

Dear Marathon Runner,

Most London Marathon newsletters start with something about Christmas being over, and about how it's time to get started on your training. I'm not going to say that, because frankly, it's 16 weeks until race day, it's the New Year, Week 1, and if you're not already full of enthusiasm, go find some. The game's afoot!

The idea is to provide you with a few useful nuggets each week to keep you going. For the record, I'm not a square-jawed expert bony whippet – so do be careful when listening to what I say.

Let's get started with a few mileage pointers – just how much running do you need to do to get that fabulous time you want? Well thankfully there are a load of people on Fetch who've run lots of marathons, and a whole heap of data about how much they ran. I know you've just looked straight at the numbers, but I just have to say that these are averages, and you are not average – so don't lose sight of what feels right for you.

	3:00	3:15	3:30	3:45	4:00	4:15	4:30	4:45	5:00
Fetchies	194	281	321	364	387	305	291	198	140
Mileage	715	587	531	492	443	426	409	385	352
Sessions Per Week	6.1	5	4.5	4.3	4	4.1	3.9	3.7	3.4

I'm hoping to get close to 4 hours myself, so the stats tell me I should aim to bash out about 440 miles, and train 4 times a week. However, 10% of the 4:00 runners did less than 300 miles, and 10% ran more than 650 - so it really is down to the individual, and to how those miles break down into individual efforts.

So what do you do? Well, if you follow the data to the letter, the average long run in the first week will be anywhere between 8 miles for a 5:00 runner, 10 miles for a 4:00 runner, up to 15 miles for a 3:00 runner... but the vast majority of our data comes from runners who are already running regularly – so if those distances feel a bit long just now, there's plenty of time to get there. Try to mark out a day each week to fit in your "long" run – you'll be getting used to it by the end!

What else? Well, your long run will train your body to cope with the distance, so how about pace? If it's your first attempt at a marathon, you might be happy just training to make sure you finish, and let the pace take care of itself. If you're not used to speed work, lets just get through the week and get out there as many times as you feel you need to, and get used to feeling like we're marathon training.

If you're already doing speed work, you'll probably know how you feel about this already, but I don't think there's any harm in reminding you that the key to effective training is to ensure you look after yourself in between bouts of hard effort. Whether you're fast or slow, run-walking, intervals, recovery runs, recovery weeks, tapers – it's all about giving your body the chance to recover, strengthen itself, and adapt to the things you're asking it to do.

If you enjoyed reading this newsletter, please forward it to your running friends – everyone is welcome on Fetch (except weirdo's of course, but unfortunately they don't come pre-labelled). If you didn't enjoy it, and don't want to receive it for the next 16 weeks, just reply to this and let me know. In the coming weeks I'll be putting the squeeze on a few experienced Fetchies to get their marathon experiences and advice – so if there's anything you'd like to know, reply to this email with your questions and I'll try to find the right people to answer them.

I hope you're looking forward to the marathon training ahead, but the one thing you should really try to do at this early stage is to keep a lid on your enthusiasm, as you'll definitely be needing it in a month or two's time, when the running workload begins to increase.

Happy Running,

Ian Williams aka 'Fetch'
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