Coach Jenny Hadfield® Train to Run Your First 50K

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
WEEK 1	Easy Run 45-50 minutes Yellow Zone	Cross-Training Orange Zone 45 minutes	Easy Run 45-50 minutes Yellow Zone	Cross-Training Orange Zone 45 minutes	Easy Run 4 miles Yellow Zone	Long Run 8 miles Yellow Zone	REST
WEEK 2	Easy Run 45-50 minutes Yellow Zone	Cross-Training Orange Zone 45 minutes	Easy Run 45-50 minutes Yellow Zone	REST	Cross-Training Yellow Zone 30-40 minutes	Long Run 8 miles Yellow Zone	Run 4 miles Yellow Zone
WEEK 3	REST	Easy Run 50-60 minutes Yellow Zone	Cross-Training Orange Zone 45 minutes	Easy Run 50-60 minutes Yellow Zone	Cross-Training Orange Zone 45 minutes	Long Run 10 miles Yellow Zone	REST
WEEK 4	Easy Run 50-60 minutes Yellow Zone	Cross-Training Orange Zone 50 minutes	Easy Run 45 minutes Yellow Zone	Cross-Training Orange Zone 45 minutes	Easy Run 4 miles Yellow Zone	Long Run 7 miles Yellow Zone	REST
WEEK 5	Easy Run 60 minutes Yellow Zone	Cross-Training Yellow Zone 45-60 minutes	HILL RUN Orange Zone	Cross-Training Yellow Zone 45 minutes	Easy Run 4 miles Yellow Zone	Long Run 12 miles Yellow Zone	REST
WEEK 6	Easy Run 60 minutes Yellow Zone	Cross-Training Yellow Zone 45-60 minutes	HILL RUN Orange Zone	REST	Cross-Training Yellow Zone 30-40 minutes	Long Run 10 miles Yellow Zone	Run 5 miles Yellow Zone
WEEK 7	REST	Easy Run 60 minutes Yellow Zone	Cross-Training Yellow Zone 45-60 minutes	HILL RUN Orange Zone	Cross-Training Yellow Zone 30-40 minutes	Long Run 14 miles Yellow Zone	REST
WEEK 8	Easy Run 45 minutes Yellow Zone	Cross-Training Yellow Zone 45 minutes	Easy Run 45 minutes Yellow Zone	Cross-Training Yellow Zone 30-40 minutes	Easy Run 3 miles Yellow Zone	Long Run 7 miles Yellow Zone	REST
WEEK 9	Easy Run 60 minutes Yellow Zone	Cross-Training Yellow Zone 45-60 minutes	HILL RUN Orange Zone	Cross-Training Yellow Zone 45 minutes	Easy Run 4 miles Yellow Zone	Long Run 16 miles Yellow Zone	REST
WEEK 10	Easy Run 60 minutes Yellow Zone	Cross-Training Yellow Zone 45-60 minutes	SPEED WORKOUT 10 x 1 Red Zone	REST	Cross-Training Yellow Zone 30-40 minutes	Long Run 12 miles Yellow Zone	Long Run 6 miles Yellow Zone
WEEK 11	REST	Easy Run 60 minutes Yellow Zone	Cross-Training Yellow Zone 45-60 minutes	SPEED WORKOUT 10 x 1 Red Zone	Cross-Training Yellow Zone 30-40 minutes	Long Run 18 miles Yellow Zone	REST

WEEK 12	Easy Run 45 minutes Yellow Zone	Cross-Training Yellow Zone 45 minutes	Easy Run 45 minutes Yellow Zone	Cross-Training Yellow Zone 30-40 minutes	Easy Run 3 miles Yellow Zone	Long Run 7 miles Yellow Zone	REST
WEEK 13	Easy Run 60 minutes Yellow Zone	Cross-Training Yellow Zone 45-60 minutes	SPEED WORKOUT 6 x 2 Red Zone	Cross-Training Yellow Zone 45 minutes	Easy Run 4 miles Yellow Zone	Long Run 20 miles Yellow Zone	REST
WEEK 14	Easy Run 60 minutes Yellow Zone	Cross-Training Yellow Zone 45-60 minutes	SPEED WORKOUT 6 x 2 Red Zone	REST	Cross-Training Yellow Zone 30-40 minutes	Long Run 14 miles Yellow Zone	Long Run 7 miles Yellow Zone
WEEK 15	REST	Easy Run 45 minutes Yellow Zone	Cross-Training Yellow Zone 45-60 minutes	Easy Run 45 minutes Yellow Zone	Cross-Training Yellow Zone 30-40 minutes	Long Run 7 miles Yellow Zone	REST
WEEK 16	Easy Run 60 minutes Yellow Zone	Cross-Training Yellow Zone 45-60 minutes	TEMPO WORKOUT 5 x 5 Orange to Red Zone	Cross-Training Yellow Zone 45 minutes	Easy Run 4 miles Yellow Zone	Long Run 22 miles Yellow Zone	REST
WEEK 17	Easy Run 60 minutes Yellow Zone	Cross-Training Yellow Zone 45-60 minutes	TEMPO WORKOUT 25 minutes Orange to Red Zone	REST	Cross-Training Yellow Zone 30-40 minutes	Long Run 16 miles Yellow Zone	Long Run 8 miles Yellow Zone
WEEK 18	REST	Easy Run 45 minutes Yellow Zone	Cross-Training Yellow Zone 45-60 minutes	Easy Run 45 minutes Yellow Zone	Cross-Training Yellow Zone 30-40 minutes	Long Run 8 miles Yellow Zone	REST
WEEK 19	Easy Run 60 minutes Yellow Zone	Cross-Training Yellow Zone 45-60 minutes	HILL TEMPO WORKOUT Orange to Red Zone	Cross-Training Yellow Zone 45 minutes	Easy Run 4 miles Yellow Zone	Long Run 23 miles Yellow Zone	REST
WEEK 20	Easy Run 60 minutes Yellow Zone	Cross-Training Yellow Zone 45-60 minutes	TEMPO WORKOUT 25 minutes Orange to Red Zone	REST	Cross-Training Yellow Zone 30-40 minutes	Long Run 18 miles Yellow Zone	Long Run 8 miles Yellow Zone
WEEK 21	REST	Easy Run 45 minutes Yellow Zone	Cross-Training Yellow Zone 45-60 minutes	Easy Run 45 minutes Yellow Zone	Easy Run 3 miles Yellow Zone	Long Run 8 miles Yellow Zone	REST
WEEK 22	Easy Run 60 minutes Yellow Zone	Cross-Training Yellow Zone 45-60 minutes	TEMPO WORKOUT 5 x 5 Orange to Red Zone	REST	Cross-Training Yellow Zone 30-40 minutes	Long Run 12 miles Yellow Zone	Long Run 6 miles Yellow Zone
WEEK 23	REST	Easy Run 50 minutes Yellow Zone	Cross-Training Yellow Zone 45 minutes	HILL TEMPO WORKOUT Orange to Red Zone	Cross-Training Yellow Zone 30 minutes	Long Run 7 miles Yellow Zone	Easy Run 3 miles Yellow Zone
WEEK 24	REST	Easy Run 40 minutes Yellow Zone	Easy Run 30 minutes Yellow Zone	REST	Easy Run 20 minutes Yellow Zone	50K Race!	REST

WEEK 25 RECOVERY	REST Massage	Cross-Training Yellow Zone 20 minutes	REST	Cross-Training Yellow Zone 30 minutes	REST	Cross-Training Yellow Zone 30 minutes	Easy Run 3 miles Yellow Zone
WEEK 26 RECOVERY	REST	Easy Run 30 minutes Yellow Zone	Cross-Training Yellow Zone 30-40 minutes	REST	Cross-Training Yellow Zone 30 minutes	Easy Run 3-5 miles Yellow Zone	REST
WEEK 27 RECOVERY	REST Massage	Easy Run 45 minutes Yellow Zone	Cross-Training Yellow Zone 30-45 minutes	Easy Run 45 minutes Yellow Zone	Cross-Training Yellow Zone 30 minutes	Easy Run 4-6 miles Yellow Zone	REST

GETTING STARTED:

You've run a marathon and now you've got the bug and want to try an ultra-marathon 50K. Excellent, you're in the right place. The First 50K Training Plan is designed for those that have run at least one marathon, and want to build on their experience and run a longer race. It's also geared to those who have been running at least four times per week for 20 miles per week, or 4-7 miles per run.

If you're running less, no worries, simply invest in a few more weeks of training to build your running time up to that level so you're ready to tackle the demands of this program.

This program is 24 weeks in duration to allow your body time to adapt to the demands of building your mileage up to run the 50K Ultra-Marathon distance. The duration of the plan also allows for life's detours along the way (vacation, illness…).

WARM UP

Warm up by walking for 3 minutes before every running workout. Start easy and build to a brisk and close to running pace by the end. This gradually increases heart rate, breathing rate and circulation to the working muscles.

COOL DOWN

Cool down by walking 3-5 minutes after every run, starting at a brisk pace and slowing towards the end. This gradually brings your body back to its resting state and aids in flushing the muscles of metabolic waste.

LONG RUNS

The longer runs are the bread and butter of the ultra training plan. They build with longer single runs, moderately long back-to-back runs, and recovery long runs. You'll notice that the long runs are to be run in the easy, yellow zone effort (Zone 1-2). This is to build your endurance, teach your body to burn fat as a fuel source, and assure optimal recovery. If possible, run these on courses that are similar to your 50K course.

EASY RUNS

The shorter, easy, yellow zone runs bridge the gap between your long runs, build your aerobic fitness and aid in allowing your body to recover from the demands of the faster and longer runs. If you're having a tough week, feel free to shorten this run, but keep 'er easy. If you use a heart rate monitor, the Yellow Zone includes Zone 1 and 2.

REST DAYS

These are your off days from training and activity. They aid in passive recovery from the demands of the progressive training plan and are just as important as the workouts. Without rest, our body will break down. Be mindful to rest on these days, and if you're feeling tired and fatigued, add a few to your plan along the way.

CROSS-TRAINING

Mix up your program on the cross-training days and include lower impact activities like cycling, elliptical, yoga, and strength training. A good example would be to perform the elliptical machine for 20-30 minutes followed by a total body strength program or yoga poses. Strength and flexibility are your best friends on this journey. Yoga is an amazing tool for your toolbox, as it lengthens and strengthens your muscles, build mental focus, and teaches you to breathe rhythmically. Keep them close, and make sure to include them twice every week because they will keep you running happy and injury free.

HILL RUN

The Hill Run is designed to build strength, fitness, and technique. You can run this Treadmill Hill Workout, or find a 1-2 minute hill, and run this workout outdoors.
Warm up walking for 3 minutes, starting easy and build to a brisk pace by the end.
Run 10 minutes in your easy yellow zone effort.
Repeat 6 times:
Run 1 minute at 3-4% incline and in your Orange Zone Effort (Zone 3)
Run 1 minute at 0% at an easy effort zone to recover
Run 2 minutes at 3-4% incline in your Orange Zone Effort (Zone 3)
Run 2 minutes at 0% at an easy effort zone to recover
Run 5 minutes in your easy yellow zone effort.
Cool down walking for 3 minutes, starting at a brisk pace and slowing by the end.

SPEED WORKOUTS

The speed runs are shorter in time, but pack a punch with red zone running intervals. You'll improve your speed, fitness and form with these fun runs and the time will fly by!

Speed Workout 10 x 1
Warm up walking for 3 minutes, starting easy and build to a brisk pace by the end.
Run 15 minutes in your easy yellow zone effort.
Repeat 10 times:
Run 1 minute at your Red Zone Effort (Zone 5)
Follow with 2 minutes of very easy jogging or walking to catch your breath.
Run 5 minutes in your easy yellow zone effort.
Cool down walking for 3 minutes, starting at a brisk pace and slowing by the end.

Speed Workout 6 x 2
Warm up walking for 3 minutes, starting easy and build to a brisk pace by the end.
Run 10 minutes in your easy yellow zone effort.
Repeat 6 times:
Run 2 minute at your Red Zone Effort (Zone 5)
Follow with 3 minutes of very easy jogging or walking to catch your breath.
Run 5 minutes in your easy yellow zone effort.
Cool down walking for 3 minutes, starting at a brisk pace and slowing by the end.

TEMPO RUNS

These are a favorite among runners because they're done at an effort that feels good and empowering. It's somewhere between and easy and hard running effort, and can be quite the cathartic experience when you're finished.

Tempo Workout 5 x 5

Warm up walking for 3 minutes, starting easy and build to a brisk pace by the end.
Run 10 minutes in your easy yellow zone effort (Zone 1-2).
Repeat 5 times:
Run 5 minutes at the top of your Orange Zone Effort (Zone 4)
Follow with 2 minutes of very easy jogging or walking to catch your breath.
Run 10 minutes in your easy yellow zone effort.
Cool down walking for 3 minutes, starting at a brisk pace and slowing by the end.

Tempo Workout 25 minutes

Warm up walking for 3 minutes, starting easy and build to a brisk pace by the end.
Run 10 minutes in your easy yellow zone effort (Zone 1-2)
Run 25 minutes at the top of your Orange Zone Effort (Zone 4)
Follow with 2 minutes of very easy jogging or walking to catch your breath.
Run 5 minutes in your easy yellow zone effort.
Cool down walking for 3 minutes, starting at a brisk pace and slowing by the end.

Hilly Tempo Workout

Warm up walking for 3 minutes, starting easy and build to a brisk pace by the end.
Run 10 minutes in your easy yellow zone effort (Zone 1-2).
Run 25 minutes on a rolling hilly course (outside or treadmill) and focus on adjusting your speed to stay at the top of your Orange Zone Effort (Zone 4).
This means slowing on the uphill, and increasing speed on the downhill.
This incredible workout teaches you how to run by the terrain, by your body and with the flow. This will be a game-changer on race day!
Run 5 minutes in your easy yellow zone effort.
Cool down walking for 3 minutes, starting at a brisk pace and slowing by the end.

RECOVERY PHASE

You'll notice a 4-Week Recovery Phase after the 50K race. This is a guideline for how to recover with rest, active recovery and how to get back to running safely.

The Zones: The three training zones, yellow, orange and red, are a way to specify the intended intensity of the workout. The training plan includes yellow, orange and red zone workouts to build endurance, stamina, and speed. If you use a heart rate monitor, Zones 1-2 are the Yellow Zone, Zone 3 is the Orange Zone, and Zone 4-5 are the Red Zone.

YELLOW ZONE: This is the easiest effort level. When you're this zone, you can talk in full sentences without pausing to catch your breath. It's conversational.

ORANGE ZONE: The is a moderately challenging effort level. You can talk, but in choppy sentences, and you need to reach for air every few words.

RED ZONE: This is a very challenging effort where you can't talk, your breathing is labored, and it feels well outside your comfort zone.

Gather Intel.
Do your research and find out as much as you can about the course. How hilly is it? Are the trails groomed or more technical single track, or is it all on road? Is it an out-an-back course or several loops? Where will the aid stations be on the course? The more you know about the course, the better you can simulate your training and prepare mentally and physically.

Train Specifically
Train specifically. The more closely you simulate the trail terrain you'll be racing on in training, the more prepared you'll be. Do your research on the course to identify the level of technical difficulty, hills, altitude, and weather. Will you be running on single track (narrow trails) with tree roots and rocks? Will the course roll up and down gradual hills, short steep rocky hills or long climbs at altitude? Is it a typically hot and humid or dry climate? Are you running on sand, dirt, rocks or grass? The more you know the better you can tailor your training to weave in similar terrain and optimally prepare your body and mind for race day.

Run Longer.
If you've run a marathon, your body knows how to run 26.2 miles and can safely run longer in training The training plan includes single day long runs in addition to back-to-back moderately long runs to build your endurance. These, in combination with shorter recovery long runs will allow your body to adapt to the distance, but reduce the risk of overtraining with too many, or too long of a long run workout.

Remember to run by effort rather than pace. It is easy to get caught up in trying to run the same pace as your marathons and that can lead to fatigue, burnout, and a drop in performance. Run by your effort level (breathing rate, how you feel, heart rate...) and find your new rhythm on the longer runs.

Run and Walk
Leave your ego at home and ignore your pace for the first few trail runs because it is much more demanding. You'll be about 30 seconds to a minute per mile or more slower than your road running times and that's OK. The key to racing a strong 50K trail race is to learn to run with the rhythm of the terrain. Many successful (and fast) ultra runners incorporate power walking into their strategy. Just like intervals in speed work, the walking intervals allow your body recovery time to recharge so you can run stronger for longer. You can plan the walks by time (every 5-15 minutes walk 2-4 minutes) or by terrain (walk the hills, run the downhills and flats). Either way, plan to incorporate walking into your training as well as race day. As you progress to the longest of runs, you'll begin to see and feel the value of a short power walk. Plus it gives you time to eat, drink, etc.

Run with the rhythm of the trail.
The greatest part of ultra trail running is it teaches you to run by the terrain rather than your watch. It doesn't mean you have to toss your watch aside, it simply means your normal pace won't mean much on a winding, technical single track trail. Set a goal this season to run by effort (how you feel - breathing, heart rate) rather than pace. This can and will change the way you run forever. One, because you end up running your best effort on any given day (hot, humid, cold, low energy) and two, it gives you a sense of freedom that empowers you to explore beyond your numerical limits. It allows you train simply by matching your effort to the planned workout for the day (easy, moderate, hard) versus trying to run by a planned pace which may or may not be optimal for the day. For example, if the training plan calls for a 60 minute trail run tomorrow and it is going to be 80 degrees and you haven't slept all week. Rather than running at a planned 10 minute pace (which would cause you to go into a red line status and overtrain), you run by feel, refer to your watch only as secondary information and run by your body and at a truly easy effort. You'll be slower for sure, but you'll be training in the optimal zone and recovery more efficently so you can continue to train forward.

Constant Forward Progress.
Every time you stop on the trail, whether it be for a bathroom break or to fuel yourself in an aid station, the clock is ticking away. I learned in my adventure racing days (and use it during my ultras now) to keep constant forward motion on the trail. Meaning, keep the stops to a minimum, practice fueling while walking on the move and organize and plan your aid stations. Aid stations can easily turn into a picnic if you're not careful and an easy way to keep your running pace efficient is to keep moving forward ("Just keep swimming," as Dori sang in Finding Nemo). Know the course and where the aid stations will be. As you're heading into the aid station, think through what you need to refuel and take with you on the next leg of the course. You can gain a lot of time on the other runners by gliding right through the aid stations. They are there to provide aid on the move, not a stopping point for rest.

Merge off road gradually.
Although the impact forces while trail running are lower than road running, the demands on your muscles, tendons and joints will be greater when you begin to run on trails. Every step is unique which ultimately lowers the risk of overuse injury however, because these patterns are new to your body it will need time to adapt. Start your journey to the trails with a few shorter runs during the week and hold this pattern for the first 4-6 weeks. Once you begin to feel comfortable, begin to transition your long endurance runs on the trails.

Watch out for trail drain.
One sign you know you've run hard on roads is the unmistakeable muscle tightness and fatigue that comes from the impact forces. You can literally feel the effects of the impact on your body. This is not the case on trails. The body hurts less and fatigue shows up in an overall energy drain and decrease in the ability to maintain strong running form (tripping, falling). Like marathon training, it is just as important to follow the flow of easy and hard workouts to allow your body to acclimate and recover efficiently. It is wise to respect the new demands of trail running and in the initial stages treat trail runs as harder workouts until your body adapts. Listen to your body for signs of trail drain (low energy during runs, fatigue, higher breathing rates at average paces, dead legs, and feeling generally tired all day). If you have the drain, cross-train for a few days at an easy effort and run on flat roads for the week to recover.

Race like the tortoise, not the hare.
The secret to successful and joyful ultra-marathon races is in your pacing strategy. Because any given mile could be flat, rolling, muddy, technical, it is impossible to race by your watch at a specific pace (unless of course you've trained on the course and know it by feel and even then it will be hard). Rather than relying on your watch, use your natural pacing instincts and run by your effort. Learning to race by feel will have a tremendous impact on all your other races as it will teach you to run from within and through any racing condition and cross the finish line at your strongest. Break the race up into three parts and color code them. Run a light green for the first third where you can't hear your breathing and you're at a happy effort. Run the second part of the course at an orange where you can just start to hear your breathing but still running at a moderate and controlled effort. Finish the third section in the red where you can hear your breathing, but you know you are in the last part and have the energy and stamina to push hard to the end. If you invest in the final act (third section), it will pay off in many hard, but happy miles in the end not to mention a fantastic finish line photo!

Be self contained.
Although there will be kick-butt aid stations on the ultra course (bananas, pickles, PB&J's, chips, sports drink, water, electrolytes and more) you will need to carry fluids and gels with you on the trail. Fueling for an ultra is much different than a marathon because you will be out there longer (due to the longer distance and the demands of the trail). Find the right balance of fuel for you while training this season and learn the hydration system that works for you. There are three basic ways to go for carrying fluids (handheld bottle, backpack/vest bladder, and waist belt with multiple bottles). The key is in understanding you'll need more energy and fuel, but in small amounts over the long duration.