

Shortcuts, tips
& tricks to
have a great
race!

MBITION HALF MARATHON HACKS





WELCOME

The half marathon is a fantastic distance to train for as it's challenging without being overwhelming.

Running 13.1 miles is still a long way to go, so you need to train smart to make your half marathon journey fun, rewarding and achievable.

That's why we've put together this bite-sized e-book full of our top half marathon hacks to help you get to the start line prepared, motivated and ready to have an awesome race day!

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SHORTCUTS, TIPS AND TRICKS!

1. Start small, finish big
2. Train smart
3. Build strong foundations
4. Invest in strength and conditioning
5. Find your running zen
6. Balance your training
7. Learn to pace yourself
8. Stay healthy



1. START SMALL, FINISH BIG

Whatever your half marathon goal - whether it's to run a specific time, raise a certain amount of money for a charity or check off an item on your bucket list - the thought of running 13.1 miles can be daunting!

So break up your main goal into a series of shorter term goals, such as completing your first long run or hitting a milestone distance. Having easily achievable targets to aim for within your sessions will keep motivation high throughout your training and make the ultimate goal less intimidating.

*Focus on where you are,
not where you're going.*

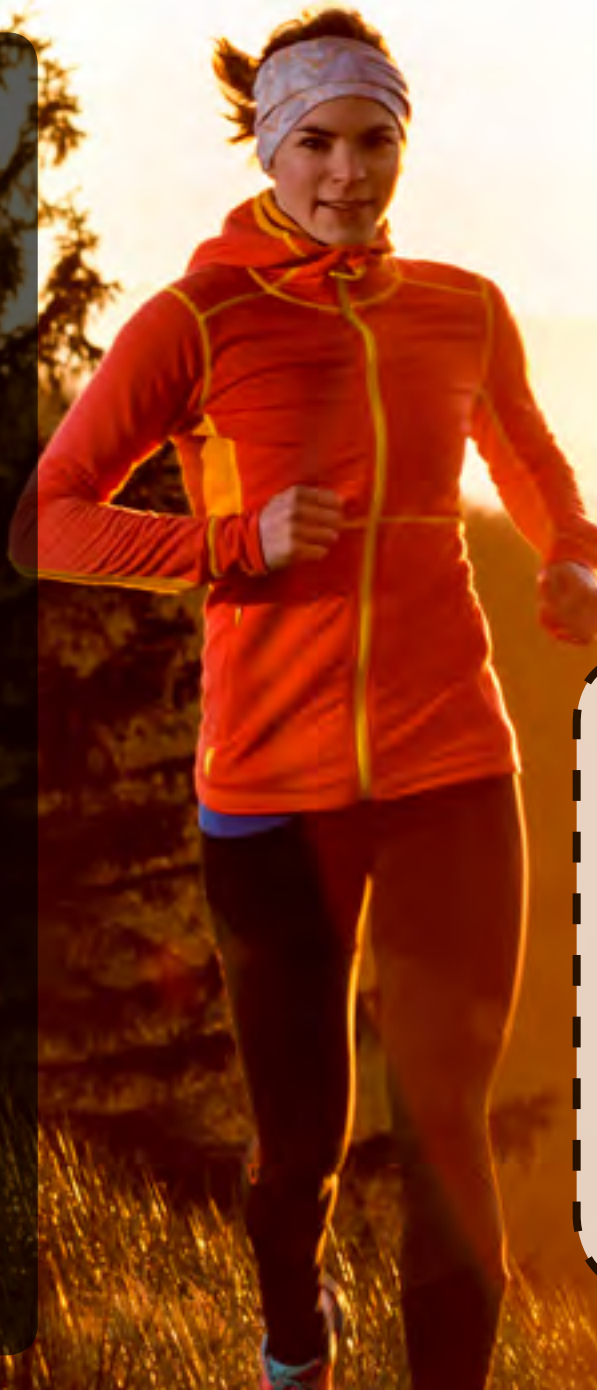
It takes time to slowly build up the fitness to run a half marathon, so it's important to be realistic about your current fitness level and how much time you have to train each week. It can be easy to get carried away with a target finish time you've set yourself, or to get competitive with friends. Your training will be most successful when you listen to your body, so run at an honest pace that is comfortable for you - it will pay off on race day!

HOT TIPS!

Review your current fitness

*Be realistic about how much
training you can commit to*

*Set multiple short term goals
to keep your
motivation high*



2. TRAIN SMART

Your half marathon training should always be focused on quality not quantity.

The long run is the foundation of most running plans as it builds your aerobic fitness and muscular endurance, ensuring you can complete 13.1 miles on race day. But running too far in training can lead to fatigue and possible injury, due to the repetitive stress placed on your body during long distance runs.

Choose a training plan which will give you a variety of sessions.

There aren't many training benefits to running for 3 hours or more so it's best to bolster 'shorter' long runs with quality high intensity sessions such as tempo, hill and speed workouts throughout your training week.

Training at high intensity brings many benefits including increased leg strength and power, improvements to running form and efficiency, increased cardiovascular fitness and improvements to your overall running pace.

So bolster 'shorter' long runs with quality high intensity sessions such as tempo, hill and speed workouts into your training week.



HOT TIPS!

Focus on quality training not the quantity

Include a variety of sessions such as hill and tempo runs into your training

3. BUILD STRONG FOUNDATIONS

Whether you're a regular runner or a beginner, building a strong running foundation early on will help ready your body for the more intensive sessions to come, whilst also increasing the overall effectiveness of your entire training cycle.

However this doesn't mean doing lots of low intensity steady runs when you feel like it. Although this may develop your aerobic potential, building structure and variation into your plan early on will help you to perform at your best on race day.

Your training week should ideally be made up of steady state running to improve your aerobic threshold, one long run to help build your aerobic endurance and faster paced interval sessions to work on speed and power. It's important to gradually introduce speed into a training schedule so your body is ready for more intensive pace sessions later on in your plan and also to help reduce injury.

Don't worry about your pace for the first few weeks, try to run by feel

Putting the focus on training effort rather than the pace you're running at will help you to run more intuitively and in tune with how your body actually feels. The first few weeks can be the toughest as you get into the routine of training, so focus on getting out there and enjoying your running rather than being held back by your GPS watch or overdoing it too early.

HOT TIPS!

Make sure you have structure and variation in your training plan

Include easier high intensity sessions early on

Don't worry about your pace for the first few weeks



4. INVEST IN STRENGTH & CONDITIONING

Running fitness doesn't just mean running! Doing strength & conditioning exercises (S&C) along with cross training is a great way to build up muscle strength, improve your aerobic fitness and minimise your injury risk by improving mobility and activating the specific muscle groups you need for efficient running.

Doing a couple of short 20-30 minute S&C sessions per week will pay off on race day.

Strength training also plays an important role in improving all the vital elements of running at a faster speed: anaerobic fitness, neuromuscular efficiency, running economy and power. So doing a couple of short S&C sessions per week will give you a massive boost on race day.

HOT TIPS!

S&C improves running performance and minimises injury risk

Incorporate 1-2 S&C or cross training sessions into your training week



Click image to see Mbiton's strength & conditioning videos



5. FIND YOUR RUNNING ZEN

To achieve half marathon success, firstly you need to make time for your training and more importantly enjoy running! This can be easier said than done when your mind is full of thoughts and you're rushing to fit a training session in between meetings or picking the kids up from school.

*Book time out of your diary
and approach your training
as quality 'me' time.*

Running alone provides that all important headspace where you have more time to think, to process and to create - it can essentially be moving meditation.

Alternatively, use the time to catch-up with your running friends - miles can fly by when you're having a good chin wag.

Plus your friends can help keep you motivated when you feel like skipping a session.

HOT TIPS!

**Enjoy getting outside and
relaxing as you run**

**Try making sessions social
occasions to keep up your
motivation**



6. BALANCE YOUR TRAINING

Half marathon training doesn't need to take over your life if you have the right plan. It's important to have a training plan which you can realistically stick to, so if a plan has 6 sessions a week and you can only fit 4 in - it's not the right plan for you.

A good training plan will be made up of a variety of sessions specifically designed to optimise every training session, so you will perform at your best on race day.

Don't panic when life gets in the way of training.

We all start training with the best intentions, but inevitably there are some periods where disruptions occur like schedule conflicts, illness or bad weather.

If you've missed some of your training, the temptation to squeeze those sessions into the following week is strong. Unfortunately this tactic can often make you run slower because your body won't get the recovery it needs between runs.

Don't be tempted to play 'catch up' with your training.

All good training programs are periodized, which means they are made up of progressive cycles and phases of training. The sessions in each week are designed to complement each other so you can reach the best possible performance, and ensure you recover sufficiently after each session.

Adding in 'unscheduled' sessions can unbalance a training program and give your body more work or stress than it can handle, increasing your risk of getting injured. If you do need to miss a session, don't worry about it and just move on to the next one in your plan.

HOT TIPS!

Be realistic about how much training you can commit to

Don't panic if your busy schedule is conflicting with your training

If you miss a session in your plan, don't worry and move on to the next one



7. LEARN TO PACE YOURSELF

Getting your pacing right can be difficult both in training and on race day. But like learning any new skill, practise makes perfect!

Practising and being aware of your pace will help you become more consistent, make the most of each training session and improve your performance on race day.

Running by feel can help you run more intuitively and in tune with how your body feels.

Tracking your runs is a great way to monitor progress, but we can sometimes become too dependent on our GPS devices. Feeling your running rhythm by listening to the sound your feet make when they hit the ground and how quickly your arms are moving back and forth, will give you an idea of pace without you having to check your watch every few minutes.

Tempo and speed sessions are a great time to practise changing pace frequently and getting used to feeling what slight differences in pace feel like.

You can think of pacing like gears of a car or bike - you want to be able to adjust the gear for the terrain and type of session you are doing.



HOT TIPS!

Learn to pace by feel rather than relying on GPS

Use interval sessions to practise varying your pace

8. STAY HEALTHY

Whilst training, looking after yourself by eating and sleeping well should be your number one priority.

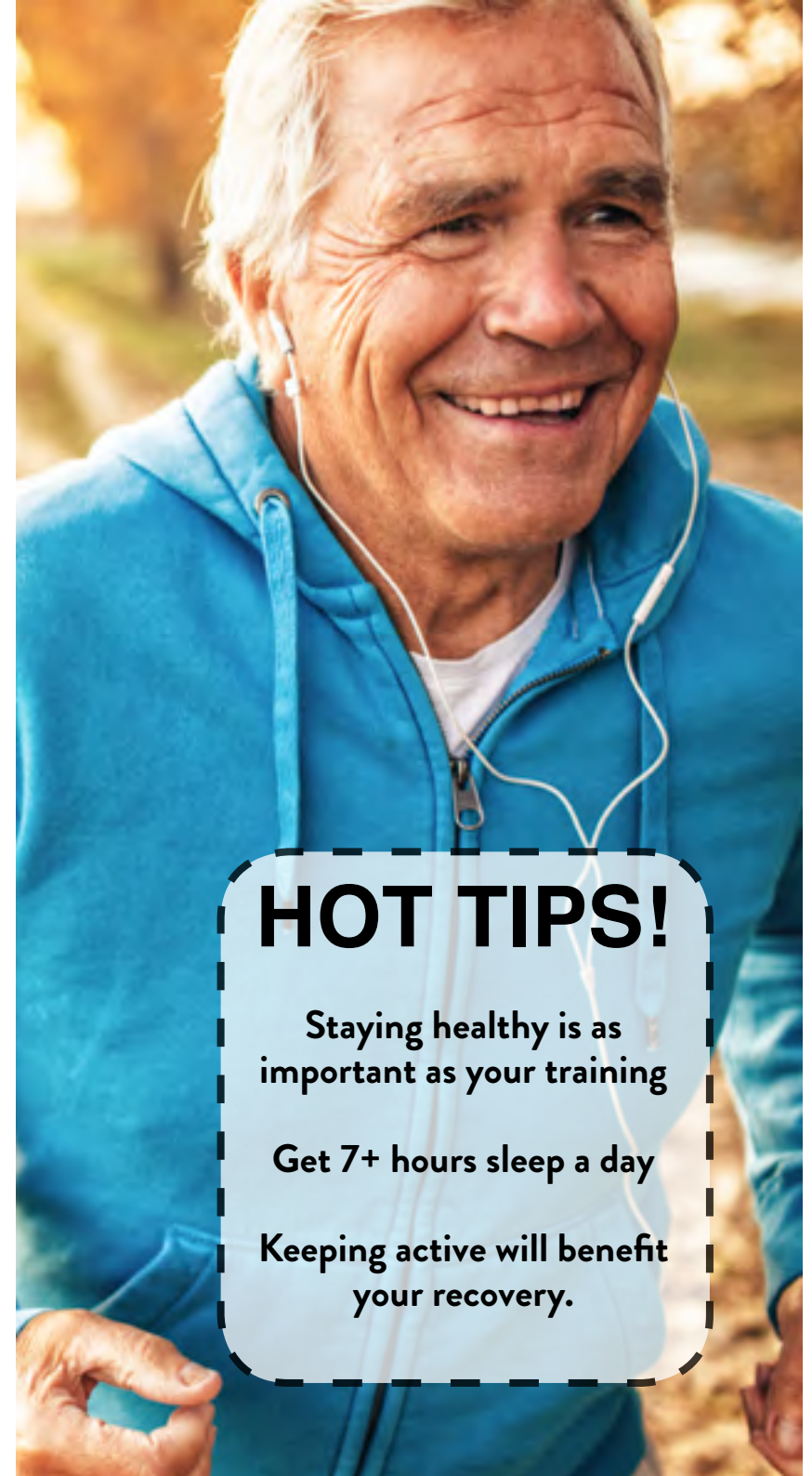
Getting to bed early is key to half marathon success as during sleep your muscles repair themselves, your hunger hormones reset and your brain makes new motor connections so you awake refreshed and ready for your next run. Exercise physiologist Greg McMillan suggests that most runners need even more sleep than the recommended 7 hours as they increase mileage.

It's absolutely OK to miss a few runs if you're feeling fatigued, sick or stressed.

If you're finding it hard to keep up with your training it can be a sign of overtraining, which can lead to a lack of motivation and potential injury. So take some time out to rest and reset.

It's also likely you will get a niggle or two during your training due to the repetitive nature of running and the stress that the body undergoes. For this reason it's a good idea to incorporate non-running exercise into your training such as cycling or a gym class, to keep improving your cardiovascular fitness whilst taking pressure off the body.

Keep active - it may take a couple of days to completely recover from a long run or high intensity session. Doing short and easy active recovery sessions such as walking, yoga or swimming will get your blood moving around the body to repair damaged muscles and help reduce residual fatigue. Meaning that you will bounce back quicker, reduce fatigue and minimise aches and pains so you'll be ready for your next training session.



HOT TIPS!

Staying healthy is as important as your training

Get 7+ hours sleep a day

Keeping active will benefit your recovery.

9. LOVE YOUR FEET

Your feet take a lot of impact forces when you run, 2-3 times your bodyweight, so it's important to take good care of them.

Visit a specialist running store and invest in appropriate running shoes and socks so your feet are well looked after from the start. Also it's important to wear comfortable and well-fitting shoes in your daily life to give your feet a well deserved break when not training.

Plus don't forget your feet when it comes to stretching and strengthening - many runners suffer from foot issues such as plantar fasciitis but it can be easily prevented by investing time in your foot health. So when you're sat on the sofa, give your feet a massage - it will do wonders!

There is no such thing as bad weather – just bad kit.

Investing in the right running gear is also important, as it will make running more enjoyable and there won't be any excuses to miss a session due to bad weather.

Typically a good running wardrobe consists of a breathable base layer, a wind and waterproof jacket and a pair of running tights or shorts. The right clothing will reduce sweat, overheating, chafing and protect you from the elements.

HOT TIPS!

Invest in appropriate trainers and socks

Stretch, strengthen and massage your feet to keep them healthy

Wear the right running gear to make running enjoyable



10. THE RIGHT FUEL IS EVERYTHING

Hydration and proper fueling are key to successful training and finding a comfortable strategy will help you complete your long runs.

If you're out running for fewer than 75 minutes, you can usually rely on water taken before you run and your body's own glycogen stores from a healthy diet to carry you along. For runs over 75 minutes, you begin to deplete glycogen stores and hydration levels which can leave you feeling fatigued, and unmotivated. So it's important to have carbs and water to hand mid-run to keep your blood sugar steady, so you don't crash and burn.

Practise taking on carbs and water during your long run so there's no surprises on race day.

Fuelling at regular intervals and before you need to during your long run is a good habit to get into whilst training. A general guide is to take on 30-60 grams of carb per hour to keep your glycogen stores topped up and 170 ml of fluids every 15 minutes - you can do this with chews, gels, or sports drinks.

Try a variety of foods and fuelling habits throughout your training plan to find what works best for you. It's also important to select foods that you enjoy, and that you know your digestive system tolerates well, because your mood and comfort will affect your performance.

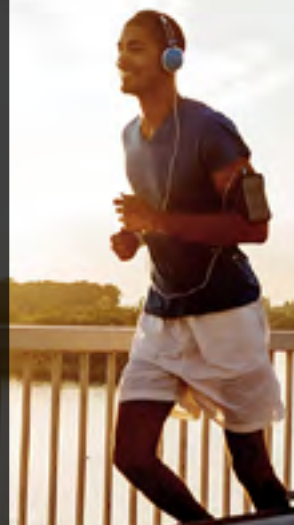
But most importantly, practise your fuel and hydration strategy - you shouldn't try **anything** new on race day!

HOT TIPS!

Fuel at regular intervals during your long run

Practise your fuel and hydration strategy

Find foods that work best for you and that you enjoy



SIGN UP FOR YOUR PERSONAL TRAINING PLAN!



Mbiton is the training plan that gives you all the support you need to achieve your half marathon goal.

It creates a 100% PERSONAL PLAN built around your fitness, goal and schedule.

It uniquely ADAPTS your plan each week to optimize your training, keeping you on track with your goal.

Get started today with our FREE 30 day trial plan!



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