

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE TWENTY-SIX TWO MARATHON CLUB (“TST”) TRAINING PROGRAMS

BEGINNER TRAINING

What is the “Beginner” training, and who is it intended for?

The “Beginner” training is intended primarily for first-time marathoners, although plenty of veteran marathoners have followed the “Beginner” level to prepare for a marathon after a long layoff from running or an injury that requires them to slowly get back into marathon fitness.

What does the Beginner training include?

The 24-week schedule typically consists of:

- **group** long run on Saturday morning
- recovery run on Sunday
- **group** speed work or hill work on Monday evening
- easy run on Tuesday
- rest on Wednesday
- “pace run” or easy run on Thursday
- rest or easy/recovery run on Friday

What happens at the “group” workouts?

The group runs on Saturday mornings generally start with all runners in training with TST together for the start of the run. The routes change every week, and TST provides water along the routes. The coaches usually are in training too, so TST usually does not have coaches “staffing” water stops.

The Monday speed/hill workout locations also vary, but usually begin at Hill Country Middle School. TST coaches lead the Monday workouts, which usually last from about 6:00 to 7:30 p.m.

The Monday “speed” sessions emphasize form and leg speed, not necessarily running “fast.” The hill workouts also cover running form, teaching runners how to run efficiently uphill and downhill. The total mileage for most of the Monday sessions ranges from 4-6 cumulative miles.

What is the average weekly mileage, and what are the long run distances?

- Average is approximately **32 miles per week**
- Long runs range from a low of 7 miles up to 21 miles

What is the difference between Beginner and Intermediate Training?

The Monday workouts are the same for Beginner and Intermediate 1 plans. However, the long runs, recovery runs, easy runs and pace runs are slightly longer for Intermediate than for Beginner.

Which one should I be doing?

If this is your **FIRST** marathon, then you should be following the Beginner plan. Even if this is not your first marathon, you certainly can follow the Beginner schedule.

INTERMEDIATE 1 TRAINING

What is the “Intermediate 1” training, and who is it intended for?

The “Intermediate 1” training is intended for runners who have completed at least one marathon. It is similar to the “Beginner” training, but includes higher weekly mileage and long run distances.

What does the Intermediate 1 training include?

The 24-week schedule typically consists of:

- **group** long run on Saturday morning
- recovery run on Sunday
- **group** speed work or hill work on Monday evening
- easy run on Tuesday
- rest on Wednesday
- “pace run” or easy run on Thursday
- rest or easy/recovery run on Friday

What happens at the “group” workouts?

The group runs on Saturday mornings generally start with all runners in training with TST together for the start of the run. The routes change every week, and TST provides water along the routes. The coaches usually are in training too, so TST usually does not have coaches “staffing” water stops.

The Monday speed/hill workout locations also vary, but usually begin at Hill Country Middle School. TST coaches lead the Monday workouts, which usually last from about 6:00 to 7:30 p.m.

The Monday “speed” sessions emphasize form and leg speed, not necessarily running “fast.” The hill workouts also cover running form, teaching runners how to run efficiently uphill and downhill. The total mileage for most of the Monday sessions ranges from 4-6 cumulative miles.

What is the average weekly mileage, and what are the long run distances?

- Average is approximately **37 miles per week**
- Long runs range from a low of 8 miles up to 21 miles

What is the difference between Beginner and Intermediate Training?

The Monday workouts are the same for Beginner and Intermediate 1 plans. However, the long runs, recovery runs, easy runs and pace runs are slightly longer for Intermediate than for Beginner.

What is the difference between Intermediate 1 and Intermediate 2?

Intermediate 1 training includes Monday group work, Intermediate 2 does not. Intermediate 1 is designed for runners who have completed at least one marathon, but still want the structure of two weekly group workouts (Saturday and Monday), with individual coaching support at the Monday sessions.

Intermediate 2 does not have any group work other than Saturday long runs, and no hill workouts. However, there are more of the intense speed workouts, and although sometimes there are fewer weekly miles in Intermediate 2, they are packed into fewer days. Intermediate 2 is designed for marathoners who are experienced enough to train on their own, don't need or want a lot of guidance from a coach week-to-week, and need a more flexible weekly training schedule.

INTERMEDIATE 2 TRAINING

What is the “Intermediate 2” training, and who is it intended for?

The “Intermediate 1” training is intended for runners who have completed at least one marathon, but who need a slightly more flexible schedule during the week. There are no group workouts other than the Saturday long runs. It is very similar to the “Intermediate 1” training, does have a slightly higher amount of intensity work for runners to complete on their own.

What does the Intermediate 2 training include?

The 24-week schedule typically consists of:

- **group** long run on Saturday morning
- recovery run on Sunday
- easy run on Monday
- easy run on Tuesday
- rest on Wednesday
- “pace run” or easy run on Thursday
- rest on all but 5 of the 24 Fridays

Can Intermediate 2 runners attend any of the “group” workouts other than Saturday?

The Intermediate 2 plan is designed for runners to attend the Saturday morning runs with all other runners who are training with TST. The routes change every week, and TST provides water along the routes. The coaches usually are in training too, so TST usually does not have coaches “staffing” water stops. Although there are no other group workouts in the schedule, Intermediate 2 runners are welcome to attend track workouts with other TST training groups, usually on Mondays. However, there are no hill workouts in the Intermediate 2 plan, and the speed workouts are usually on Thursdays.

What is the average weekly mileage, and what are the long run distances?

- Average is approximately **36 miles per week**
- Long runs range from a low of 8 miles up to 21 miles

What is the difference between Intermediate 1 and Intermediate 2?

Intermediate 1 training includes Monday group work, Intermediate 2 does not. Intermediate 2 does not have any group work other than Saturday long runs, and no hill workouts. However, there are more of the intense speed workouts, and although sometimes there are fewer weekly miles in Intermediate 2, they are packed into fewer days. Intermediate 2 is designed for marathoners who are experienced enough to train on their own, don't need or want a lot of guidance from a coach week-to-week, and need a more flexible weekly training schedule.

ADVANCED TRAINING

What is the “Advanced” training, and who is it intended for?

The “Advanced” training is intended for experienced marathoners (not necessarily “fast”) who are comfortable training a significant amount of time on their own. The Advanced training is recommended for runners who want to attempt to run a “personal record” or “Boston qualifying time.”

What does the Advanced training include?

The 24-week schedule that typically consists of:

- long run on Saturday
- recovery run on Sunday
- easy run or speed work on Monday
- recovery run or easy run on Tuesday
- rest on Wednesday
- pace run or easy run on Thursday
- rest or easy run on Friday

Is there any training that I should do before the 24-week training starts?

Runners who want to tackle the Advanced training should aim for 8-12 weeks of “base” work, where the runners are expected to do most of their work at a very slow, easy pace (using a heart rate monitor if available). There is a bit of “homework” to be done at the outset of training to determine maximal heart rate, resting heart rate, “heart rate reserve,” and training zones. The 8-12 weeks of base work should be completed before the 24-week regimen begins. Accordingly, to get the maximum benefit from this training, runners should identify their target race date, count backwards 32-36 weeks, and begin base training at that point.

Are there any “group” sessions?

The Advanced groups meet on Monday evenings for speed work, tempo runs and occasional hill work, but those sessions are not every week in the training plan. The Advanced groups also meet on Saturday mornings for the long run. With limited exceptions, there are no other “group” workouts under this plan. However, in the past, runners who train with Twenty-Six Two under this plan occasionally get together for runs on Tuesdays and Thursdays also.

What is the average weekly mileage, and what are the long run distances?

- Average is approximately **43 miles per week**
- Long runs range from a low of 10 miles up to 21 miles

Can I switch between “Beginner” or “Intermediate” training and “Advanced” training once the programs are underway?

Switching from Beginner or Intermediate training to Advanced training is not recommended. The demands and intensity of the Advanced training are high, and rely heavily on the many weeks of base training that precede the 24-week regimen. Switching from Advanced to Beginner or Intermediate training should not be a problem. It is a step down in intensity and overall mileage.