

Hal Higdon: On The Run

Ultramarathon Training

Prelude:

You ran a fall marathon. For a month or two, you relaxed your training, cutting back on miles to allow minor injuries to heal. As the year comes to an end, it's time to start working on your New Year's resolution. You're going to run an ultramarathon. Most importantly, you're going to run the prestigious Comrades Marathon in South Africa on Wednesday, June 16. This allows you a little less than six months to get ready.

The 24-week ultramarathon training schedule follows. Here is what you need to know to follow this ultramarathon training program.

Mileage: The schedules include the number of miles to run each day. Unless otherwise noted, run these miles comfortably enough to insure you finish at approximately the same pace you started. The important thing is to *cover* the miles (particularly the weekend long miles), not run them fast.

Pace: Where the term "pace" is used, it refers to the pace you plan to *run* the Comrades Marathon. Remember: since you will need to walk some of the race (specifically the hills), this refers to the actual pace while you are running, not the *average* pace for the full 54 miles.

Cross: This refers to cross-training: other aerobic activities such as biking, swimming and even walking. Do not make the mistake of training harder on these cross-training days than you would if you had run instead.

Step-Back: This is a pattern of training used in the *Marathon Training Guide*. It refers to the fact that every third week or so, you cut your weekly mileage and the mileage of your long runs to save strength for the next push upward.

Mile Repeats: If you choose to include this form of speedwork in your training, run these repeats between 10-K and marathon pace, jogging or walking 3-5 minutes between. If you do not do speedwork, run approximately the same mileage you do on your other mid-week runs.

[Prelude](#)

[Month 6: January](#)

[Month 5: February](#)

[Month 4: March](#)

[Month 3: April](#)

[Month 2: May](#)

[Month 1: June](#)

Week	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Miles
24	cross	4	7	4	rest	7 pace	14	36
23	cross	4	7	4	rest	7 pace	15	37
22	cross	4	5	4	rest	7 pace	11	31
21	cross	4	8	4	rest	8 pace	17	41
Week	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Miles
20	cross	5	8	5	rest	8 pace	18	44
19	cross	5	5	5	rest	8 pace	13	36
18	rest	6	3 x mile	6	rest	6 pace	20	50
17	rest	7	3 x mile	6	rest	7 pace	23	50
Week	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Miles
16	rest	7	3 x mile	6	rest	7 pace	24	51
15	rest	7	4 x mile	6	rest	7 pace	25	53
14	rest	7	4 x mile	6	rest	7 pace	26	54

[24 Week Schedule](#)

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