

running to race

the ultimate **5km**, **10km** and **half-marathon** plans

Racing is one of the best ways to help improve your running. It helps keep you motivated and gives you something to aim for. Whether you're thinking about entering your first race or want to beat your personal best, we've got the training plans to help. By **Liz Champion**

There is no better feeling than completing your first race. Once you've got the racing bug you'll feel more motivated to train and your fitness levels will improve. Before racing seriously you should have a solid fitness base – both aerobic fitness and muscular endurance. If you are comfortable with your fitness there is no reason why you can't succeed as a racing runner.

Racing is not just about winning. Any level of runner can race – it's all about setting and beating your own personal goals. That could be finishing your first half marathon or breaking 1hour 30 minutes.

The late running philosopher Dr George Sheehan said: "The only difference between a jogger and a runner is an entry form." His words make sense and many runners enter races with the goal of just completing. Don't be afraid to race – it will give your training a boost and a new outlook. Setting yourself challenges to run further and faster is inspiring and fun.

Racing isn't for everyone but every runner should try a few races to see what it's like and decide if they enjoy it. For most of the runners in races, the race is not to win, but to better personal goals

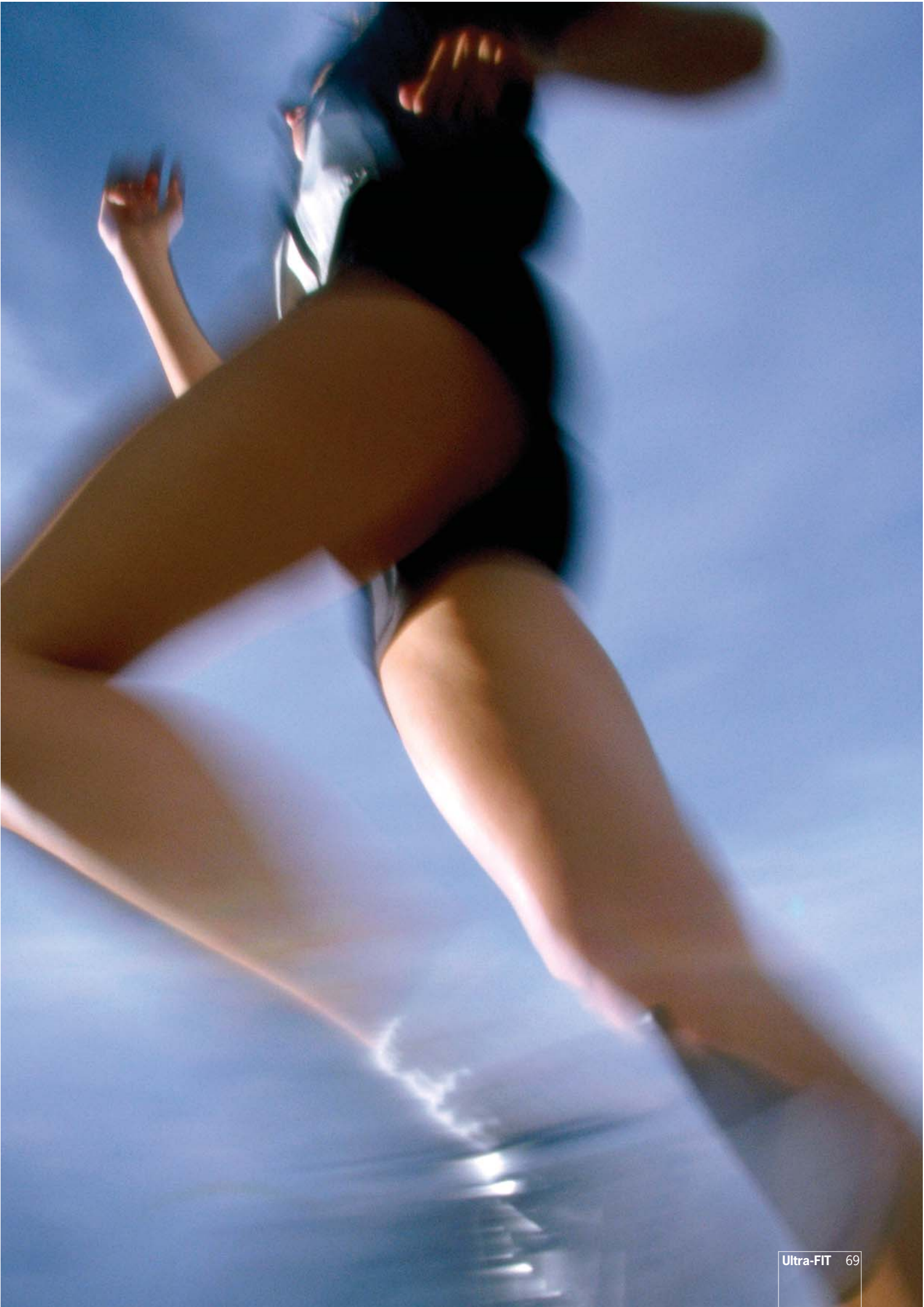
and to have fun doing it. Your first race goal is to finish then you can think about breaking your personal bests.

We've put together 5km, 10km and half marathon training plans for beginners, intermediate and advanced runners - with tips on how to prepare and make the most of your training. When you're selecting a programme make sure you are realistic with your goals. You will need to think about your current levels of fitness and racing experience. We've included definitions of the three groups to help you decide which programme is for you.

Beginner - you're running recreationally two to three times a week. You've done a few fun runs but now you want to enter a real race - and finish.

Intermediate - You're serious about your running, you've taken part in various races and are looking to improve your personal best.

Advanced – you're a regular on the racing circuit and want to step up your training and improve your performance.



The 5km race

The 5km (3.1 miles) race is one of the most popular racing distances and is a great distance for every level of runner. It's achievable for first timers, there's almost one every weekend for personal best chasing intermediates, and it's the ideal fast time trial, tough tempo run, or 10km to marathon tune-up for more experienced competitors.

When you are training for a 5km race, you don't need to be running high mileage. The focus will be on quality rather than quantity. If you're new to racing the goal

will be to complete the race but if you are chasing a time you will need to concentrate on speed work. This will include 400m, 800m repetitions on the track, hill work, fartlek and tempo runs.

The pace during the race should be slightly faster than 10km race pace. The 5km requires less tapering than for the longer distance races and you will probably recover much sooner than if you were running a half marathon. Not everyone is suited for the distance - some runners lack the speed needed to succeed - but it will help improve your

performance over the longer distances.

On race day make sure you do a thorough warm up. Make sure you judge the pace - if you set off too slowly you will struggle to make up time in the later stages, and if you set off too quickly you risk burning out. It is difficult to judge pace in the 5km event - if you set off too slow you immediately fall off target pace and if you slow in the later stages it will affect your time. Every second counts in the 5km race so you will need to work on pace during training to make sure you get it right on race day.

5km programmes

5km Beginner's programme

Week one:

Monday: rest
Tuesday: 3km
Wednesday: 3km
Thursday: 3km
Friday: rest
Saturday: rest
Sunday: 3km

Total: 12km

Week two:

Monday: rest
Tuesday: 6.5km
Wednesday: 4 x 400m fast pace
Thursday: 6.5km
Friday: 5km
Saturday: rest
Sunday: 6.5km

Total: 25km

Week three:

Monday: rest
Tuesday: 5km
Wednesday: 4 x 400m fast pace
Thursday: 3km
Friday: 5km
Saturday: rest
Sunday: 5km

Total: 19km

Week four:

Monday: rest
Tuesday: 5km
Wednesday: 3 x 1000m reps
Thursday: 3km
Friday: 5km
Saturday: rest
Sunday: 6.5km

Total: 22.5km

Week five:

Monday: rest
Tuesday: 5km
Wednesday: 6.5km
Thursday: 3km
Friday: rest
Saturday: 6.5km
Sunday: 3km

Total: 24km

Week six:

Monday: 5km
Tuesday: rest
Wednesday: 3km
Thursday: 3km
Friday: rest
Saturday: rest
Sunday: race

Total: 11km plus race

5km Intermediate programme

Week one:

Monday: 6.5km
Tuesday: 5km
Wednesday: 4 x 800m fast pace
Thursday: rest
Friday: 5km
Saturday: rest
Sunday: 6.5km

Total: 24.5km

Week two:

Monday: rest
Tuesday: 5km
Wednesday: 6.5km fast
Thursday: 5km
Friday: rest
Saturday: 8km
Sunday: 5km

Total: 29.5km

Week three:

Monday: rest
Tuesday: 5km
Wednesday: 4 x 400m fast
Thursday: 3km
Friday: 5km
Saturday: rest
Sunday: 6.5km

Total: 20.5km

Week four:

Monday: rest
Tuesday: 5km
Wednesday: 6.5km fast
Thursday: 3km
Friday: rest
Saturday: 3km
Sunday: 6.5km

Total: 24km

Week five:

Monday: rest
Tuesday: 5km
Wednesday: 5km fast
Thursday: 3km
Friday: rest
Saturday: 3km
Sunday: 6.5km

Total: 22.5km

Week six:

Monday: 3km
Tuesday: 5km
Wednesday: rest
Thursday: 5km
Friday: rest
Saturday: rest
Sunday: race

Total: 13km plus race

5km Advanced programme

Week one:

Monday: rest
Tuesday: 6.4km
Wednesday: 8km fast
Thursday: 6.4km
Friday: rest
Saturday: 1.3km
Sunday: 6.5km

Total: 33.8km

Week two:

Monday: rest
Tuesday: 8km
Wednesday: 6 x 400m
Thursday: 6.5km
Friday: 6.5km
Saturday: rest
Sunday: 9.5km

Total: 32.1km

Week three:

Monday: rest
Tuesday: 5km
Wednesday: 8km fast
Thursday: 5km
Friday: rest
Saturday: 9.5km
Sunday: 5km

Total: 32.5km

TIPS FOR NEW RACERS

- Try to avoid going too quickly in the early stages of the race - start near the back of the field and keep telling yourself to start slowly.
- Find a pace you are comfortable with.
- If you feel good, pick up the pace and try to pass runners ahead of you. This is a great confidence boost.
- Make sure you keep well hydrated before, during and after the race. If it's a hot day you will need to drink more than on a normal training day.
- Take time to recover and avoid the temptation to enter another race immediately.
- Set yourself goals for your next races.

Week four:

Monday: rest
Tuesday: 6.5km
Wednesday: 4 x 800m
Thursday: 5km
Friday: 5km
Saturday: rest
Sunday: 10km

Total: 28.1km

Week five:

Monday: rest
Tuesday: 5km
Wednesday: 5km
Thursday: 5km
Friday: 5km
Saturday: rest
Sunday: 10km

Total: 20km

Week six:

Monday: rest
Tuesday: 5km
Wednesday: 5km
Thursday: 5km
Friday: rest
Saturday: rest
Sunday: race

Total: 15km plus race

10km racing

The 10km race is popular with runners who want to balance endurance and speed work. It is a great distance to use to

The 10km event is the next progression for beginners who have completed a few 5km races and are looking to improve their endurance. It's

“The 10km race is popular with runners who want to balance endurance and speed work”

predict your time over the half-marathon and marathon distances. Most runners can usually recover within a week so use the 10km to gauge their fitness.

also fast enough so that advanced runners can specialise in the distance. To succeed at the distance you will need to run more miles than for 5km

training but with less speed work. You will need to do more speed work than if you were focusing on the half-marathon distance. You will need to build endurance and increase your strength.

It's a good idea to include speed work, hill training and pace work. If you have a hard training session, make sure you take time to recover and don't do too much too soon or you risk injury or burn out.

During the 10km race make sure you don't set off too quickly - concentrate on your pace and push the pace during the last few miles. You will need to experiment with pace work to make sure you get it right on the day.

10km programmes

10km Beginner's programme

Week one:

Monday: rest
Tuesday: 6km
Wednesday: 6km fast
Thursday: 6km
Friday: rest
Saturday: 12km
Sunday: 6km
Total: 36km

Week two:

Monday: rest
Tuesday: 6km
Wednesday: 4 x 400m
Thursday: 6km
Friday: 3km
Saturday: rest
Sunday: 11km
Total: 27.6km

Week three:

Monday: rest
Tuesday: 6km
Wednesday: 4 x 800m
Thursday: 5km
Friday: rest
Saturday: 3km
Sunday: 12km
Total: 27.6km

Week four:

Monday: rest
Tuesday: 6km
Wednesday: 8km fast
Thursday: 6km
Friday: 5km
Saturday: rest
Sunday: 8km
Total: 33km

Week five:

Monday: rest
Tuesday: 6km
Wednesday: 6km fast
Thursday: 5km
Friday: rest
Saturday: 3km
Sunday: 10km
Total: 30km

Week six:

Monday: rest
Tuesday: 3km
Wednesday: rest
Thursday: 3km
Friday: 3km
Saturday: rest
Sunday: race
Total: 9km plus race

10km Intermediate programme

Week one:

Monday: rest
Tuesday: 6km
Wednesday: 6km fast
Thursday: 6km
Friday: rest
Saturday: 6km
Sunday: 12km
Total: 36km

Week two:

Monday: rest
Tuesday: 6km
Wednesday: 4 x 400m
Thursday: 8km
Friday: 6km
Saturday: 5km
Sunday: 12km
Total: 38.6km

Week three:

Monday: rest
Tuesday: 6km
Wednesday: 4 x 800m
Thursday: 6km
Friday: rest
Saturday: 3km
Sunday: 12km
Total: 28.6km

Week four:

Monday: rest
Tuesday: 6km
Wednesday: 8km fast
Thursday: 6km
Friday: 5km
Saturday: rest
Sunday: 10km
Total: 35km

Week five:

Monday: rest
Tuesday: 6km
Wednesday: 6km fast
Thursday: 5km
Friday: rest
Saturday: 5km
Sunday: 10km
Total: 32km

Week six:

Monday: 3km
Tuesday: 3km
Wednesday: rest
Thursday: 3km
Friday: rest
Saturday: rest
Sunday: race
Total: 69km plus race

10km Advanced programme

Week one:

Monday: rest
Tuesday: 10km
Wednesday: 8km fast
Thursday: 8km
Friday: rest
Saturday: 6km
Sunday: 12km
Total: 44km

Week two:

Monday: rest
Tuesday: 10km
Wednesday: 8 x 400m
Thursday: 6km
Friday: 8km
Saturday: rest
Sunday: 12km
Total: 37.6km

Week three:

Monday: rest
Tuesday: 6km
Wednesday: 8km fast
Thursday: 8km
Friday: rest
Saturday: 6km
Sunday: 12km
Total: 40km



Week four:

Monday: rest
Tuesday: 6km
Wednesday: 8km fast
Thursday: 6km
Friday: rest
Saturday: 5km
Sunday: 10km
Total: 35km

Week five:

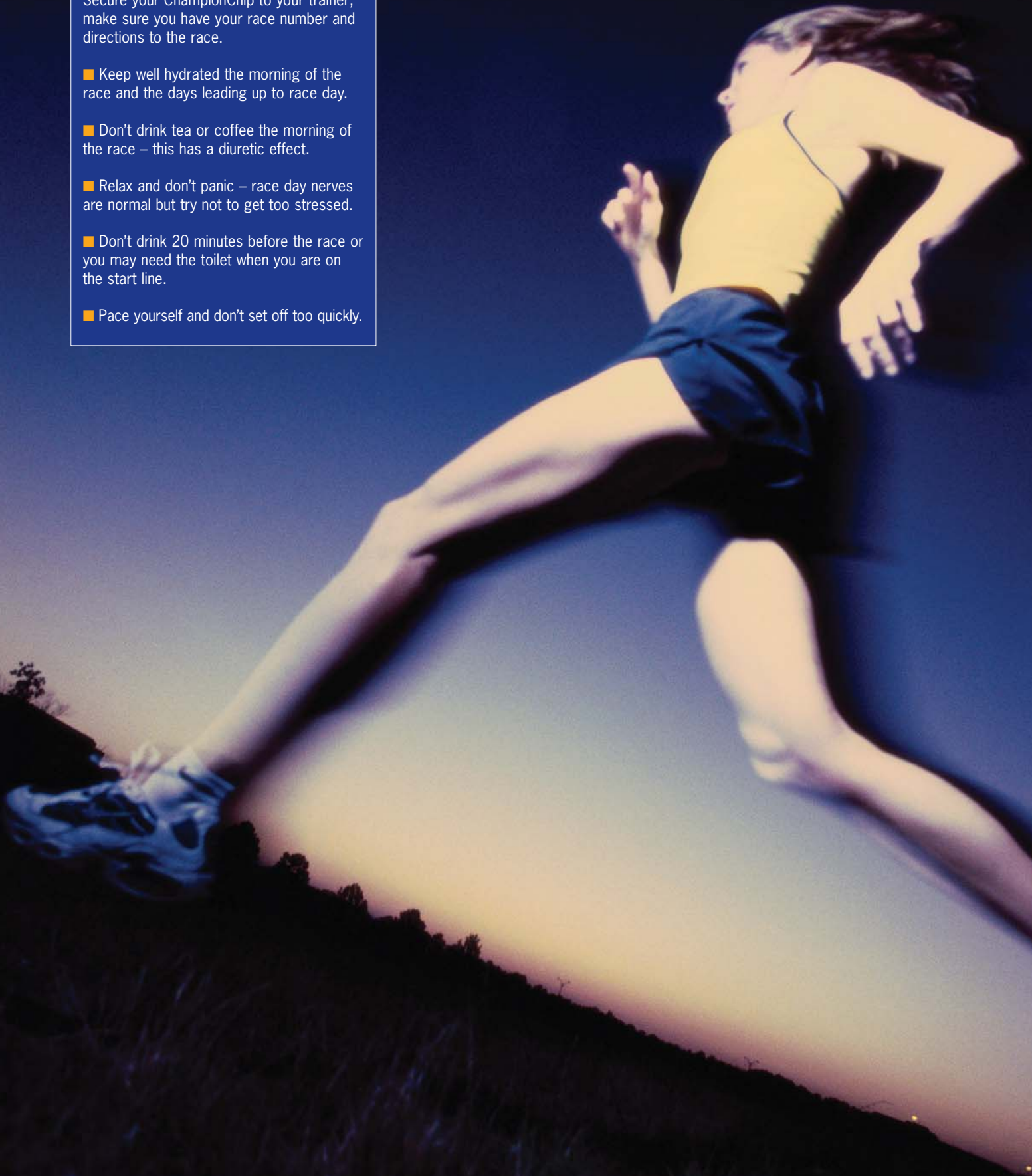
Monday: rest
Tuesday: 5km
Wednesday: 8km
Thursday: 5km
Friday: rest
Saturday: 5km
Sunday: 12km
Total: 35km

Week six:

Monday: rest
Tuesday: 5km
Wednesday: rest
Thursday: 5km
Friday: 3km
Saturday: rest
Sunday: race
Total: 13km plus race

RACE DAY TIPS

- Arrive early – make sure you prepare your kit bag the evening before the race. Secure your ChampionChip to your trainer; make sure you have your race number and directions to the race.
- Keep well hydrated the morning of the race and the days leading up to race day.
- Don't drink tea or coffee the morning of the race – this has a diuretic effect.
- Relax and don't panic – race day nerves are normal but try not to get too stressed.
- Don't drink 20 minutes before the race or you may need the toilet when you are on the start line.
- Pace yourself and don't set off too quickly.



Half-marathon racing

The half-marathon has become very popular with runners looking for a challenging distance but without the commitment that is required from the marathon. The emphasis in training is on distance rather than speed. Make sure you do enough mileage and long runs.

To succeed over the distance you will also need to keep well hydrated and make sure you eat well to fuel your running. The distance will place a lot of strain on your body and if you don't prepare properly you risk dehydrating and depletion of glycogen - the body's main source of energy.

If you are new to the distance, the aim will be to complete the race. The more experienced runners who are chasing a time will need to include faster paced

sessions of four to five miles. You will need to hold a strong pace for a long time. Many runners use 10km races to help them prepare for the half-marathon. The speed of the 10km will also help improve

“The emphasis in training is on distance rather than speed”

your half-marathon time and will make racing the longer distance less stressful.

Tapering is important when you are training for the half-marathon. This is to allow your body time to recover from the

training so your legs are fresh on race day. It's important to remember not to warm up too much - this will only deplete your glycogen levels and make the race more difficult. Jog half a mile to loosen up but remember not to overdo it.

You will need to think about pacing. If you go out slower you still have enough time to make up for it but if you go out too fast, you are making it more difficult and risk failure. Use the first mile as a warm up and then gradually start to speed up your pace - pick out competitors and try to overtake them. Try to resist the urge to race too early - concentrate on staying relaxed but don't let your pace slow. Think about your running form, control your breathing and adjust your pace if you need to slow down or speed up. **UF**

Half-marathon programmes

Half-marathon beginners and intermediate programme - intermediate runners should train at a higher intensity.

Week one:

Monday: rest
Tuesday: 8km
Wednesday: 8km
Thursday: 6km
Friday: 6km
Saturday: 3km
Sunday: 10km
Total: 41km

Week two:

Monday: rest
Tuesday: 8km
Wednesday: 8km fast
Thursday: 8km
Friday: rest
Saturday: 3km
Sunday: 12km
Total: 39km

Week three:

Monday: rest
Tuesday: 8km
Wednesday: 8km fast
Thursday: 6km
Friday: 6km
Saturday: rest
Sunday: 16km
Total: 44km

Week four:

Monday: rest
Tuesday: 8km
Wednesday: 8km fast
Thursday: 8km
Friday: rest
Saturday: 16km
Sunday: 3km
Total: 43km

Week five:

Monday: rest
Tuesday: 6km
Wednesday: 5km
Thursday: 6km
Friday: rest
Saturday: 3km
Sunday: 12km
Total: 32km

Week six:

Monday: rest
Tuesday: 5km
Wednesday: rest
Thursday: 5km
Friday: rest
Saturday: 3km
Sunday: race
Total: 13km plus race

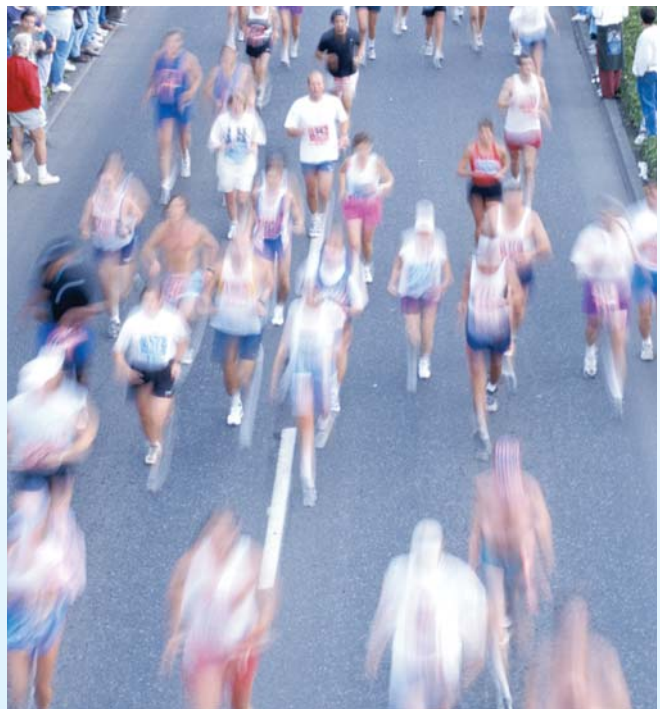
Half-marathon advanced programme

Week one:

Monday: rest
Tuesday: 10km
Wednesday: 10km fast
Thursday: 10km
Friday: 10km
Saturday: rest
Sunday: 10km race
Total: 50km

Week two:

Monday: rest
Tuesday: 10km
Wednesday: 10km fast
Thursday: 10km
Friday: rest
Saturday: 6km
Sunday: 20km
Total: 56km



Week three:

Monday: rest
Tuesday: 10km
Wednesday: 10km fast
Thursday: 10km
Friday: rest
Saturday: 5km
Sunday: 16km
Total: 51km

Week four:

Monday: rest
Tuesday: 8km
Wednesday: 10km
Thursday: 6km
Friday: rest
Saturday: 5km
Sunday: 16km
Total: 44km

Week five:

Monday: rest
Tuesday: 8km
Wednesday: 10km
Thursday: 6km
Friday: rest
Saturday: 5km
Sunday: 12km
Total: 41km

Week six:

Monday: rest
Tuesday: 5km
Wednesday: 5km
Thursday: 5km
Friday: 3km
Saturday: rest
Sunday: race
Total: 18km plus race