

THAMES MARATHON

TRAINING PLAN



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The Thames Marathon Sunday 6 August 2017

Training plan bought to you by www.fitandabel.com together we can redefine your limits and achieve great things.

The advice and training plan below is a generic plan to help provide structure to your preparation for the Thames Marathon.

For increased results and performance you are best to see a coach first for a stroke and training review or attend one of our specific Thames Marathon clinics.

Training:

To be properly prepared for the Thames Marathon you need to be rehearsed and competent in three main areas; Technique, Fitness and Open water skills. Skills in each one of these foundations are critical to your overall performance. They can reduce risk of injury, increase performance with a decrease in work load, increase endurance and speed and allow a swimmer to competently swim in open water. All of these need to be covered during the build-up. It doesn't need to be complicated; in fact we believe sometimes we inadvertently make our training overly complicated.

You don't need to swim a marathon distance in training to swim a marathon.

You do need to be consistent in your training. We suggest picking a minimum amount of swims you know you can fit around your family, work and social commitment each week. Start with that minimum and fight hard each week to make sure these swims happen. Three sessions is a good number. Then over the build-up period we can add to this number. A consistent number of weeks at 4-6 swims will be required. These can fit in around your schedule. We don't like telling you to swim on this day and recover on that day because all our schedules and fatigue levels will be different. The key is to be honest with yourself and listen to your body. If you need reassurance, help or advice - ask for it.



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Pacing; The hardest thing about open water is that we get very few cues about our pacing. In the pool we have a wall/turning point and a clock so that we can gauge our swim pace. Many swimmers don't take advantage and learn from these pacing cues in the pool, this can be detrimental once you start open water swimming. It is not uncommon for me to start the Thames Marathon and have 50 plus swimmers ahead of me. I swim the same pace all the way to the first lock. There is less 10 swimmers ahead of me by the first lock, sometimes less. That means 50 odd swimmers went out a pace they couldn't sustain even for the first leg of a 14 km swim. Get your pacing right and you'll have a great swim. Get it wrong and 14km is a long way to 'hang in there' on a swim. Therefore in our training we are going to focus intently on getting comfortable with our pacing – we call it your RealSwim (or realistic) swim speed. First we are going to train well above your 14 km speed to create adaptation in our body (Fitness). Then in phase three of the program (the final phase) we are going to bring the pacing back to our 14km 'race pace'. We are going to train so that we can replicate this pace without reference to a clock. The more we can get this right the better you will perform on the day.

Starting out a 14km swim the pace should feel extremely comfortable. Remember you need to be maintaining or increasing this pace 14km later...

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Equipment

You will be able to complete all of the swim sessions below without any swim equipment. You can choose to use some swim equipment to enhance your training and or help with technique and also to help keep it interesting.

Flippers – create more workload for the legs, increase the heart rate and will help with kick technique. Don't become reliant on them. But you can use them to increase the intensity of the workout or for support when working on technique.

Kickboard / float– We would prefer you to practice kick without a board, as it's more relative to actual swimming. However if you're training with someone else and you want to have a gossip by all means use a kickboard.

Pull Buoy – Will help isolate your legs bringing your heart rate down. Not great for fitness work as you need to swim further to get the same cardio result. We suggest using it for recovery eg 3 x 200 swim 80% pace then 1 x 200 pull buoy recovery swim.

Paddles – Probably the most riskiest piece of equipment to use without expert instruction. Smaller surface area paddles are better. We strongly advise not attaching your paddle to your wrist, strap to fingers only. They can help increase strength and are good to help with technique, learning catch and pull. The risk is if technique is poor you place more pressure on the shoulders at an unhelpful angle potential resulting with an injury.

For racing : An important part of training is not just to get fit for an event. It is also to get comfortable with your equipment. Ensuring you have the right equipment for you. Goggles should be comfortable without having to have the strap super tight to stop leaking. All goggles will eventually fog, we recommend anti fog spray. Wetsuits – its really important to get the right wetsuit for you, swim technique and body type influence the best wetsuit for you. As an example I am a floater, I prefer swimming in a Blueseventy Fusion than a Helix because a Fusion has less neoprene in the legs and doesn't hold me legs up out of the water. The right wetsuit with a good fit can make your swim amazing. The wrong wetsuit can create a lot of discomfort. Take time during training to figure this out. Ask questions. Get help. Shop around. Also think about products such as ear plugs, anti-chaff products. You should have practiced all of this before the Thames Marathon.



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Feeding

For those stepping up to a marathon swim for the first time practicing nutrition is essential. The most important mantra is 'a little often'. Especially as big swims progress our hunger and appetite can increase markedly. Eating too much or foods that don't agree with us can be detrimental. Fluids first then solids if needed. Practice before and during training to work out what quantities and types of nutrition you are comfortable with. Some people like water plus solids. Some prefer energy drinks. There will be a number of options available during the Thames Marathon; bananas, energy bars, energy drinks, water, some chocolate, sweets, and some salty snacks such as crisps. A couple of the stops will also have hot drinks. The key items to work out in training are what your preferences are and how much you require.

The Golden rule for race day – do not eat, wear or swim a style or pace you haven't practiced in training.

Training with others

Training with others provides motivation; to turn up to the swim and to push yourself that little bit more. It also provides a social aspect and adds to the fun. We highly recommend you meet with others to complete your training session and if you can swim with a group or club at least once a week. It doesn't matter too much what they're doing, just avoid things that you haven't done before like butterfly or swimming with paddles. You can meet people at one of our Thames Marathon clinics or there are a range of group swim options from masters pool to open water swim groups available.

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Let's get started on our 14km in 14 weeks with fitandabel.com

Code:

RI = stands for Rest in Between. If not stated take 30 – 60 seconds rest in between repetitions.

'/' = indicates a new set. Rest between sets is up to you.

% = percentage of your maximum possible effort. It's very important you pay attention to these and gauge as best you can matching up your perception of your effort with a time (use a watch or the clock on the wall at your local pool)

SEC = Seconds

TM = Thames Marathon

RealSwim Speed = the average 100 pace taken from your last continuous swim time trial. Eg if the swim was 1000M and your time was 20m minutes your RealSwim Speed will be 2 minutes. If the set is 200M distances at RealSwim Speed your goal pace is 4 minutes.

All swimming is frontcrawl unless stated.



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Phase 1 – Technique / Base fitness

Week 1

Session 1

400M swim 50% effort. /2 x 200M swim 60% effort. Note your time. 30 Seconds RI/ 400M swim 60% effort / 2 x 200M swim 60% effort. Hold the same time as the first 2 x 200M, note times as it will be used in session 2. Breathing only LEFT side going up the pool only RIGHT side coming back / 400M swim 70% effort. Three stroke breathing. Note time/ 4 x 25 kick on your back. No float. Hands by your side. 30 sec RI / 100M cool down swim

Session 2

4 x 75 warm up . Each middle 25M is kick on your front or back NO float / Ladder all at 60% effort with 15 seconds RI 50 / 100 / 150 / 200 / 250 / 200 / 150 / 100 / 2 x 200 holding the same pace you held in session 1 with 30 sec RI / 6 x 25 each one faster than the one prior 15 sec RI /200 cool down easy swim.

Session 3

4 x 100 1 @ 50 % effort, 1 @ 60% effort, 1 @ 70% effort 1 @ 70% effort , the last two 100's the time should be the same / 4 x 200 @ 60% effort with 45 seconds RI. Hold the same time for each 200. The key is not to go too fast in that first 200 / 500 steady swim / 4 x 25 backstroke 15 sec RI / 50 kick no board / 150 cool down swim easy

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Week2

Session 1

100M warm up swim / 4 x 25 head up swim. Keep your head still eyes looking forward. Check where your hands are entering the water – should be in line with your shoulders. 60 seconds RI / 200M swim 70% effort / 4 x 25 easy swim good technique 30 seconds RI / 1000M timed swim, calculate average 100M pace, eg a 20 min 1000M swim equals 2min average per 100 Pace. We are going use this RealSwim (Realistic) swim speed in future sessions / 300 cool down swim

Session 2

800 warm up swim/ 4 x 25 back stroke / 600 70% effort 60 sec RI / 4 x 25 kick no board / 400 70% effort / 4 x 25 backstroke / 2 x 200 holding the average 100 pace calculated from your current RealSwim speed taken from your 1000M time trial with 45 sec RI (for example if your time in the 1000M was 20 min your average 100 pace is 2 minutes you time to hold in the 200's is 4minutes/ 400 cool down

Session 3

4 x 500M the first one should be slower than your RealSwim speed pace / 2 x 500M hold the 100 pace of your RealSwim Speed / 1 x 500M above the pace of your RealSwim speed / 8 x 25M 1 kick / 1 head up swimming / 1 backstroke / 1 easy swim } repeat each

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Week3

Session 1

800 50% effort / 700 60% / 400 70% / 300 80% / 100 80 % / 4 x 50 90%

Session 2

2 x 1500M swims second one faster than the first

Session 3

8 x 25 count your strokes on each one 20 sec RI/ 4 x 25 backstroke / 500 swim / 8 x 25 15 sec RI count strokes keep them the same as your first set of stroke count 25's / 4 x 25 backstroke / 500 swim / 8 x 25 10 sec RI stroke count / 4 x 25 backstroke / 500 cool down.

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Week4

Session 1

200 swim / 100 kick no float / 400 swim faster than RealSwim Speed / 4 x 25 head up swim / 600 swim faster than RealSwim Speed / 100 kick no float / 4 x 25 head up swim / 800 swim

Session 2

6 x 75 20 sec RI / 10 x 100 hold your average RealSwim 100 pace with 30 sec RI / 400 swim 50% effort / 4 x 25 back stroke / 5 x 100 hold your Realswim 100 pace 20 sec RI / 400 cool down swim

Session 3

10 x 50 each 50 has to be at least 1 sec faster than the one prior 30 sec RI / 1200M straight swim / 4 x 25 back stroke / 2 x 25 head up swim / 150 cool down swim

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Phase 2 – Fitness

Week1

Session 1

6 x 150M try and swim each one at the same pace as the one prior. 30 Sec RI / 15 x 100 at your 100 RealSwim speed 30 Sec RI/200 easy swim / 6 x 200 60 SEC RI hold your RealSwim pace / 200 cool down swim

Session 2

10 x 50 @ 60% effort / 10 x 25 80% effort / 8 x 12.5M fast 15 Sec RI / 800 steady / 3 x 400 holding your average RealSwim pace – Hint each 400 should be the same time/ 4 x 150 first one fast then each one slower, last one is cool down

Session 3

4 x 500 holding your RealSwim speed 90 sec RI / 4 x 200 / 4 x 100 / 8 x 50 / 4 x 25 backstroke

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Week2

Session 1

400 steady / 200 at RealSwim speed – try to swim it exactly / 4 x 25 fast / 200 easy / 2000M timed swim= the average 100 pace of this timed swim gives us your new RealSwim speed. / 500 cool down swim

Session 2

10 x 25 warm up your choice/ 10 x 25 backstroke 20 sec RI / 10 x 50 80% effort 20 sec RI / 8 x 25 kick / 8 x 25 fast / 4 x 25 backstroke / 10 x 50 % effort 20 sec RI / 400 cool down swim

Session 3

10 x 400 holding your new RealSwim speed 100 pace from your 2000M timed. Hint all your 400's should be the same time. 90 sec RI / 2 x 250M 1 is breathing only left second is only breathing right recovery swimming.

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Week3

Session 1

6 x 75 / 4 x 50 kick / 30 x 100 holding your RealSwim speed 30 Sec RI / 4 x 50 kick / 200 cool down

Session 2

10 x 100 RealSwim Speed 15 Sec RI / 10 x 200 RealSwim Speed 45 sec RI / 5 x 100 5 sec FASTER than your RealSwim Speed 30 sec RI / 400 cool down.

Session 3

800 warm up / 4 x 400 each 400 faster than RealSwim Speed 60 sec RI / 6 x75 middle 25 kick no board / 10 x 200 @ 5 second faster than your RealSwim speed for 200 M rest as required to maintain this pace for the entire 10 – note this RI must be consistent throughout the entire 10 therefore it should feel like a LOT of rest in the first 3-4 of your 200's / 400 cool down

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Week 4

Session 1

600 / 300 breathing every two strokes to the left only / 400 breathing every 3 strokes / 300 breathing to the right only / 4 x 25 head up swimming keep your head still 40 sec RI / 100 breathing every 5 strokes / 300 breathing pattern of your choice / 4 x 25 backstroke 20 sec RI / 200 kick no board / 200 cool down

Session 2

5 x 100 each 100 slightly faster than the previous one 20 sec RI / 1000M faster than the 1000M or halfway split in your 2000M timed from week 2 session 1 / 400 easy swim 3 min RI / 1000M swim faster than your 1000M or halfway split from your 2000M timed from week 2 session 1 / 400 easy

Session 3

6 x 200 at your RealSwim speed / 5 x 100 faster than RealSwim Speed 20 sec RI / 4 x 50 faster than $\frac{1}{2}$ your 100 RealSwim speed 45 sec RI / 5 x 200 faster than RealSwim Speed but the times should all be the same = consistency is what we are looking in the times for your 200's / 5 x 100 holding the same times as your previous 5 x 100 30 sec RI / 600 cool down swim

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Week5

Session 1

4 x 25 stroke count try and keep each length the same stroke count / 4 x 25 breathing left odd lengths , breathing right only on even lengths / 4 x 25 backstroke / 4 x 25 kick / 4 x 25 head up swim / 1000M RealSwim pace/ 4 x 25 stroke count try and keep each length the same stroke count / 4 x 25 breathing left odd lengths , breathing right only on even lengths / 4 x 25 backstroke / 4 x 25 kick / 4 x 25 head up swim / 1000M Real

Swim pace

Session 2

1500 straight swim at RealSwim Pace / 5 x 100 faster than RealSwim Pace 20 SEC RI/ 1000 RealSwim Pace / 5 x 200 faster than RealSwim Pace 45sec RI / 500 cool down swim

Session 3

12 x 50 {1 front crawl , 1 kick no board , 1 front crawl , 1 head up swim } x 3 / 4 x 25 fast swim 60 sec RI / 4 x 25 backstroke / 12 x 50 odds breathing only left , evens breathing only right / 3 x 800 90 sec RI first one slower than RealSwim Pace (HINT this will take patience and accuracy), middle one at RealSwim Pace , last one above RealSwim Pace / 400 cool down swim

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Week6

Session 1

5 x 400 30 sec RI / 5 x 300 30 sec RI / 5 x 200 30 sec RI / 4 x 25 backstroke / 5 x 100 above RealSwim Speed / 10 x 50 15 sec RI / 100 kick no board / 400 cool down

Session 2

Your choice of warm up up to 800M / 3 x 2000M swims 4min RI / try and hold 2000M pace from phase 2 week 1.

Session 3

4 x 800 each one faster than the previous / 400 kick no board / 300 breathing every 3 strokes / 200 breathing only left and right changing side each length / 4 x 25 head up swimming / 800 cool down.

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Phase 3 – The Thames Marathon readiness (Open H2O Skills)

Week1

Session 1

1000M continuous swim slower than most recent RealSwim Speed / 5 x 100M swim each 25 meetings roll onto backstroke and look behind and roll onto front again continue front crawl / 1000M continuous swim above RealSwim speed / 200 cool down / 4 x 25 stroke count

Session 2

6000M continuous timed swim = this time will be your Thames Marathon RealSwim speed max. Calculate your average 100 time = this is your maximum 100 pace for the Thames Marathon, get to know what it feels like. Also try doing a stroke count for one length in each 1000M, can you keep the stroke count consistent for the entire 6000M?

Session 3

3 x 400 steady pace / 10 x 100 holding your RealSwim Thames Marathon pace 20 sec RI / 2 x 400 steady / 5 x 200 holding your Thames Marathon RealSwim pace. / 800 cool down

Session 4

Open water swim between 2 – 4km

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Week2

Session 1

6 x 150 the middle 50M of each lifting your head at least x 3 each length as though sighting / 100 backstroke / 100 front crawl rolling backstroke to frontcrawl again in the middle of each length without stopping / 1200M swim / 8 x 25 strong / 4 x 25 kick no board / 400 cool down

Session 2

1500M swim

Session 3

9 x 300 at your Thames Marathon pace 45 sec RI / 500 swim @ TM pace / 6 x 50 strong 15 Sec RI / 800 cool down

Session 4

Open water swim 4km

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Week3

Session 1

Swim with a friend and complete these sets either swimming side by side or swimming regularly one behind the other touching feet : 4 x 200 switch lead swimmer each 200 45 sec RI / 4 x 100 the front swimmer tries to outswim the person behind 30 Sec RI / 400M cool down

Session 2

3000M swim continuous at your TM pace – you should still feel fresh at the end of this.

Session 3

10 x 400 at TM pace 60 sec RI

Session 4

Open water swim 5 km

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Week4

Session 1

500M TM pace / 4 x 25 head up swimming / 500M TM pace / 4 x 25 backstroke / 500 TM pace / 4 x 25 head up swimming / 6 x 50 @ 90% effort 60 sec RI / 400 cool down swim

Session 2

4 x 800 @ TM pace 60 sec RI

Session 3

1000M at TM pace

Session 4

Open water swim 1500M

Don't try and do too much in the 7 days leading up to the Thames Marathon. Shorter swims, feel good. Think about all the great work you have completed in the last 14 weeks. Think positive. Be positive. Plan your swim equipment, your transport and your breakfast for the Thames Marathon day. See you there!