



unbound running

Welcome

Everyone here at RacingThePlanet wishes you the best in preparing for the race ahead. We want to see you as fit and healthy as you can possibly be at the start line!

The race ahead will be tough. Every competitor will be challenged. Committing to consistent, structured exercise and planning will put you in the best possible position to overcome anything the race has to offer, and to make it through all 250km so we can see you crossing the finish line with pride.

All the best with your training, and we'll see you at check-in!

On behalf of Unbound Running, welcome! You're about to travel to some beautiful places, enjoy some great company by the campfire, and have one of the most unique athletic experiences going.

This plan is designed to help prepare you for these specific races. You won't just be working on strength and endurance, you'll be getting ready for time off road, with a pack, from early starts into dark nights. Take confidence from knowing that the training ahead will give you the best chance to get the most out of your race.

Good luck, and happy running...

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ferg-Edh".

Disclaimer

Each athlete must bear sole responsibility for their own health and fitness, and for the training and dietary regime that they choose to adopt.

While this plan has been designed to help athletes preparing for RacingThePlanet races, they are guides that each athlete takes sole responsibility for interpreting and applying.

Please seek appropriate medical guidance before undertaking this, or any other, physical endeavour. Stop exercising and seek medical attention if at any point you feel unwell, or experience any unusual or sharp pains.

Don't undertake exercise while under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Do not exercise either when taking painkillers or if you feel painkillers are necessary before or after exercise.

Be conscious of calorie, fluid and electrolyte intake during training and racing, and seek guidance if unsure how to remain appropriately hydrated and fuelled during training and races.

Introduction

The following training plan has only one aim: to improve your fitness to complete RacingThePlanet multi-day races. While the plan does not know your specific background, it assumes that you are in good health and have been undertaking regular exercise for 3-5 hours per week over at least the last 4 months. The plan works to improve your fitness in the three specific areas that are crucial in the self-sufficient environment of the RacingThePlanet races:

- + Physical fitness: this involves endurance (keeping moving for longer), and stamina (moving more strongly for longer), but also strength (carrying weight) and agility (moving on uneven terrain).
- + Mental fitness: this means becoming able to accept and deal with the strain caused by physical stress, and to have developed processes that will allow you to work through adversity and take intelligent decisions that will give you the greatest chance of continuing to move forward.
- + Craft: this means choosing and testing gear, developing stretching and nutritional routines that will help you continue to operate well in the race without having to waste time and energy considering what to do in camp or on the course.

Each month of the plan has an area to focus on for your body, mind, and craft, to help you get the most out of training and to develop relevant race skills. They are not comprehensive, but they're a good start!

All your sessions are based on time, not distance. Your body responds to stress over time – it has no idea how far you might have gone, only how long it has been working for. As you get fitter, you will go further in the same amount of time on the same terrain. This plan involves working on different terrain, and this or other stresses might mean two similar sessions cover very different distances. This is absolutely as it should be.

In a typical week, you will be asked to spend time working at an 'easy, gentle' level of exertion; this engages your cardiovascular system and starts to build endurance at minimal risk of impact injury. Easy means easy: even when running with a pack it's important that you could still hold a full conversation at this effort level. Sessions that involve faster efforts or hills will help you to become more efficient in your movement, and will help develop strength that will aid all your exercise. These higher levels of exertion should be those at which you could talk in sentences, but only just. If you can barely get a word out, you're pushing too hard – save that for sprint finishes in the race!

Your long efforts will acclimatise you to carrying weight over distance. Purposeful, consistent effort for the full session is what matters to maximising gains from these key sessions. Towards the end of the plan you will need to determine the balance between hiking and running that you can sustain day after day. Consider your training sessions in this light: working at a hard but sustainable level – not working so hard that you have nothing left the day after.

The plan has hard sessions, but is designed to avoid those with a disproportionate injury risk to the fitness gained. Consistent, uninjured training matters more than any one session: train to compete, don't compete in training.

Finally: training is the application of deliberate stress so that you heal stronger. Make the most of your hard work by following it with rehydration, refuelling and rest.

Good luck, and happy running...

Training Plan: 24 Weeks: Introducing Structured Exercise

The initial phase of training should allow you to integrate regular exercise into your daily routine. Small, frequent sessions allow you to get used to preparing to train, and allow your body to adapt to cycles of stress and recovery. The body gets stronger *after* the stimulus, so make sure you refuel, rehydrate, and relax after each session.

Training Focus

Body: make sure that the runs are gentle – as slow as you need – but keep the pace consistent

Mind: don't cheat - get off tarmac when you should; your joints need to get used to uneven ground

Craft: find your race pack and shoes now - use them for weighted runs; change if they cause abrasions

Session		Notes
24	Mon	Rest
	Tue	30m easy run (a pace at which you can hold a full conversation)
	Wed	45m easy run, include 5 strides of 20 seconds in the last 10 minutes
	Thu	30m easy run
	Fri	30-60m non-load bearing exercise (yoga, cycling, swimming, etc)
	Sat	30m progression run - 10m easy, 10m harder, 10m tempo (pace at which a sentence is just possible)
	Sun	1 hr hike, with 2kg race rucksack, (carry water, spare jackets, etc), not on tarmac
23	Mon	Rest
	Tue	40m easy run
	Wed	40m intervals - an easy run, but with 4 sets of 2m at tempo pace, 1m recovery, in the last 15 minutes
	Thu	30m easy run
	Fri	30-60m non-load bearing exercise (yoga, cycling, swimming, etc)
	Sat	40m run, include 5 strides of 20 seconds in the last 10 minutes
	Sun	1 hr 30m hike, 4kg rucksack, (carry water, spare jackets, etc), off road; no running - hike purposefully
22	Mon	Rest
	Tue	50m easy run
	Wed	60m easy run, include 5 strides of 20-30 seconds in the last 15 minutes
	Thu	40m easy run
	Fri	45-60m non-load bearing exercise (yoga, cycling, swimming, etc)
	Sat	45m easy run, finding hills to run while keeping your effort level consistent
	Sun	2hr hike, 6kg rucksack, off road, moving as purposefully as possible without running
21	Mon	Rest
	Tue	60m easy run
	Wed	60m progression run; first 30m easy, then 20m harder, last 10m at tempo effort
	Thu	45m easy run - consider this a recovery after yesterday's effort
	Fri	60m non-load bearing exercise (yoga, cycling, swimming, etc)
	Sat	45m easy run, finding hills to run while keeping your effort level consistent
	Sun	2 hr hike, wearing an 8kg rucksack, not on tarmac

Training Plan: 20 Weeks: Hiking (Not Walking)

Hike with purpose, moving swiftly and using your arms. Do not run (yet – it will come). Adapt to the load and work at a strong pace that is sustainable for the entire session. If you plan to race with walking poles, research them and start using them now. Add useful weight to your rucksack, taking food, water, waterproofs, and spare clothes before using bags of rice if you need to top up.

Training Focus

Body: respect the increase in pack weight; aim for constant, purposeful effort

Mind: recognise the mental strain of full body fatigue from pack sessions; practise thinking through it

Craft: start trialling any food or electrolytes on your long hikes; both the quantity and the frequency

Session		Notes
20	Mon	Rest
	Tue	60m easy run
	Wed	60m easy run, finding hills to run while keeping your effort level consistent
	Thu	45m easy run
	Fri	60m non-load bearing exercise (yoga, cycling, swimming, etc)
	Sat	60m progression run; first 30m easy, then 20m harder, last 10m at tempo effort
	Sun	2hr 30m hike, with an 10kg rucksack (carry water, spare jackets, etc), not on tarmac, no running
19	Mon	Rest
	Tue	am: 30-40m easy run; pm: 30-40m easy run
	Wed	45m hill run - easy, including 5x2m up the steepest hill you have, walking down to recover
	Thu	45m easy run
	Fri	60m non-load bearing exercise (yoga, cycling, swimming, etc)
	Sat	60m easy run, picking the pace up slightly for the last 15m (not as fast as tempo)
	Sun	3hr hike, 10kg rucksack, off tarmac, no running
18	Mon	Rest
	Tue	am: 30-45m easy run; pm: 30-45m easy run
	Wed	60m easy run, finding hills to run while keeping your effort level consistent
	Thu	45m easy run
	Fri	60m non-load bearing exercise (yoga, cycling, swimming, etc)
	Sat	60m interval run; easy, with 6x 2m tempo pace with 1m recovery between them in the last 20 minutes
	Sun	3hr 30m hike, 10kg rucksack, not on tarmac, stride purposefully (use the arms)
17	Mon	Rest
	Tue	45-60m easy run
	Wed	60m easy run, include 5 strides of 20-30 seconds in the last 15 minutes
	Thu	45m easy run
	Fri	60m non-load bearing exercise (yoga, cycling, swimming, etc)
	Sat	30m run, gentle and conversational pace
	Sun	2hr hike, 10kg rucksack, off tarmac, no running

Training Plan: 16 Weeks: Increased Stress

As the volume and intensity of training increases, so does the importance of recovery: try to avoid leaving stressful activities for your rest day. Prioritise sleep, eat well and without artificial restriction, and consider reducing alcohol intake. Adapt to the mental stress of running with load: anticipate the slower pace that may result and concentrate on consistent, disciplined effort.

Training Focus

Body: pack runs are high stress - keep the physical effort sustainable

Mind: plan for 2-a-day easy runs - prepare kit and routes the day before - do not sacrifice sleep!

Craft: research and test a head torch (even if it's on a lit sidewalk to begin with)

Session		Notes
16	Mon	Rest
	Tue	am: 30-45m easy run; pm: 30-45m easy run
	Wed	30m pack run, easy with no more than 2kg load; may need to be very slow; focus on form
	Thu	60m easy run over rolling hills; off road
	Fri	60m non load bearing exercise (swimming, cycling, yoga, etc)
	Sat	60m progression run; first 30m easy, then 20m harder, last 10m at tempo effort
	Sun	4hr hike, 10kg pack, off road; steepest hills available
15	Mon	Rest
	Tue	am: 45m easy run; pm: 30-45m easy run
	Wed	30m pack run, easy with no more than 3kg load; may need to be very slow; focus on form
	Thu	60m easy run over rolling hills; off road; include 4x 20 second strides in last 10 minutes
	Fri	60m non load bearing exercise (swimming, cycling, yoga, etc)
	Sat	60m interval run; easy, with 5x 3m tempo pace with 1m recovery between them in the last 20 minutes
	Sun	4hr hike, 10kg pack, off road; steepest hills available; add slow, controlled jogs on downhill sections
14	Mon	Rest
	Tue	am: 45-60m easy run; pm: 30-40m easy run
	Wed	60m progression run; first 30m easy, then 15m harder, last 15m at tempo effort
	Thu	am: 45-60m easy run; pm: 30-40m easy run
	Fri	60m non load bearing exercise (swimming, cycling, yoga, etc)
	Sat	30m pack run, easy with no more than 4kg load; focus on form, cadence and recovery for tomorrow
	Sun	4hr hike, 10kg pack, off road; hike uphill, jog downhills; easy run efforts for 30s of every 5m on the flat
13	Mon	Rest
	Tue	60m easy run
	Wed	60m easy run over rolling hills; off road; include 4x 20 second strides in last 10 minutes
	Thu	45m easy run
	Fri	60m non-load bearing exercise (yoga, cycling, swimming, etc)
	Sat	30m run, gentle and conversational pace
	Sun	2hr hike, 10kg rucksack, off tarmac, no running

Training Plan: 12 Weeks: Race Format Familiarisation

Begin to recognise and adapt to early morning exercise, and what will almost certainly be some time moving after dark. Use training sessions to get used to moving by torchlight and to waking up, eating, hydrating, dressing and exercising. Find and adopt a post-exercise routine, allowing you to refuel, rehydrate, stretch and begin to rest within 30 minutes of getting into camp.

Training Focus

Body: research and use a 5-10 minute stretching routine after your hikes

Mind: start getting used to early morning exercise: ideally start your long hikes at c. 7am

Craft: consider and set a post-run routine for camp: eg rehydrate, refuel, stretch, change clothes

Session		Notes
12	Mon	Rest
	Tue	am: 60m easy run; pm: 30-40m easy run
	Wed	30m pack run, easy with no more than 6kg load
	Thu	60m easy run over rolling hills; off road
	Fri	60m non load bearing exercise (swimming, cycling, yoga, etc)
	Sat	60m tempo run; first 30m easy, then 20m hard tempo effort, then 10m easy
	Sun	4hr hike, 10kg pack, off road; hike uphill, jog downhills; easy run efforts for 1m of every 5m on the flat
11	Mon	Rest
	Tue	am: 60m easy run; pm: 30-45m easy run
	Wed	30m pack run, easy with no more than 7kg load
	Thu	60m easy run over rolling hills; off road; include 4x 20 second strides in last 10 minutes
	Fri	60m non load bearing exercise (swimming, cycling, yoga, etc)
	Sat	60m interval run; easy, with 8x 2m tempo pace with 1m recovery between them in the last 20 minutes
	Sun	4hr hike, 10kg pack, off road; hike uphill, jog downhills; easy run efforts for 90s of every 5m on the flat
10	Mon	Rest
	Tue	am: 60m easy run; pm: 30-45m easy run
	Wed	60m progression run; first 30m easy, then 15m harder, last 15m at tempo effort
	Thu	am: 30-45m easy run; pm: 60m easy run
	Fri	60m non load bearing exercise (swimming, cycling, yoga, etc)
	Sat	30m pack run, easy with no more than 8kg load
	Sun	4hr hike, 10kg pack, off road; hike uphill, jog downhills; easy run efforts for 2m of every 5m on the flat
9	Mon	Rest
	Tue	60m easy run
	Wed	60m easy run over rolling hills; off road; include 4x 20 second strides in last 10 minutes
	Thu	45m easy run
	Fri	60m non-load bearing exercise (yoga, cycling, swimming, etc)
	Sat	30m run, gentle and conversational pace
	Sun	2hr hike, 10kg rucksack, off tarmac, no running

Training Plan: 8 Weeks: Training Peak

Use your long hikes to determine, as objectively as possible, the run/hike split that is best for you. It must be a sustainable effort that, while tiring, leaves you able to operate well the day after: the last minute on the trail is as important as the first; and all the days will count equally. Be confident in your choice, and disciplined in putting it into practise.

Training Focus

Body: consider a sports massage every 1-2 weeks, focus on hamstrings, quads and lower back

Mind: decide on optimal run/walk balance that leaves you feeling strong throughout your long hikes

Craft: lay out all your race kit, research and purchase anything you need; cut weight where possible

Session		Notes
8	Mon	Rest
	Tue	am: 60m easy run; pm: 30-45m easy run
	Wed	30m pack run, easy with no more than 9kg load
	Thu	60m easy run over rolling hills; off road
	Fri	60m non load bearing exercise (swimming, cycling, yoga, etc)
	Sat	60m tempo run; first 30m easy, then 20m hard tempo effort, then 10m easy
	Sun	4hr hike, 10kg pack, off road; hike uphill, jog downhills; easy run efforts for 2.5m of every 5m on the flat
7	Mon	Rest
	Tue	am: 60m easy run; pm: 30-45m easy run
	Wed	30m pack run, easy with no more than 10kg load
	Thu	60m easy run over rolling hills; off road; include 4x 20 second strides in last 10 minutes
	Fri	60m non load bearing exercise (swimming, cycling, yoga, etc)
	Sat	60m interval run; easy, with 6x 3m tempo pace with 90s recovery between them in the last half of the run
	Sun	4hr hike, 10kg pack, off road; hike up, jog down; easy run for no more than 3m of every 5m on the flat
6	Mon	Rest
	Tue	am: 60m easy run; pm: 30-45m easy run
	Wed	60m interval run; easy, with 5x 4m tempo pace with 90s recovery between them in the last half of the run
	Thu	am: 30-45m easy run; pm: 60m easy run
	Fri	60m non load bearing exercise (swimming, cycling, yoga, etc)
	Sat	45m pack run, easy with no more than 10kg load
	Sun	4hr hike, 10kg pack, off road; hike up, jog down; easy run at your preferred race run/walk split
5	Mon	Rest
	Tue	60m easy run
	Wed	60m easy run over rolling hills; off road; include 4x 20 second strides in last 10 minutes
	Thu	45m easy run
	Fri	60m non-load bearing exercise (yoga, cycling, swimming, etc)
	Sat	30m run, gentle and conversational pace
	Sun	2hr hike, 10kg rucksack, off tarmac, no running

Training Plan: 4 Weeks: Psychological Preparation and Taper

Use the long hikes to think about the race ahead – early starts, making breakfast, packing kit, and heading out. Retain your stretching routine, and consider how you will make sure you refuel and rehydrate after each day to recover for the day to come. Look forward to having a fantastic race, moving purposefully every day through some of the most beautiful places on the planet. Enjoy!

Training Focus

Body: enjoy the taper – keep eating and drinking healthily to minimise stress on the body

Mind: look back at your training: take confidence in your new fitness and readiness for the race ahead

Craft: minimise travel stress: pack early, double check gear, stay hydrated and healthy while travelling

Session		Notes
4	Mon	Rest
	Tue	am: 60m easy run; pm: 30-45m easy run
	Wed	45-60m pack run, easy with no more than 10kg load
	Thu	am: 30-45m easy run; pm: 60m easy run
	Fri	60m non load bearing exercise (swimming, cycling, yoga, etc)
	Sat	60m tempo run; first 30m easy, then 20m hard tempo effort, then 10m easy
	Sun	4hr hike, 10kg pack, off road; hike up, jog down; easy run at your preferred race run/walk split
3	Mon	Rest
	Tue	am: 60m easy run; pm: 30-45m easy run
	Wed	60m interval run; easy, with 4x 5m tempo pace with 2m recovery between them
	Thu	am: 60m easy run; pm: 30-45m easy run
	Fri	60m non load bearing exercise (swimming, cycling, yoga, etc)
	Sat	60m pack run, easy with no more than 10kg load
	Sun	4hr hike, 10kg pack, off road; hike up, jog down; easy run at your preferred race run/walk split
2	Mon	Rest
	Tue	60m easy run
	Wed	60m hike, 10kg, not on tarmac; no running
	Thu	45m run, gentle pace but over some hills
	Fri	60m non load bearing exercise (swimming, cycling, yoga, etc)
	Sat	30m run, gentle and conversational pace
	Sun	1hr hike, 10kg pack, off road; hike up, jog down; easy run at your preferred race run/walk split
1	Mon	Rest
	Tue	30m run, gentle pace, off tarmac
	Wed	Rest
	Thu	30m run, gentle pace
	Fri	Rest
	Sat	Race!
	Sun	Race!