

Comox Valley RV Half Marathon Training Plan

Congratulations on wanting to run the Comox Valley RV Half Marathon on 22 March 2020. I want you to get to both the start line and the finish line feeling strong and injury-free, and if you happen to set a new personal record (PR) and/or manage to smile for your finisher's photo ... even better!

This program is designed to be adaptable to any fitness level. You'll often notice a broad time range for easy/recovery jogs (e.g. 30-50 mins) or a set range for harder workouts (e.g. 3-5 sets). Please use your discretion (and listen to your body!) when choosing where you fall along these continuums.

Assumptions:

- You currently run ~4 times/week and have a good aerobic base.
- You can comfortably complete 8-10 km in a training run or race.
- You engage in a core strengthening and stretching program to maintain good flexibility, stability, balance and body awareness (e.g. yoga, Pilates, foam rolling, high intensity interval training).
- You prioritize high quality, nutrient-dense food and respect your body's need for sleep and recovery from hard training sessions.

This 18-week training program is designed to have you feeling fit and ready to cover the 21.1 km, which requires you to have a well-developed aerobic system. How do you develop your aerobic system? You jog a lot of very easy miles over the next few months (or even do a jog/walk combo). The number one mistake I see runners make is running too fast on their easy days, or skipping their easy days altogether but never missing a "workout." Please do not make this mistake! The 30 minute recovery jogs in this program are just as important as – if not *more* important than – the fancy track workouts. The very best runners in the world all respect the fact that their aerobic system must be well trained.

How to get the most out of this program

This program has been designed to be flexible so you can personalize it to your unique circumstances. For example, the faster workouts are usually set for Tuesdays and the long runs are on Saturdays, but if they fit your schedule better on Wednesdays/Sundays, feel free to make that change. In order to get the most benefit from any training regimen, it has to work for you.

While consistency of training is a key part of running your best race, I like to teach people to also be *intuitive*. There may be a hard workout on your schedule the same day you feel a sore throat coming on, your calf is acting up, or you're dealing with some extra stress at home or work. *Just remember that you're the boss!* I'd rather you listen to your own body and adjust the program as needed (always erring on the side of caution) in order to avoid a full-blown injury or illness. If you miss a workout, you miss a workout. Do NOT try to make up for it by doing two workouts or long runs too close together.

Completing a few races during your training can be a good idea, and I've even suggested some to consider. Races provide the ideal environment to practice calming your nerves, learning how to pace yourself, and figuring out what to eat/drink for optimal performance. It's certainly not mandatory to run races, but it does provide some variety and could even increase your confidence before the main event.

Defining the Pacing Terms

"Pace" refers to how fast you cover a certain distance. Usually we talk about pace in terms of minutes per kilometer.

Brisk Walk - Every Sunday (or whatever day follows your long run) you'll see a brisk walk in the program. This is not a stroll and you should be able to cover ~5.5 to 6.5 kilometers per hour. The brisk walk is key for recovery and a great way to connect with people in your life who have missed you while you've been out running.

Recovery Runs - These runs are *really* easy - as slow as you need to go to recover from a workout or long run. It is perfectly acceptable to swap these runs for some light cross training (e.g. hike, bike, swim)

instead. If you decide to jog on these days, don't be afraid to take it very easy or even do a jog/walk combo. In order to keep it easy enough, even very fit individuals might benefit from walking up hills.

Easy/Long runs - These runs are also very slow and comfortable and there's a broad range of paces that fall into this category. For many people a fast walk/hike may very well get them into the ballpark here. You should be able to converse easily with a training partner or breathe through your nose if running alone. For those with a GPS watch, aim for 5k pace + 1:30/km OR 10k pace + 1:15/km at the very fastest. If you have access to a heart rate monitor, keep these runs below $180 - \text{age}$. For example, a 40 year old would stay below 140 beats per minute ($180 - 40$). I *know* that you can run faster, but anything faster is not truly easy and interferes with aerobic development.

Most of your weekly mileage should be at an easy/recovery pace (~70%)

Half Marathon Pace (HMP) - The pace that you can maintain for a half marathon. You can estimate this pace by adding 10 sec/km to tempo pace or 15 sec/km to 10k pace.

Tempo - "Comfortably hard," or the pace that you could maintain for a 1-hour race. Tempo pace is slightly *slower* than 10k race pace (5-10 sec/km), so even if your 10k PR is close to 60mins, add 5-10 sec/km to make tempo easier than 10k pace.

10k pace - The speed you would average for a 10k race. For example, if you run a 10k in 50 minutes, your 10k pace would be 5:00 mins/km.

Approximately 10-30% of weekly mileage should be at half marathon, tempo, and 10k race paces

5k pace - The speed you would average for a 5k race. For example, if you run a 5k in 22:30 minutes, your 5k-pace would be 4:30 mins/km.

Speed intervals - Pace for an all out 10-12 minute effort, approximately 5-10sec/km faster than 5k-pace.

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Strides, hills - Pace does not matter. High effort for a short duration with excellent form and quick leg turn is what counts. Strides are ~100m where you gradually accelerate for the first 1/3, hold your speed for the middle 1/3, and gradually decelerate over the final 1/3. Hill training is a great way to increase your strength while minimizing pounding and injury risk.

***Approximately 5-15% of weekly mileage should be done at 5k-pace or faster ***

So ... are you ready to get started?

Comox Valley RV Half Marathon Program

18 Weeks to Go (Nov 18-24)

- Monday: 20-35 min easy run with 4x15s strides midway with 60-90s easy in between
- Tuesday: 30-45 min easy run
- Wednesday: 25-40 min recovery run
- Thursday: X-train, weights, or day off
- Friday: 20-35 mins with 4x15s strides
- Saturday: 50-70 min easy long run
- Sunday: 40-45 min brisk walk)

17 Weeks to Go (Nov 25 – Dec 1)

- Monday: 25-40 min easy run with 5x15s strides midway with 60-90s easy in between
- Tuesday: 35-50 min easy run
- Wednesday: 30-40 min recovery run
- Thursday: X-train, weights, or day off
- Friday: 25-40 mins with 5x15s strides
- Saturday: 60-80 min easy long run
- Sunday: 45-50 min brisk walk (~6-6.5 km/hr)

16 Weeks to Go (Dec 2-8)

- Monday: 30-45 min easy run with 6x15s strides midway with 60-90s easy in between
- Tuesday: 40-55 min easy run
- Wednesday: 30-40 min recovery run
- Thursday: X-train, weights, or day off
- Friday: 25-40 mins with 6x15s strides
- Saturday: 60-80 min easy long run. *If and only if you feel good* with 15 mins left to go, slightly pick up the pace to the faster end of your easy run range
- Sunday: 45-50 min brisk walk.

15 Weeks to Go (Dec 9-15)

- Monday: 30-45 min easy run with 4x20s strides midway with 60-90s easy in between
- Tuesday: 45-60 min easy run
- Wednesday: 30-40 min recovery run
- Thursday: X-train, weights, or day off
- Friday: 20-45 mins with 4x20s strides
- Saturday: 70-90 min easy long run
- Sunday: 50-60 min brisk walk.

14 Weeks to Go (Dec 16-22)

- Monday: 35-50 min easy run with 5x20s strides midway with 60-90s easy in between
- Tuesday: 50-70 min easy run with 4-5x30s hill repeats (10 min warm up, find a gentle hill for the hill repeats, jog up hard and jog down easy to recover, starting the next one only after you're feeling fully recovered, then carry on for the remainder of the prescribed run time)
- Wednesday: 35-45 min recovery jog
- Thursday: X-train, weights, or day off
- Friday: 20-45 mins with 5x20s strides
- Saturday: 70-90 mins easy long run. *If and only if you feel good* with 20 mins left to go, slightly pick up the pace to the faster end of your easy run range
- Sunday: 50-60 min brisk walk.

13 Weeks to Go (Dec 23-29)

- Monday: 40-50 min easy run with 6x20s strides
- Tuesday: 55-70 min easy run, finishing the final ~20 mins on a soccer field/grass. Run 5 laps around the perimeter with a 20s stride during each lap.
- Wednesday (Merry Christmas!): 35-45 min recovery jog
- Thursday: X-train, weights, or day off
- Friday: 30-45 mins with 6x20s strides
- Saturday: 1:20-1:40 easy long run
- Sunday: 50-60 min brisk walk.

12 Weeks to Go (Dec 30-Jan 5)

- Monday: 40-50 min easy run with 6x20s strides
- Tuesday: 45-60 min run split into thirds [First 1/3 easy warm up

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- jog, Middle 1/3 light tempo run, Final 1/3 easy cool down jog]
- Wednesday(Happy New Year!): 30-50 min recovery jog
 - Thursday: X-train, weights, or day off
 - Friday: 30-45 mins with 6x20s strides
 - Saturday: 1:20-1:40 easy long run. *If and only if you feel good* with 20 mins left to go, slightly pick up the pace to the faster end of your easy run range.
 - Sunday: 50-60 min brisk walk

11 Weeks to Go (Jan 6-12)

- Monday: 30-50 min easy run with 6x20s strides
- Tuesday: 20 mins easy warm up followed by 3-4 x 5 mins tempo with 1 min rest in between, 10 min easy cool down jog
- Wednesday: 30-50 min recovery jog
- Thursday: X-train, weights, or day off
- Friday: 30-45 mins with 6x20s strides
- Saturday: 1:20-1:40 long run with the final 30 mins as light tempo
- Sunday: 50-60 min brisk walk.
 - On Sunday there is an 8k race just north of Victoria called Harrier Pioneer 8k. If you choose to do this race, do *not* do a long run on Saturday but rather a 20-30 min easy jog with strides.

10 Weeks to Go (Jan 13-19)

- Monday: 25-40 min easy run with 6x20s strides
- Tuesday: 20 min warm up jog + 12-15 x [1 min on/1 min off] where "on" = ~5k race pace and "off" = easy/recovery jog. 10 min cool down jog.
- Wednesday: 30-50 min recovery jog
- Thursday: X-train, weights, or day off
- Friday: 30-45 mins with 6x20s strides
- Saturday: 1:40-2:00 long run
- Sunday: 50-60 min brisk walk

9 Weeks to Go (Jan 20-26)

- Monday: 25-45 min easy run with 6x20s strides
- Tuesday: 20 min warm up, 2-3 x 8 mins tempo with 5 min recovery jog in between, 10 min cool down
- Wednesday: 30-50 min recovery jog
- Thursday: X-train, weights, or day off

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- Friday: 30-45 mins with 6x20s strides
- Saturday: 1:40-2:00 long run with the final 30 mins a little bit faster (only if you feel good)
- Sunday: 50-60 min brisk walk
 - On Sunday there is a 10k race in the Cowichan Valley called the Cobble Hill 10k. If you choose to do this race, do not do a long run on Saturday but rather a 20-30 min easy jog with strides.

8 Weeks to Go (Jan 27-Feb 2)

- Monday: 25-45 min easy run with 6x20s strides
- Tuesday: 20 min warm up jog, drills/strides, followed by 6-8 x 2 mins hard / 2 mins easy, 10 min cool down
- Wednesday: 30-50 min recovery jog
- Thursday: X-train, weights, or day off
- Friday: 30-45 mins with 6x20s strides
- Saturday: 10 min warm-up + drills/strides + 3x1k tempos with 1 min easy in between + 50-70 mins easy + 2x1k tempos with 1 min easy in between
- Sunday: 50-60 min brisk walk

7 Weeks to Go (Feb 3-9)

- Monday: 30-50 min easy run with 6x20s strides
- Tuesday: 10 min warm up + 3 x long tempo intervals (10 mins, 9 mins, 8 mins) with 1-2 mins rest in between, 10 min cool down
- Wednesday: 30-50 min recovery jog
- Thursday: X-train, weights, or day off
- Friday: 30-45 mins with 6x20s strides
- Saturday: 1:30-1:45 with final 20-30 mins at HMP
- Sunday: 50-60 min brisk walk
 - On Sunday there is a 12k race in Nanaimo called the Cedar 12k. If you choose to do this race, do not do a long run on Saturday, but rather a 20-30 min easy jog with strides.

6 Weeks to Go (Feb 10-16)

- Monday: 30-50 min easy run with 6x20s strides
- Tuesday (this workout can be done on a track):
 - 20 min warm up jog, drills, strides
 - 2-3 x 1000m tempo with 1 min recovery jog in between
 - Rest 2-3 mins

- 2 x 800m @ 5k pace with 2 mins in between
- Rest 3-4mins
- 4 x 200m hard, full recovery
- 10 min cool down jog
- Wednesday: 30-50 min recovery jog
- Thursday: X-train, weights, or day off
- Friday: 30-45 mins with 6x20s strides
- Saturday: 1:20-1:40 with final 6-8k at HMP
- Sunday: 50-60 min brisk walk

5 Weeks to Go (Feb 17-23)

- Monday: 30-40 min easy run with 6x20s strides
- Tuesday: 15min warm up jog + drills, strides, 4-5 x 800m @ 5k pace, recovery = 3mins, 10 min cool down
- Wednesday: 30-50 min recovery jog
- Thursday: X-train, weights, or day off
- Friday: 30-45 mins with 6x20s strides
- Saturday: 10 min warm up jog, 3x1k tempo with 1 min easy jog + 40-60 min easy run + 3x1k tempo with 1 min easy jog
- Sunday: 50-60 min brisk walk
 - On Sunday there is an 8k near Victoria called the Hatley Castle 8k. If you choose to do this race, do not do a long run on Saturday but rather a 20-30 min easy jog with strides.

4 Weeks to Go (Feb 24-Mar 1)

- Monday: 25-45 min easy run with 6x20s strides
- Tuesday: 20 min warm up jog, drills/strides, 4-5 x 3 mins at 5k pace, with equal recovery time, 4x30s fast, 10 min cool down
- Wednesday: 30-50 min recovery jog
- Thursday: X-train, weights, or day off
- Friday: 30-45 mins with 6x20s strides
- Saturday: 1:20-1:40 long run with final 6-8k at HMP
- Sunday: 50-60 min brisk walk

3 Weeks to Go (March 2-8)

- Monday: 25-45 min easy run with 6x20s strides
- Tuesday: 10 min warm up jog, 15-20mins @ HMP, 5mins easy jog + 15-20mins @ HMP, 5mins easy jog, 8-10mins @ HMP, 10 min cool down jog
- Wednesday: 30-50 min recovery jog

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- Thursday: X-train, weights, or day off
- Friday: 30-45 mins with 6x20s strides
- Saturday: 1:15-1:30 long run with final 20 mins slightly faster
- Sunday: 50-60 min brisk walk
 - On Sunday there is 15k race in Port Alberni called the Port Alberni Paper Chase 15k. If you choose to do this race, do not do a long run on Saturday but instead a 20-30 min easy jog with strides.

2 Weeks to Go (March 9-15)

- Monday: 25-45 min easy run with 6x20s strides
- Tuesday: 12-15 min warm up jog, 4-5 x 4 mins @5k pace with 2-3 min recoveries, 10 min cool down
- Wednesday: 30-50 min recovery jog
- Thursday: X-train, weights, or day off
- Friday: Off
- Saturday: 70-80 min long run with final 20 mins at HMP
- Sunday: 40-50 min brisk walk

Race Week (March 16-22)

- Monday: 20-40 min easy run with 5x15s strides
- Tuesday: 10 min warm up + drills/strides, 2-3 x 3 mins at 10k pace, rest = 2 mins + 15-20 min tempo run + 2 x 3 mins at 10k pace, rest = 2 mins, 10 min cool down
- Wednesday: 30-40 min recovery jog
- Thursday: X-train, weights, or 45 min brisk walk
- Friday: Off
- Saturday: Easy 20-30 min jog with 5x15s strides
- Sunday: RACE DAY! Good luck, you've got this!!