



unbound running

Welcome

Everyone here at RacingThePlanet wishes you the best in preparing for the race ahead. We want to see you as fit and healthy as you can possibly be at the start line!

The race ahead will be tough. Every competitor will be challenged. Committing to consistent, structured exercise and planning will put you in the best possible position to overcome anything the race has to offer, and to make it through all 250km so we can see you crossing the finish line with pride.

All the best with your training, and we'll see you at check-in!

On behalf of Unbound Running, welcome! You're about to travel to some beautiful places, enjoy some great company by the campfire, and have one of the most unique athletic experiences going.

This plan is designed to help prepare you for these specific races. You won't just be working on strength and endurance, you'll be getting ready for time off road, with a pack, from early starts into dark nights. Take confidence from knowing that the training ahead will give you the best chance to get the most out of your race.

Good luck, and happy running...

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ferg-Edh".

Disclaimer

Each athlete must bear sole responsibility for their own health and fitness, and for the training and dietary regime that they choose to adopt.

While this plan has been designed to help athletes preparing for RacingThePlanet races, they are guides that each athlete takes sole responsibility for interpreting and applying.

Please seek appropriate medical guidance before undertaking this, or any other, physical endeavour. Stop exercising and seek medical attention if at any point you feel unwell, or experience any unusual or sharp pains.

Don't undertake exercise while under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Do not exercise either when taking painkillers or if you feel painkillers are necessary before or after exercise.

Be conscious of calorie, fluid and electrolyte intake during training and racing, and seek guidance if unsure how to remain appropriately hydrated and fuelled during training and races.

Introduction

The following training plan has only one aim: to improve your fitness to complete RacingThePlanet multi-day races. Each day of the plan has a specific activity for the day. The plan does not know you or your background, so it simply assumes that you are in good general health but taking no regular exercise. There are three areas in which your fitness will improve, and they are all important in such a self-sufficient environment:

- + Physical fitness: this involves endurance (keeping moving for longer), and stamina (moving more strongly for longer), but also strength (carrying weight) and agility (moving on uneven terrain).
- + Mental fitness: this means becoming able to accept and deal with the strain caused by physical stress, and to have developed processes that will allow you to work through adversity and take intelligent decisions that will give you the greatest chance of continuing to move forward.
- + Craft: this means choosing and testing gear and nutrition, developing stretching and nutritional routines that will help you continue to operate well in the race without having to waste time and energy considering what to do in camp or on the course.

Each month of the plan has an area to focus on for your body, mind, and craft, to help you get the most out of training and to develop relevant race skills. They are not comprehensive, but they're a good start!

All your sessions are based on time, not distance. Your body responds to stress over time – it has no idea how far you might have gone, only how long it has been working for. As you get fitter, you will go further in the same amount of time on the same terrain. This plan involves working on different terrain, and this or other stresses might mean two similar sessions cover very different distances. This is absolutely as it should be.

In a typical week, you will be asked to spend time working at an 'easy, gentle' level of exertion. This engages your cardiovascular system and starts to build endurance at minimal risk of impact injury. Easy means easy: while you should be focused on the task at hand, it's important that you could still hold a full conversation at this effort level.

You will then have some faster efforts and some involving hills. These help you to become more efficient in your movement, and will help develop strength that will aid all your exercise. These higher levels of exertion should be those at which you could talk in sentences, but only just. If you can barely get a word out, you're pushing too hard – save that for sprint finishes in the race!

Your long efforts will acclimatise you to carrying weight over distance. Purposeful, consistent effort for the full session is what matters to maximising gains from these key sessions. The plan avoids sessions that increase injury risk with reduced marginal training benefit – there are no day long hikes or back to back long runs. Consistent, uninjured training matters more than any one session: train to compete, don't compete in training.

Finally: training is the application of deliberate stress so that you heal stronger. Make the most of your hard work by following it with rehydration, refuelling and rest.

Good luck, and happy running...

Training Plan: 24 Weeks: Introducing Structured Exercise

The initial phase of training should allow you to integrate regular exercise into your daily routine. Small, frequent sessions allow you to get used to preparing to train, and allow your body to adapt to cycles of stress and recovery. The body gets stronger *after* the stimulus, so make sure you refuel, rehydrate, and relax after each session.

Training Focus

Body: make sure that the runs are gentle – as slow as you need – but keep the pace consistent

Mind: if you're a smoker, now is the time to stop

Craft: research and purchase your race rucksack, use it in training, and make sure it works for you

Session		Notes	
24	Mon	Rest	
	Tue	20m walk	
	Wed	20m run, as slow as needed to be able to hold a full conversation	
	Thu	20m walk, finding the steepest hill nearby	
	Fri	Rest	
	Sat	20m run, at a gentle, conversational pace	
	Sun	20m walk, wearing an empty rucksack, not on tarmac	
23	Mon	Rest	
	Tue	30m walk, making an effort to walk swiftly, with purpose	
	Wed	20m run, gentle and conversational pace	
	Thu	30m walk, including any nearby hills	
	Fri	Rest	
	Sat	20m run, gentle and conversational pace	
	Sun	30m hike, wearing an empty rucksack, not on tarmac	
22	Mon	Rest	
	Tue	20m run, gentle conversational pace	
	Wed	20m run, gentle conversational pace, going just a little faster for the last minute	
	Thu	30m walk, including any nearby hills, moving purposefully	
	Fri	Rest	
	Sat	20m run, gentle conversational pace	
	Sun	40m hike, wearing an empty rucksack, not on tarmac	
21	Mon	Rest	
	Tue	20m run, gentle and conversational pace	
	Wed	20m run, gentle conversational pace, going a little faster for the final two minutes	
	Thu	20m run, gentle and conversational pace	
	Fri	Rest	
	Sat	20m run, gentle conversational pace, a little faster for the last minute	
	Sun	1 hr hike, wearing an empty rucksack, not on tarmac	

Training Plan: 20 Weeks: Hiking (Not Walking)

Hike with purpose, moving swiftly and using your arms. If you plan to race with walking poles, research them and start using them now. Add useful weight to your rucksack, taking food, water, waterproofs, and spare clothes before using bags of rice if you need to top up the weight.

Training Focus

Body: try to increase cadence when running – more small steps reduces impact damage

Mind: make the effort to get off tarmac, even if you're slower – you need to adjust to uneven footing

Craft: research, purchase and use your race shoes for hiking – and change them if they cause blisters

Session		Notes	
20	Mon	Rest	
	Tue	20m run, relaxed, but see how fast you can go for the last two minutes	
	Wed	25m run, gentle and conversational pace	
	Thu	20m run, easy pace, including any nearby hills	
	Fri	Rest	
	Sat	25m run, gentle, conversational, consistent pace	
	Sun	1hr hike, with a 1kg rucksack (carry water, spare jackets, etc), not on tarmac	
19	Mon	Rest	
	Tue	25m run, going a little faster for the last two minutes	
	Wed	30m run, as easy as needed to keep the feet turning over faster than a walk	
	Thu	25m run, gentle and conversational pace	
	Fri	Rest	
	Sat	30m run, gentle and conversational pace	
	Sun	1hr 15m hike, 1kg rucksack (carry water, spare jackets, etc), not on tarmac	
18	Mon	Rest	
	Tue	30m run, gentle and conversational pace	
	Wed	30m run, as easy as needed to keep the feet turning over faster than a walk	
	Thu	30m run, easy, moving a little faster for the last two minutes	
	Fri	Rest	
	Sat	30m run, gentle and conversational pace	
	Sun	1hr 30m hike, 1kg rucksack, not on tarmac, stride purposefully (use the arms)	
17	Mon	Rest	
	Tue	30m run - at gentle pace for 4 minutes, slightly faster for 1 minute; repeat 6 times	
	Wed	Rest	
	Thu	30m run, gentle pace but over some hills	
	Fri	Rest	
	Sat	30m run, gentle and conversational pace	
	Sun	1hr hike, with a rucksack with around 2kg of gear, not on tarmac, no stopping!	

Training Plan: 16 Weeks: Disciplined Recovery

As the volume and intensity of training increases, so does the importance of recovery: where you can, try to avoid leaving chores or stressful activities for your rest day. Prioritise sleep, and consider reducing alcohol intake in the evening. Non load bearing exercise will help flush out muscles and retain a range of movement without generating impact stress.

Training Focus

Body: keep your rest days as stress-free as possible, and ideally off your feet

Mind: plan your non load bearing sessions in advance; book a class or a pool session before the day

Craft: start trialling the type and frequency of electrolyte and snack intake during your hikes

Session		Notes	
16	Mon	Rest	
	Tue	30m run, gentle pace, off tarmac	
	Wed	40m run, easy pace	
	Thu	30m interval run - gentle for 4 minutes, slightly faster for 1 minute; repeat 6 times	
	Fri	30-60m non load bearing exercise (swimming, cycling, yoga, etc)	
	Sat	30m run, gentle and conversational pace	
	Sun	1hr 30m hike, 3kg rucksack, not on tarmac	
	15	Mon	Rest
Tue		30m run, gentle pace, off tarmac	
Wed		45m run, easy pace	
Thu		30m interval run - gentle pace for 3min 45s, faster for 1min 15s; repeat 6 times	
Fri		30-60m non load bearing exercise (swimming, cycling, yoga, etc)	
Sat		30m run, gentle and conversational pace	
Sun		2hr hike, 2kg rucksack, not on tarmac, ideally with hills	
14		Mon	Rest
	Tue	30m run, gentle, conversational pace, off tarmac	
	Wed	50m run, conversational pace	
	Thu	30m progression run - 10m gentle; 10m slightly faster; 10m fast, but not a sprint	
	Fri	30-60m non load bearing exercise (swimming, cycling, yoga, etc)	
	Sat	30m run, gentle and conversational pace	
	Sun	1hr 30m hike, 3kg rucksack, no tarmac, steepest hills you can find	
	13	Mon	Rest
Tue		30m run, gentle pace, off tarmac	
Wed		1hr walk, no weight, not on tarmac	
Thu		30m run, gentle pace but over some hills	
Fri		30-60m non load bearing exercise (swimming, cycling, yoga, etc)	
Sat		30m run, gentle and conversational pace	
Sun		1hr hike, no weight, not on tarmac	

Training Plan: 12 Weeks: Stress Familiarisation

The desert races involve challenges unlike other races. At this point it's important to recognise adapt to early morning exercise, and what will almost certainly be some time moving after dark. Use training sessions to get used to moving by torchlight and to waking up, eating, hydrating, dressing and exercising.

Training Focus

Body: research and use a 5-10 minute stretching routine *after* all your longer runs and hikes

Mind: start getting used to early morning exercise: ideally start hiking at around 7am

Craft: research, purchase, and test a head torch, even if only on a lit sidewalk to begin with

Session		Notes
12	Mon	Rest
	Tue	30m run, gentle and conversational pace, off tarmac
	Wed	1hr run, conversational pace
	Thu	30m interval run - at gentle pace for 3m 15s, faster for 1m 45s; repeat 6 times
	Fri	45-60m non load bearing exercise
	Sat	30m run, gentle and conversational pace; preparing for tomorrow
	Sun	2hr 30m hike, 4kg rucksack, not on tarmac
11	Mon	Rest
	Tue	30m run, gentle pace, off tarmac
	Wed	1hr run, conversational pace
	Thu	30m progression run - 10m gentle; 10m slightly faster; 10m fast, but not a sprint
	Fri	45-60m non load bearing exercise (swimming, cycling, yoga, etc)
	Sat	30m run, gentle and conversational pace
	Sun	3hr hike, 3kg rucksack, not on tarmac, roughest, steepest ground you can find
10	Mon	Rest
	Tue	45m run, gentle and conversational pace, off tarmac
	Wed	1hr run, conversational pace
	Thu	30m interval run - gentle 3m, faster 2m; repeat 6 times; consistent pace for effort
	Fri	45-60m non load bearing exercise (swimming, cycling, yoga, etc)
	Sat	30m run, gentle and conversational pace
	Sun	1hr hike, 6kg rucksack, not on tarmac, consistent pace
9	Mon	Rest
	Tue	30m run, gentle pace, off tarmac
	Wed	Rest
	Thu	30m run, gentle pace but over some hills
	Fri	60m non load bearing exercise (swimming, cycling, yoga, etc)
	Sat	30m run, gentle and conversational pace
	Sun	1hr hike, no weight, not on tarmac

Training Plan: 8 Weeks: Training Peak

With improved fitness, including an increased aerobic capacity and familiarity with hills and uneven terrain, comes increased work with a weighted pack. Hiking powerfully with a pack is less aerobically challenging than many running sessions; take this time to adapt to the heightened perception of effort that comes from exercise that places simultaneous demands on the whole body.

Training Focus

Body: consider a sports massage every 1-2 weeks, focus on hamstrings, quads and lower back

Mind: recognise your ability to keep moving purposefully with a weighted pack even when tired

Craft: lay out all your race kit, research and purchase anything you need; cut weight where possible

Session		Notes
8	Mon	Rest
	Tue	45m run, gentle and conversational pace, off tarmac
	Wed	1 hr run, conversational pace
	Thu	45m interval run - gentle 4m, faster 1m; 9x with efforts at same pace
	Fri	60m non load bearing exercise (swimming, cycling, yoga, etc)
	Sat	45m run, gentle and conversational pace
	Sun	3hr hike, 6kg rucksack, not on tarmac, ideally on hills
7	Mon	Rest
	Tue	45m run, gentle pace, off tarmac
	Wed	1 hr hike, 8kg rucksack, not on tarmac
	Thu	45m progression run - 15m gentle; 15m slightly faster; 15m fast, but not a sprint
	Fri	60m non load bearing exercise - make this an easy, recovery effort
	Sat	45m run, gentle and conversational pace
	Sun	3hr hike, 7kg rucksack, not on tarmac, purposeful, consistent effort
6	Mon	Rest
	Tue	45m run, gentle pace, off tarmac
	Wed	1 hr hike, 10kg rucksack, not on tarmac; steady pace throughout
	Thu	45m interval run - gentle 4m, faster 1m; 9x with efforts at same pace
	Fri	60m non load bearing exercise - make this an easy, recovery effort
	Sat	45m run, gentle and conversational pace, prepare mentally for tomorrow
	Sun	3hr hike, 8kg rucksack, not on tarmac, ideally on hills, purposeful effort
5	Mon	Rest
	Tue	45m run, gentle pace, off tarmac
	Wed	Rest
	Thu	45m run, gentle pace but with hills
	Fri	60m non load bearing exercise (swimming, cycling, yoga, etc)
	Sat	30m run, gentle and conversational pace
	Sun	1 hr hike, no weight, not on tarmac, but move swiftly and purposefully

Training Plan: 4 Weeks: Psychological Preparation and Taper

Use the long hikes to think about the race ahead – early starts, making breakfast, packing kit, and heading out. Retain your stretching routine, and consider how you will make sure you refuel and rehydrate after each day to recover for the day to come. Look forward to having a fantastic race, moving purposefully every day through some of the most beautiful places on the planet. Enjoy!

Training Focus

Body: enjoy the taper – keep eating and drinking healthily to minimise stress on the body

Mind: look back at your training: take confidence in your new fitness and readiness for the race ahead

Craft: minimise travel stress: pack early, double check gear, stay hydrated and healthy while travelling

Session		Notes
4	Mon	Rest
	Tue	45m run, gentle pace, off tarmac
	Wed	1hr hike, 10kg rucksack; off road, no hills
	Thu	45m interval run - gentle 4m, faster 1m; 9x with efforts at same pace
	Fri	60m non load bearing exercise - make this an easy, recovery effort
	Sat	45m run, gentle and conversational pace
	Sun	3hr hike, 10kg rucksack, steepest off road hills that you have; purposeful
3	Mon	Rest
	Tue	45m run, gentle pace, off tarmac
	Wed	1hr hike, 10kg rucksack, not on tarmac
	Thu	45m progression run - 15m gentle; 15m slightly faster; 15m fast, but not a sprint
	Fri	60m non load bearing exercise - make this an easy, recovery effort
	Sat	45m run, gentle and conversational pace
	Sun	4hr hike, 10kg rucksack, hills, off-road, constant purposeful effort
2	Mon	Rest
	Tue	45m run, gentle pace, off tarmac
	Wed	1hr hike, 10kg, not on tarmac
	Thu	45m run, gentle pace but over some hills
	Fri	60m non load bearing exercise (swimming, cycling, yoga, etc)
	Sat	30m run, gentle and conversational pace
	Sun	1hr hike, 10kg, not on tarmac
1	Mon	Rest
	Tue	30m run, gentle pace, off tarmac
	Wed	Rest
	Thu	30m run, gentle pace
	Fri	Rest
	Sat	Race!
	Sun	Race!