

## Half Marathons: Twice the Fun?

By Dave McGovern

Looking for a new challenge beyond walking in local 5K and 10K races?

Or maybe you started out backwards and you've already walked a full marathon or two and now want to cut back and try your speed legs at a shorter distance event.

Rivaling the marathon in popularity these days, the half marathon offers all the excitement, comparable finishers' medals, T-shirts and other "goodies," without requiring nearly as much training or post-event recovery time that a full marathon does.

Entering a half can also give you motivation to get out the door every day if your goals run toward weight loss or fitness rather than pure competitive drive.

The thing to remember about the half is that even though halves are often held concurrently with full marathons — many walker-friendly marathons like Mardi Gras, Mobile and Sacramento have accompanying half marathons on the same day — the half is a lot closer in distance to a 10K than it is to a full marathon.

Training, then, will be much more similar to 10K training than marathon training, except for the length of the long day, and to some extent the need for more speed work.

A veteran of several full marathons, Lauri Berger of Mesa, AZ has switched her focus to the half.

Lauri says, "I just found that with so many other commitments in my life, training for a full marathon took too much time, and too heavy a toll physically.

"One of the best things about the half marathon is that I don't feel I lose all of my speed like I do when training for a marathon, so I still feel comfortable jumping into an occasional shorter race during my half-marathon training."

Very few walkers (if any!) are doing it for the money and fame. Enjoyment is our main motivator, and for some people walking 26.2 miles at a time just isn't all that appealing.

Some of us, of course, love marathons, but if 26.2 miles seems a bit daunting, maybe the half marathon is the distance for you.

Depending on your experience level, training for a half does not have to be much more time-consuming or difficult than training for a 10K race.

A few modifications, like a slightly longer long day on the weekend and maybe a longer tempo or speed workout (thankfully, at a somewhat slower pace!) during the week, are probably all you will need to get yourself ready for a half marathon if you've already been training for 5Ks and 10Ks.

Very new fitness walkers should consider training for these shorter races first, but plenty of "newbies" have become successful half-marathon walkers right from the start.

Each of the following beginner, 5K to 10K racers, and marathon walkers schedules will get you ready to complete a half marathon in about 12 weeks. ♦

Due to space limitations, the beginner training schedule does not appear here. In addition, the list of walker-friendly races has been edited for space. For the complete list of races, and for all three of Dave's training schedules, visit [www.walk-magazine.com](http://www.walk-magazine.com).

**Dave McGovern** is a member of the U.S. National Racewalking Team and the author of **The Complete Guide to Racewalking** and **The Complete Guide to Marathon Walking**. Visit his web site at [www.racewalking.org](http://www.racewalking.org).

NOTE: The model in the Spring Issue **Coach's Corner** is **Loretta Schuellein**, Oyster Bay, NY. Thank you to everyone who wrote on her behalf.

### Walker-Friendly Halves

Most half marathons **allow** walkers to enter, but some really go out of their way to cater to us. Here are some of the best:

#### July

##### **Wine Country Half Marathon, Sonoma, CA**

Beautiful course through Sonoma vineyards, wetlands and farms. Racewalk division, and awards, but course closes at 3:00 hours. [winecountryhalf.com](http://winecountryhalf.com)

##### **San Francisco Half Marathon, San Francisco, CA**

You get to pick which half to enter: Out and back across the Golden Gate Bridge, or the flat, fast second half of the full marathon course. 3:30 and 3:45 time limits for the two halves. [runsfm.com](http://runsfm.com)

#### August

##### **News & Sentinel Half Marathon, Parkersburg, WV**

Strong racewalk community, great crowd support. [newsandsentinel.com](http://newsandsentinel.com)

##### **Pike's Peak Ascent, Manitou Springs, CO**

Toughest race you'll ever love. [Pikespeakmarathon.org](http://Pikespeakmarathon.org)

##### **Chicago Distance Classic, Chicago, IL**

John "the Penguin" Bingham race caters to back-of-the-packers and walkers. [chicagodistanceclassic.com](http://chicagodistanceclassic.com)

#### September

##### **Rock & Roll Half Marathon, Virginia Beach, VA**

4-hour limit, bands all along the course, great finishers' medals. [rnrmarathon.com](http://rnrmarathon.com)

##### **Fox Cities Half Marathon, Appleton, WI**

Separate "Power Walk" with awards for walkers. [foxcitiesmarathon.org](http://foxcitiesmarathon.org)

#### October

##### **Sacramento Half Marathon, Sacramento, CA**

Walk division awards, medals to all finishers, fast course. [sacramentomarathon.net](http://sacramentomarathon.net)

##### **The Under Armour Baltimore Half Marathon, Baltimore, MD**

Under Armour shirts and medals to all finishers. [thebaltimoremarathon.com](http://thebaltimoremarathon.com)

#### November

##### **Big Sur Half Marathon, Monterey, CA**

Breathtaking scenery, 3.5 hour time limit. [www.bigsurhalfmarathon.org](http://www.bigsurhalfmarathon.org)

##### **Ole' Man River Half Marathon, New Orleans, LA**

Racewalk division with separate start for racewalkers. [www.runnotc.org](http://www.runnotc.org)

#### December

##### **The Half, White Rock Lake, Dallas, TX**

4.5 hour time limit, entertainment all along the way. Medals to all finishers. [www.thehalf.org](http://www.thehalf.org)

##### **St. Jude Half Marathon, Memphis, TN**

Six-hour limit. All finishers receive a T-shirt, medal and certificate. [stjudemarathon.org](http://stjudemarathon.org) ♦

### Schedule for 5K-10K Racers Moving Up to the Half Marathon

Week	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.
1	Off or easy cross-train	Warm-up, then 8 x 400 meters @ 5K race pace w/ 2:00 rests	Easy 30 minutes	Easy 45 minutes	45 minute "tempo" Should be hard, but not all-out.	Easy 30-45 minutes	6 miles easy
2	Off or easy cross-train	4-5 x 800 meters @ 10K race pace w/ 2:00 rests.	Easy 30 minutes	Easy 45 minutes	45-60 minute acceleration, start easy, build to a fast finish.	Easy 30-45 minutes	7 miles easy
3	Off or easy cross-train	Warm-up, then 8 x 400 meters @ 5K race pace w/ 2:00 rests	Easy 30 minutes	Easy 45 minutes	45 minute "tempo" Should be hard, but not all-out.	Easy 30-45 minutes	9 miles easy
4	Off or easy cross-train	45 minute "tempo" Should be hard, but not all-out.	Easy 30 minutes	Easy 45 minutes	3 x 1 mile @ ½ marathon race pace w/ 3:00 rests.	Easy 30-45 minutes	6 miles "not so easy"
5	Off or easy cross-train	Warm-up, then 8 x 400 meters @ 5K race pace w/ 2:00 rests	Easy 30 minutes	Easy 45 minutes	45-60 minute acceleration, start easy, build to a fast finish.	Easy 30-45 minutes	11 miles easy
6	Off or easy cross-train	6 x 800 meters @ 10K race pace w/ 2:00 rests.	Easy 45 minutes	Easy 45 minutes	3 x 1 mile @ ½ marathon race pace w/ 3:00 rests.	Easy 30-45 minutes	8 miles "not so easy" or 10K race
7	Off or easy cross-train	Warm-up, then 8 x 400 meters @ 5K race pace w/ 2:00 rests	Easy 45 minutes	Easy 45 minutes	45 minute "tempo" Should be hard, but not all-out.	Easy 30-45 minutes	13 miles easy
8	Off or easy cross-train	45 minutes "not so easy"	Easy 45 minutes	Easy 45 minutes	3 x 1 mile @ ½ marathon race pace w/ 3:00 rests.	Easy 30-45 minutes	8 miles "not so easy" or 10K race
9	Off or easy cross-train	Warm-up, then 8 x 400 meters @ 5K race pace w/ 2:00 rests	Easy 45 minutes	Easy 45 minutes	45 minute "tempo" Should be hard, but not all-out.	Easy 30-45 minutes	15 miles easy
10	Off or easy cross-train	45 minutes "not so easy"	Easy 45 minutes	Easy 45 minutes	3 x 1 mile @ ½ marathon race pace w/ 3:00 rests.	Easy 30-45 minutes	10 miles acceleration.
11	Off or easy cross-train	Warm-up, then 8 x 400 meters @ 5K race pace w/ 2:00 rests	Easy 45 minutes	Easy 45 minutes	6 x 800 meters @ 10K race pace w/ 2:00 rests.	Easy 30-45 minutes	8 miles. Start easy, last 3 miles at race pace.
12	Off	Easy 30 minutes	Easy 30 minutes	30 minutes acceleration down to ½ mar. pace	Off	Easy 20 minutes	½ Marathon

- This schedule should be used by walkers who are currently racing 5K and 10K races who want to move up to the half marathon.
- A standard high school track is 400 meters around in lane 1. Two laps = 800 meters. Four laps = 1600 meters. (1 mile = 1609.3 meters.)

### Schedule for Marathon Walkers Moving Down to the Half Marathon

Week	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.
1	Off or easy cross-train	Warm-up, then 8 x 400 meters @ 5K race pace w/ 2:00 rests	Easy 45 minutes	Easy 45 minutes	45 minute "tempo" Should be hard, but not all-out.	Easy 30-45 minutes	12 miles easy
2	Off or easy cross-train	4-5 x 800 meters @ 10K race pace w/ 2:00 rests.	Easy 45 minutes	Easy 45 minutes	45-60 minute acceleration, start easy, build to a fast finish.	Easy 30-45 minutes	8 miles "not so easy"
3	Off or easy cross-train	Warm-up, then 8 x 400 meters @ 5K race pace w/ 2:00 rests	Easy 45 minutes	Easy 45 minutes	45 minute "tempo" Should be hard, but not all-out.	Easy 30-45 minutes	15 miles easy
4	Off or easy cross-train	45 minute "tempo" Should be hard, but not all-out.	Easy 45 minutes	Easy 45 minutes	3 x 1 mile @ ½ marathon race pace w/ 3:00 rests.	Easy 30-45 minutes	9 miles "not so easy"
5	Off or easy cross-train	Warm-up, then 8 x 400 meters @ 5K race pace w/ 2:00 rests	Easy 45 minutes	Easy 45 minutes	45-60 minute acceleration, start easy, build to a fast finish.	Easy 30-45 minutes	15 miles easy
6	Off or easy cross-train	6 x 800 meters @ 10K race pace w/ 2:00 rests.	Easy 45 minutes	Easy 45 minutes	3 x 1 mile @ ½ marathon race pace w/ 3:00 rests.	Easy 30-45 minutes	10 miles "not so easy" or 10K race
7	Off or easy cross-train	Warm-up, then 8 x 400 meters @ 5K race pace w/ 2:00 rests	Easy 45 minutes	Easy 45 minutes	45 minute "tempo" Should be hard, but not all-out.	Easy 30-45 minutes	15 miles easy
8	Off or easy cross-train	45 minutes "not so easy"	Easy 45 minutes	Easy 45 minutes	3 x 1 mile @ ½ marathon race pace w/ 3:00 rests.	Easy 30-45 minutes	10 miles "not so easy" or 10K race
9	Off or easy cross-train	Warm-up, then 8 x 400 meters @ 5K race pace w/ 2:00 rests	Easy 45 minutes	Easy 45 minutes	45 minute "tempo" Should be hard, but not all-out.	Easy 30-45 minutes	15 miles easy
10	Off or easy cross-train	45 minutes "not so easy"	Easy 45 minutes	Easy 45 minutes	3 x 1 mile @ ½ marathon race pace w/ 3:00 rests.	Easy 30-45 minutes	10 miles acceleration.
11	Off or easy cross-train	Warm-up, then 8 x 400 meters @ 5K race pace w/ 2:00 rests	Easy 45 minutes	Easy 45 minutes	6 x 800 meters @ 10K race pace w/ 2:00 rests.	Easy 30-45 minutes	8 miles. Start easy, last 3 miles at race pace.
12	Off	Easy 30 minutes	Easy 30 minutes	30 minutes acceleration down to ½ mar. pace	Off	Easy 20 minutes	½ Marathon

- The key for marathon walkers isn't the distance, but increasing speed. Intervals and tempo walks will help to develop high-speed technique and cardiovascular fitness.
- If you just can't imagine only walking 45 minutes on the easy recovery days, these can be increased up to 60 min. to 90 min. some days IF you're feeling good. Don't let the speed days suffer because you're going too long on the recovery days though!