

A group of runners participating in a marathon, with a woman in the foreground wearing a black long-sleeve shirt and a man in a blue long-sleeve shirt. They are running on a paved road with a colorful mural in the background.

LIFETIME[®]
MIAMI

MARATHON  AND HALF

13.1



Miami Half Marathon TuneUp Program by Frankie Ruiz, Chief Running Officer - Life Time

Are you ready to take on the Life Time Miami Half Marathon distance (13.1 miles/21 KM)? You've set your eyes on the race calendar and may be looking for some guidance to get to that Finish Line. The plan we have designed for you will help prepare your body so that you can enjoy your experience if you're a first timer or to perform at an optimum level if you are veteran of the distance.

The plan is based on a 12-week schedule. However, depending on your current fitness level, this plan may be modified by a few weeks. When beginning the TuneUp program, you're encouraged to already be in shape to comfortably complete at least a 5K (or be able to run at least at 15 minutes per mile for 45 minutes straight). For the days of the week that have been assigned, it is ok to shuffle the workouts but keep at least 48 hours between the more demanding workouts and even longer if you are training in warm weather.

Are you a bucket list or avid runner?

If you're looking to just complete the race and have fun doing it, the schedule provided will certainly help you get there. If you're a more seasoned veteran of running and are looking to PR or compete, you too can follow the plan - however, you should add more intensity and increase your total weekly volume. After all, those are the two variables an athlete will adjust during endurance race training to increase the chances of reaching desired goals.

C'mon Frankie! Running is a simple sport, why all the technical and complex sounding terms?

Training jargon can be a bit confusing; often time, different terms mean different things to different runners and coaches. To provide the best understanding before you dive into the training, take a few moments to review some of the terms defined below used for our training. Much like a recipe that includes each ingredient, every single one of these has a purpose and a specific recommended dosage.

Your training will include varied runs described using some running jargon. And within these assigned runs, you'll be running at different speeds and maintain certain paces as you progress. Don't get ahead of yourself - that way you're less likely to burn out and get injured. The effort-based approach is recommended over being mastered by only the pace shown on your smart device. In other words, listen to your body and be cognizant that your effort will fluctuate from workout to workout.

Types of Workouts

Tempo Runs

This type of workout is best described for our purpose as sustained speed for a predetermined duration - usually no longer than about 40 minutes or so. Think of this as another term for quality running. A pace where an extended conversation with a friend isn't easy nor very possible because you will just grow too winded and have to slow down. Your friend might think you're in distress if you should try to talk too much. It's a pace where you aren't too comfortable, but you can handle it steadily for a lengthy period of time.

Intervals

This type of workout is usually done on a track or an unimpeded leveled path. The idea here is that you will run fast but for bouts of shortened distances with rest toggled between each repetition. Your form and strength are gaining the most from this type of workout. Here we think shorter distance but higher intensity. For simplicity's sake, the effort here is best described as non-conversational - at a pace as fast as you would race a 5K on that particular day. This is not an all-out sprint but an evenly spread pace that brings you near that edge where you might need to slow down if you sustain it for the entire distance.

Long Runs

This is the one element of training for a half marathon you can't live without. As the term suggests, it is when we go longer than our average daily training. The pace held is usually conversational or at least comfortable - longer duration but lower intensity. This is a distance we slowly progress up to so that we can eventually come close to that coveted 13.1 Mile/21 KM distance. The physical gains are tremendous as you build aerobic capacity and grow capillaries. Equally important is the confidence you'll be building as you complete the increased distance each week. This is where the endurance is actually built - so you slowly build to push forth when you feel you can't - and the next time this moment comes even later.

For the first few weeks your long run will be assigned as mileage and minutes run. The goal is always to run the miles but starting out, the time spent out on your feet running will suffice - especially if this is your first shot at a long-distance race. We never want to do too much on a day where the weather isn't safe - so if it's a warm and humid day, it may be best to guide yourself using minutes rather than specific mileage.

Fartlek

This is a Swedish term for speed-play coined in the 1940's. When this is assigned, it means you will vary your speed within the run and use slower speeds to recover for a specific allotted time. Think of this as playing tag in the playground. This is what playing outside as a kid feels like. Are you ready to play?

Striders

Not a Usain Bolt type of sprint but close to one. These are about 10-20 seconds long or listed in meters. Their purpose is to help add power to your form and promote an efficient stride. The pace for these is usually a gradual build up, almost to a sprint. But it is NOT a sprint. This is a good time to run as if the cameras are focused on you. Pay extra attention to your posture, your arm swing and your leg turnover. Striders will be one of the more frequently assigned elements to your training.

Following each strider, you can jog for about a minute to recover before your next bout. Feel free to extend this recovery time. When the "+" is in the assigned distance this means the striders are to be done within the distance run as part of that length of time/distance. The striders should be done at any point after the midpoint of your run. If there is no "+" then the striders can be done pre- or post-run.

Recovery

This is crucial for every athlete on this half marathon training journey. The lowered intensity and reduced volume are where we give time to the body to adapt and repair itself. The greatest gains of the body and mind will come during the easy days. We still try to do some movement on these days labeled recovery. This will help us mix things up and avoid getting stale. This also helps us train the entire body as an overall athlete, not just our running legs. You can also use the recovery days to substitute the running for other exercise such as cycling, swimming or other cardio exercise activity.

Pace

You'll see terms such as easy, recovery, medium, moderate and so forth. These are relative terms to you, not to those around you. There are days where "easy" can feel easier than other days. You should also expect your pace to feel easier as your progress through the program. In sum, the assigned pace description means different speeds at different days, and it's all uniquely defined to each individual. Once again, we remind you to think of effort rather than always following a specific pace as dictated by your smart device.

Prep and Clearance

Before you start your training make sure you check with your doctor to be sure you're cleared to start your training. Step two is to make sure you are all geared up by visiting a running store for your essentials. You should also have some form of distance- and time-recording device. That device can be a wearable such as a GPS enabled watch or other smart watch. You could also take your smart phone with you and download any of the many running apps available.

Your Famous Journey

Alright, let's get this Miami Famous running show started. We want more than just 5 minutes of fame for you - we want you running for life! We know that the race is the focus - but the fun and the positive life impact is in the training itself. You can move the workouts around during the week but don't do any of the workout days back-to-back, instead always insert a recovery or a rest day in between if that's on the calendar for that particular week. Keep in mind that "recovery" always means we are still doing something. The word "rest" means you do no exercise that day. You always have the option to opt for rest or shuffle your workouts as you need to; only you know your body and how it should feel.

Warm-up

This will be so important in helping you accrue mileage volume and lessen the chance of injury. It also helps us create the right mindset. It gives added variety to your session when you begin with a proper warm-up. The time spent warming up helps us be cognizant on form because we are fresh and more self-aware of our movements. This is also a good time to adjust to your training or even consider a pause if there are any areas of the body that are in pain or discomfort. If any pain persists for more than 3 days or is acute and sharp, go see a doctor.

5-10 minutes easy jog + 5 minutes of Active Drills + 2 minutes of Leg Swings + Lunges

Active Drills - These can be exaggerated movements of the legs such as high knees marching, butt kicks, short and quick feet shuffle, skips, side jumping jacks, etc. You can find a number of these runner/sprinter drills on videos across the web, pick a few and rotate them every week. Mixing and matching your favorites will work just fine. Make the routines fun and rhythmic.

Leg Swings - This is quite literally the swinging of your legs in various planes from your hips. You swing one leg at a time while holding on to a wall or nearby object to maintain your balance as you swing through forwards, backwards and to opposite sides of your other leg.

Lunges - Simply do 5 forward lunges with each leg followed by 5 reverse lunges with each leg. This to be done in a controlled manner.

Drink hydration fluids and tighten your running shoelaces right before you head out after performing the warm-ups above.

Cool-Down

Long static stretching should be avoided prior to your run. Instead, it's best done after the workout is complete and stretching holds should be for 20-30 seconds. This is a good time to insert more yoga-like poses. The cool down time is a great moment to reflect on your workout. Visualize the good parts and the tough parts to help you connect with the actual thoughts that will go through your mind on race day.

Now that you have some of the basics down, it's time to jump into your 12-week TuneUp plan. Best of luck on your journey to become #MiamiFamous – we're in this together!