathon+ pace, followed by 8x15 seconds accelerations

Week 9 (8/10/15 – 8/16/15)

Focus: Intensity/Speed/Strength

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Miles: 20-25

Description: This week should be fairly intense. By this point, you are getting more and more fit, and you should capitalize on your fitness level to get in some good, hard training. With 6 weeks to go until the race, this is the time when you want to be training the hardest in preparation for a taper in a couple of weeks. In addition to the higher intensity workouts this week, you should have a long run planned for the end of the week that is around 11-14 miles.

Good Sample Workout: Hill workout. Find a large hill (should take about 3 minutes to get up). 20 minute warm up, first hill repeat should be at 10k pace (really the last part of the warm up), and then 7-8 more hill repeats should be done at 5k pace. This workout should be very difficult. By the last interval, you should be pretty tired. Be sure you're recovering between intervals, and you get a good cool down at the end of the workout of at least 20 minutes. Make sure you are leaving at least 2 days between this workout and your long run at the end of the week.

Week 10 (8/17/15 – 8/23/15)

Focus: Aerobic Training; Strength

Miles 30-40

Description: Big intensity week last week, now we have a big aerobic week. All runs this week should be at least 5 miles, with the long run at the end of the week approaching 14 miles or so. Be sure all of your runs this week are at a good pace, and you're bringing water and food on longer runs.

Good Sample Workout: 13 mile run on trails. This should be nice and easy, and you should bring plenty of water/sports drink, and a couple of granola bars. Be sure you are running at a good, controlled pace the whole time, and you're not going too hard at the beginning. Also, be sure to get a good amount of carbs and protein following this run in order to replenish the large amount of fuel you've burned.

Week 11 (8/24/15 – 8/30/15)

Focus: Intensity/Speed/Strength

Miles: 15-20

Description: This week should be similar to two weeks ago, but not quite as intense. You'll want to do 2 shorter, faster intensity workouts this week, preferably on hills to maintain strength gained in the last few weeks. Be sure you're recovering well this week (lots of sleep, good nutrition, stay hydrated, etc.)

Good Sample Workout: 4 mile Fartlek workout (with the first 15 minutes as a warm up). Intervals should be 5-10k pace, and you should recover fully between each one.

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September

Week 12 (8/31/15 – 9/6/15)

Focus: Recovery/Speed

Miles: 15-20

Description: This week we'll recover from the previous 3 hard weeks, but we'll still maintain some speed work. Three of your runs this week should be followed by at least 6 15 second accelerations.

Good Sample Workout: 4 mile marathon+ pace run with 7x15 second accelerations following the run.

Week 13 (9/7/15 – 9/13/15)

Focus: Begin Tapering

Miles: 10-15

Description: As we're getting closer and closer to the race, this week you'll want to begin tapering for the race. The past 4 weeks have been all about building both aerobic and anaerobic capacities, and now we need to recover, and let the training take its full effect so that you feel your best on race day. You'll still want to get in one relatively long run this week (10-12 miles), but everything else should be short and easy.

Good Sample Workout: 3 mile marathon+ pace run.

Week 14 (9/14/15 – 9/20/15)

Focus: Taper

Miles: 8-10

Description: Longest run this week should be about 5 miles. At least 2 off days this week.

Week 15 (9/21/15 – 9/26/15)

Focus: Race Prep

Miles: 5-7

Description: Very short, easy runs, just to stay active. Lots of recovery, and a day off at least the day before the race, if not the two days prior. Eat a good dinner the night before the race, and then have a good time on race day! Good Luck!

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