

# Two Oceans Marathon 2020 Training Programmes - Intro



## INTRODUCTION TO THE TWO OCEANS MARATHON 2020 TRAINING PROGRAMMES

If you've secured your entry for the Two Oceans Marathon Half or Ultra Marathon 2020, congratulations!

Now the hard work begins as you prepare to achieve a particular goal time and medal for your race. The Two Oceans Marathon has partnered with the Sports Science Institute of South Africa to help you on your running journey with a series of six training programmes that are specifically designed to help you achieve your target race times for either the Half or Ultra Marathon.

**The 15-week programmes include three Half Marathon Programmes and three Ultra Marathon Programmes.**

The TOM 2020 Half Marathon Training Programmes are designed for those:

- seeking the elusive Silver Medal for the Half Marathon (sub 90 minutes)
- chasing a sub 2-hour finish for the Half Marathon, or
- who are essentially recreational runners aiming to finish the Half comfortably within the cut-off time.

The TOM 2020 Ultra Marathon Training Programmes are designed for those aiming for either:

- the Sainsbury Medal
- a Bronze Medal, or
- the finisher's Blue Medal.

Given the options above, how do you go about choosing the best programme for the particular race you have entered?

The training programmes are all similar in composition. They are periodised relative to Race Day into the following phases:

- Base
- Transition
- Peak, and
- Taper.

These phases build onto each other in the following manner:

- They start with a focus on increasing mileage or volume.
- Then, steadily more intensity and hill work with specific speed, hill or time trial work is incorporated.
- The phases then peak with efforts closely resembling the race, before tapering off to Race Day.

However, the difference lies in the finer details of the various sessions. The increase in mileage for the Half Marathon runners is naturally more gradual as significantly less load is required to prepare. Within Half or Ultra marathon streams, there is also a more gradual increase in load for beginner runners with less running experience, whereas more rapid increases in load are prescribed for those chasing faster times and who likely have more training load behind them.

Advanced runners targeting the faster race times will be exposed to higher intensity work sooner into their programmes (e.g. speed or hill work) and will accumulate more time at those higher intensities compared to those chasing slower times. This is again due to the assumption that those chasing faster times are more familiar with work at higher intensities, and because a greater amount of time at these intensities is needed to ensure the target race pace is sustainable come Race Day.

Read more about each programme to determine the best one for you.



**Half Marathon Beginner Programme** – This is designed for recreational runners who have been able to maintain some running fitness over the past while, accumulating around 20 km each week and/or who would like to finish the race comfortably within the cut-off time. These runners would probably struggle to achieve a sub 60-minute 10 km run. The programme demands four runs per week, with three of these being low intensity easy or long runs and one speed session per week. Weekly mileage starts off at 21 km and peaks at 38 km before tapering off to Race Day.

**Half Marathon Intermediate Programme** – This is designed for recreational runners who are striving to break the 2-hour barrier or even edge closer to that 90 minute mark. They should have been running at least 25 to 30 km per week over the last while and should be able to run a 10 km in under or around 60 minutes. Similarly to the Beginners' programme, the Intermediate programme demands four runs per week, with one of those involving higher intensity work, but the mileage is consistently higher – starting off at 25 km in week 1 and peaking at 50 km before tapering off.

**Half Marathon Silver Medal ('Advanced') Programme** – This is designed for more serious, faster runners who are striving to break that 90-minute mark. You should have been training at least 30 km over the past one to two months and have a solid history of running training and speed work. This programme demands an extra run per week, amounting to five runs per week, except during de-load weeks. This consists of three low intensity easy or long runs and two higher intensity runs, with one focused on speed and the other on hill training. The latter is specifically important for those targeting the Silver Medal since runners need to be able to sustain a fast pace on the long hills found on the Half Marathon route. These runners should be able to run a 10 km in sub 45 minutes. Weekly mileage starts at 30 km and peaks at 60 km before tapering off to Race Day.

**Ultra Marathon Blue Medal Programme** – This programme is designed for runners wanting to cross the finish line at the Ultra Marathon within the cut-off time. They should have been running more than 25–30 km relatively consistently over the past 2 months or so and should be able to complete a 21.1 km in 2 to 2.5 hours. The programme starts at an easy pace in week 1 with 3 runs and a total mileage of 25 km. However, from week 3 the programme ramps up in mileage and hill exposure over the remainder of the base period to culminate at a total of 45 km within week 6. The transition period sees the introduction of specific speed work with peak mileage achieved at week 12 (3 weeks out) at 65 km.

**Ultra Marathon Bronze Medal Programme** – This programme is designed for more experienced, who have been running (> 30 km/week) for the past 2 months or so and/or who are faster and aiming to receive a Bronze Medal in the Ultra Marathon. These runners would be capable of a sub 2-hour half marathon. Similar to the Blue Medal Programme, it starts relatively easily at 28 km in week 1, however, it ramps up in both mileage and exposure to hill and speed work (from week 1) more rapidly than the Blue Medal Programme. Peak mileage also occurs during week 12 (at 73 km) before tapering off.

**Ultra Marathon Sainsbury Medal Programme** – Lastly, this programme is designed for more competitive and/or experienced runners, who have probably completed the Ultra Marathon or similar races previously; and have been running about 35 – 40 km/week consistently for about 2 months. These runners want to push themselves and achieve a highly sought after Sainsbury Medal in the Ultra Marathon. This programme is significantly more demanding than the two above, increasing in mileage more rapidly and incorporating more high-intensity work than the other programmes. The latter typically comes in the form of an extra speed, hill or time trial session per week. These sessions are intended to promote adaptations that will enable you to summit the tough hills that are characteristic of the TOM Ultra route relatively comfortably, and to sustain an overall faster pace on Race Day. Similar to the Bronze Medal Programme, mileage peaks during week 12 at 73 km. This reinforces the fact that the primary distinction between programmes is the added intensity work of the Sainsbury Medal Programme.

Although these programmes are designed to get you to your goal race time, they should not be viewed as your sole training resource. If you're tackling the Ultra Marathon in particular and/or are less conditioned for the race you have entered, running-specific strength training on ideally two days per week should be viewed as a crucial adjunct to your running programme.

Your strength training should include appropriate mobility, stability, activation, strength and conditioning work. This will help to ensure the following:

- that your joints are able to move through their full range of motion
- that your joints are well supported and aligned due to strong surrounding soft tissue structures
- that the right muscles are firing at the right time and to an appropriate extent during your running gait, and
- that your muscles are all strong enough to withstand the high eccentric load (particularly on the long downhill of the Ultra), and continue to propel your body forward for the duration of the race.

Incorporating appropriate and structured strength training will significantly boost your chances of training and racing injury-free and achieving the performance you desire. For more information on what strength training to include and how to incorporate it into your

training, contact the Sports Performance Centre at the Sports Science Institute of South Africa ([www.ssisa.com](http://www.ssisa.com)) at [dleith@ssisa.com](mailto:dleith@ssisa.com).

