

Copenhagen  
Marathon®



Beginner

# Training program towards Copenhagen Marathon 2026



5 HIGH **LØBEREN**



# Welcome to your journey towards Copenhagen Marathon 2026

It's said that if you want to learn something about running, run five kilometers. If you want to learn something about yourself, run a marathon. Welcome to your first steps toward Copenhagen Marathon 2026.

42.195 kilometers is more than a distance. It's a myth passed down through generations ever since the Greek messenger Pheidippides, in 490 BC, ran from the battlefield at Marathon to Athens to announce the Greek victory over the Persians.

When you complete a marathon, you become part of that history and part of the legendary distance. You step into an invisible line of people who, throughout time, have dared to reach for something bigger than themselves. And when you cross the finish line, you become a marathon runner – for life.

At the Copenhagen Marathon, we're not only excited to see you at the start line. We want you to finish strong and enjoy the journey along the way. That's why we've created this

18-week training program designed to build your fitness, strength, and endurance. The program includes three levels, so you can adjust the difficulty if you need to.

And remember: even if you end up training in rain, darkness, or cold – without another runner in sight – you are never truly alone. At the exact same time, thousands of runners around the world are doing the very same thing, preparing to stand strong together on 10 May as you wait to be released to the roar of the crowd. In that moment, you will become Copenhagen.

**Welcome to the first step of your journey.  
Enjoy the ride.**



# Here is your 18-week training program

When you cross the finish line at a marathon, you become a marathon runner. Not just for the rest of the afternoon or the next day, but for life – and no one can take that away from you. But first, there's training to be done. Let's get started!

Finally! It's time to build the foundation that will carry you through all 42.195 kilometres. On the following pages, you'll find a program that combines the most important elements of marathon training: the long, easy runs that build your endurance; the interval sessions that sharpen your speed and strength; and the tempo runs that teach you to hold a steady, powerful rhythm over longer periods.

Good training is all about finding the right balance between load and recovery. When you run, you break the body down – which is why you may feel sore afterwards. In the days that follow, your body spends energy rebuilding itself, and a little stronger than before. This is exactly how progress happens. If you train too often, your body doesn't have time to recover and ends up overworked. If you train too infrequently, your body returns to its starting point and the improvement disappears.

The training plan is divided into three levels, allowing you to choose the one that suits you best. And if you need to increase the load or ease off a little along the way, you can freely move between the levels. This gives you flexibility without losing direction.

This program is not just about crossing the finish line. It's about building structure, taking steady steps each week, and feeling your body grow stronger. No matter your goal, pace, or experience, you are beginning a journey where every kilometre counts.

**Enjoy your training!**



# Understand your training sessions

Your training plan is – roughly speaking – built around three types of runs: easy runs, tempo runs, and intervals. Here's what each of them means.

## Easy runs

Easy runs are the most important ingredient in any marathon training plan. This is where your joints, muscles, and tendons adapt and strengthen so you can handle long distances and manage the load your body is exposed to during a marathon. Your pace should be slow enough that you can hold a conversation while running. You should feel tired afterward, maybe even a bit worn, but with the sense that you could have kept going a little longer. It sounds simple, but for many runners, running slowly is actually harder than stepping on the gas.

## Tempo runs

Tempo runs are sessions where you run at a pace just below or around your lactate threshold – the point where your body begins to accumulate more lactate than it can clear. Tempo varies greatly from person to person, but if you can speak in short sentences while running, you're in the right zone.

It roughly corresponds to your 10-kilometer pace or about 85–90 percent of your maximum heart rate.

## Intervals

Intervals are not just about running fast. They are designed to improve your running economy – how much oxygen and energy your body needs to maintain a given pace. The better your running economy, the less energy you use at the same speed, and the longer you can run before fatigue sets in. For marathon runners, this means the body uses fewer resources early in the race and therefore preserves more energy for later.

## A little something about pace

Concepts like running “fast” or “slow” are highly individual. That's why we use the following rule of thumb when referring to pace in this program:

Slow: You can hold a conversation while running

Tempo: You can speak in short sentences

Fast: You can only say a few words

WEEK 1		5. January
Day	Distance	
Monday	3 mi / 5 km	
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday	3 mi / 5 km	
Friday		
Saturday		
Sunday	3 mi / 5 km	Easy pace

WEEK 2		12. January
Day	Distance	
Monday	3 mi / 5 km	
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday	3,5 mi / 6 km	
Friday		
Saturday		
Sunday	5,5 mi / 9 km	Easy pace



WEEK 3		19. January
Day	Distance	
Monday	3 mi / 5 km	
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday	3,5 mi / 6 km	If you feel for it, you can introduce tempo runs or intervals. Thursdays would be a good day.
Friday		
Saturday		
Sunday	5 mi / 8 km	Easy pace

WEEK 4		26. January
Day	Distance	
Monday	3 mi / 5 km	Continue to keep this day easy after your long weekend run.
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday	3 mi / 5 km	Intervals or tempo runs
Friday		
Saturday		
Sunday	5 mi / 8 km	Easy pace

WEEK 5		2. February
Day	Distance	
Monday	3 mi / 5 km	
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday	4,5 mi / 7 km	Intervals or tempo runs
Friday		
Saturday		
Sunday	7,5 mi / 12 km	Easy pace

**Tip >>**

Use your long runs to test your hydration and fueling strategy.



# 5 intervals to boost your strength

Most people associate marathon training with long, easy runs that build plenty of kilometers in the legs. But if you really want to stand strong on the start line, you also need speed in your training. Interval sessions are one of the most effective shortcuts to a faster, more efficient marathon. Here are 5 different interval workouts you can include in your marathon preparation.

## The Classic

Duration: 5 x 4 minutes

In this classic tempo workout, you run 4 minutes at a pace where you can speak in short sentences. Take a 2-minute easy jog as recovery between each interval.

## The Tough One

Duration: 3 x 10 minutes

This is one of the tougher sessions — but you'll feel great afterward. Run the first two intervals at a moderately fast pace where you can only say short sentences, and in the third and final interval, you can push the pace slightly more. Take a 2-minute slow jog between intervals to avoid stiff legs.

## The Long One

Duration: 6 x 1,200 meters

This workout is perfect for the track. Run three laps (1,200 meters), then take a 2-minute break before starting the next rep. Walk a little during the recovery to keep your legs loose, and keep a water bottle nearby so you can take a sip between intervals.

## The Evil One

Duration: 5–4–3–3–2–1 minutes

This pyramid interval is a simple and effective session where you gradually reduce the length of each interval while increasing the speed.

How to do it: First run 5 minutes fast, then 4 minutes faster, and finally 3 minutes even faster. Take 1 minute of recovery between each interval. When that series is done, take a 3-minute break before starting the second half: 3 minutes fast, 2 minutes faster, and 1 minute fastest.

Important: Don't sprint — you don't want to risk a strain or injury.

## The Short One

Duration: 10 x 300 meters

Find a track and start at the exit of one of the bends. From there, run 300 meters fast, then jog 100 meters slowly through the next bend before you repeat. Even though you're running fast, don't push harder than you can maintain consistently across all intervals.



WEEK 6		9. February
Day	Distance	
Monday	3 mi / 5 km	
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday	5 mi / 8 km	Intervals or tempo runs
Friday		
Saturday		
Sunday	8,7 mi / 14 km	Easy pace

WEEK 7		16. February
Day	Distance	
Monday	3 mi / 5 km	
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday	5 mi / 8 km	Intervals or tempo runs
Friday		
Saturday		
Sunday	9,5 mi / 15 km	Easy pace

## Tip >>

Have 2–3 different pairs of running shoes that you rotate during your training. This distributes the load across tendons, joints, and muscles, reducing the risk of injury.

# Copenhagen Marathon®

## WEEK 8

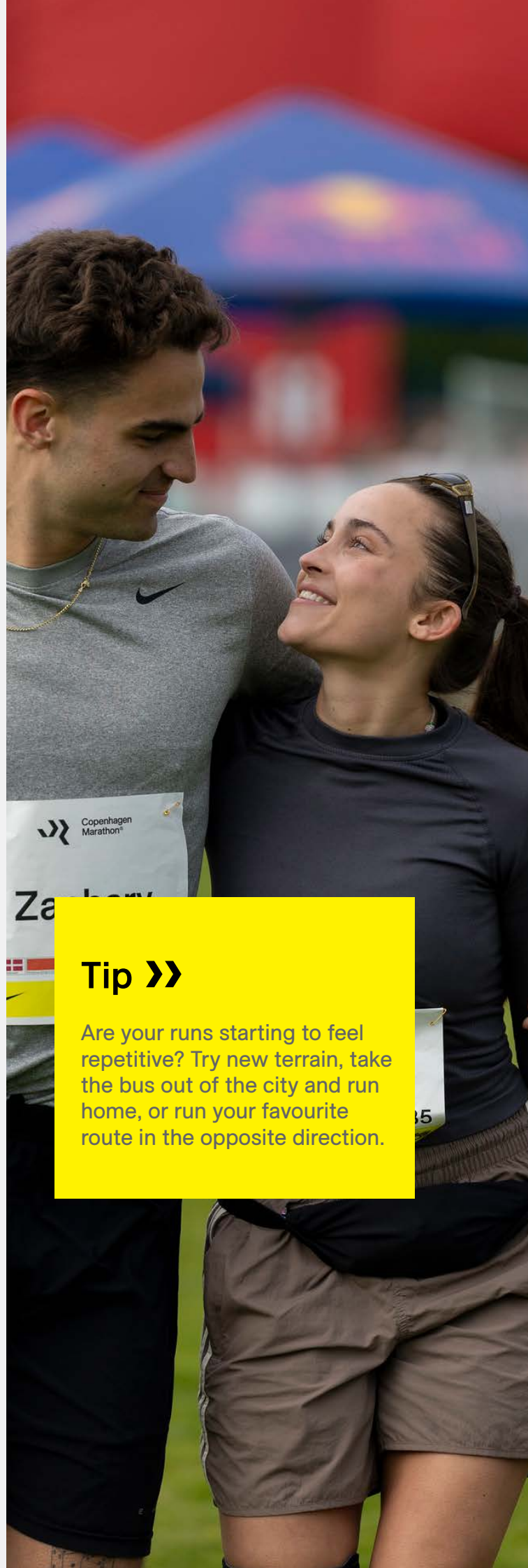
23. February

Day	Distance	
Monday	3 mi / 5 km	
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday	5 mi / 8 km	Intervals or tempo runs
Friday		
Saturday		
Sunday	10 mi / 16 km	Easy pace

## WEEK 9

2. March

Day	Distance	
Monday	5 km	
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday	5 km	Intervals or tempo runs
Friday		
Saturday		
Sunday	10 km	Easy pace



### Tip >>

Are your runs starting to feel repetitive? Try new terrain, take the bus out of the city and run home, or run your favourite route in the opposite direction.

# 5 tips for better interval training

Interval training is one of the most effective ways to become a stronger runner. But because it pushes your body hard, it's also a training method that deserves respect. Here are five solid tips before you put on your fast shoes and fire up the rockets under your feet.

## 1. Warm up properly

Always start with 10–15 minutes of easy running plus some dynamic drills such as high knees, butt kicks, and leg swings. A good warm-up reduces the risk of injury and prepares your body for speed.

## 2. Vary your interval lengths

Mix short intervals (e.g., 200–400 m), medium intervals (800–1000 m), and long intervals (1–2 km). Short ones build speed, longer ones develop endurance — together they create a strong marathon engine.

## 3. Use your recoveries wisely

Rest between reps is part of the workout. Jog or walk lightly during the recovery to avoid heavy legs and to bring your heart rate down in a controlled way.

## 4. Train at the right pace

Aim to hold roughly the same pace from start to finish. If you're completely spent halfway through, you started too fast. Finding the right balance between patience and pushing yourself can be a challenge — but it matters.

## 5. Use a track or GPS

Measure your intervals accurately on a track or with your GPS watch. This makes it easier to control your pace and track your progress over time.



WEEK 10		9. March
Day	Distance	
Monday	3 mi / 5 km	
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday	5,5 mi / 9 km	Intervals or tempo runs
Friday		
Saturday		
Sunday	11 mi / 18 km	Easy pace

WEEK 11		16. March
Day	Distance	
Monday	3 mi / 5 km	
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday	5,5 mi / 9 km	Intervals or tempo runs
Friday		
Saturday		
Sunday	12,5 mi / 20 km	Easy pace



**Tip >>**

Take part in small test races of 5 or 10 kilometres during your marathon training. It gives you an idea of your current form, and you can practise running in groups and taking fluids on the go.



WEEK 12		23. March
Day	Distance	
Monday	3 mi / 5 km	
Tuesday		
Wednesday	»»	
Thursday	5,5 mi / 9 km	Intervals or tempo runs
Friday		
Saturday		
Sunday	13,5 mi / 22 km	Easy pace

## Tip »»

Eat a meal that is easy to digest on Race Day. This could be oatmeal or white bread with jam. Your body needs energy to run – not to digest heavy food.

## Tip »»

Many runners overdress on Race Day. Remember that you will warm up quickly on the course, so if you don't feel slightly cool before the start, you're probably wearing too much.

WEEK 13		30. March
Day	Distance	
Monday	3 mi / 5 km	In this week you'll run your longest run. Consider it a rehearsal race and practice fluid and energy intake.
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday	5,5 mi / 9 km	Intervals or tempo runs
Friday		
Saturday		
Sunday	18,5 mi / 30 km	Easy pace



## Tip >>

Struggling with motivation? Make running plans with others. This is especially helpful on long, easy runs where you should be able to hold a conversation while running.

WEEK 14		6. April
Day	Distance	
Monday	3 mi / 5 km	Now it's time for tapering to allow your body to recover for race day.
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday	6 mi / 9 km	Intervals or tempo runs
Friday		
Saturday		
Sunday	12,5 mi / 20 km	Easy pace



WEEK 15		13. April
Day	Distance	
Monday	3 mi / 5 km	While your mileage is decreasing, keep up the speed / intensity in your training.
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday	5 mi / 8 km	Intervals or tempo runs
Friday		
Saturday		
Sunday	11 mi / 18 km	Easy pace

WEEK 16		20. April
Day	Distance	
Monday	3 mi / 5 km	
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday	5 mi / 8 km	Intervals or tempo runs
Friday		
Saturday		
Sunday	7,5 mi / 12 km	Easy pace



# 10 tips for Race Day

We've put together a checklist to help you arrive at the 42.195 kilometers in Copenhagen with calm confidence, fresh legs, and the right mindset. We've put together a checklist to help you arrive at the 42.195 kilometers in Copenhagen with calm confidence, fresh legs, and the right mindset.

1. Lay out your race kit, attach your bib, charge your watch, and sort your transport plan the day before Race Day.
2. Eat something familiar and easy to digest 2–3 hours before the start. Think simple carbohydrates like white bread, jam, honey, or bananas.
3. Arrive early – ideally about 90 minutes before the start. That gives you time to drop your bag, use the toilet, and meet up with people you know.
4. Avoid trying anything new on race day. That includes shoes, drinks, food, and energy products.
5. It's easy to get carried away by the atmosphere when the race begins. Stay patient and stick to your plan. You can always pick up the pace in the final third if you have the energy.
6. Take a sip at each aid station, and don't go for the very first cup. There's often more space further ahead.
7. If you need to walk for a moment, choose a point a bit ahead where you'll start running again.
8. Stay positive. You're about to spend the day doing nothing but putting one foot in front of the other. That's a luxury – remember to enjoy it.
9. Save a little energy for the finishing stretch – and cross the line like you've just won. Our photographers will be there, ready to capture the moment you became Copenhagen.
10. Some runners experience "hitting the wall" after 25–30 kilometres. This can happen when the body's stores of carbohydrates (glycogen) – our quick source of energy – are depleted. To avoid this, make sure not to use your energy too quickly, and remember to top up with energy drink and sugar along the course.





WEEK 17		27. April
Day	Distance	
Monday	3 mi / 5 km	Use the last two weeks to relax more, and refuel and hydrate well.
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday	3 mi / 5 km	
Friday		
Saturday		
Sunday	7,5 mi / 12 km	Easy pace

WEEK 18		4. May
Day	Distance	
Monday	3 mi / 5 km	
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday	3 mi / 5 km	
Friday		
Saturday	3 mi / 5 km	Loosen up with a shake out of max 5 km
Sunday	Marathon	Race Day!

Have a great Copenhagen Marathon 2026