

Preparing your Body for the Annapurna Marathon

Doing a Marathon in the Himalayas is a dream for many. To be in beautiful Nepal with its grand vistas is a privilege, and participating in an event such as the Annapurna Marathon is extraordinary... To embrace an altitude gain of around 3500m takes courage and determination and a little bit of the crazies 😊 It also takes training. This marathon will be a journey; it's not just about crossing the finish line. If your body has not received sufficient training for an event such as this, no amount of mental strength will get you across that line!

- **This program is designed for 16-20 weeks of training prior to the Annapurna Marathon.** If you are planning to train for a longer time than this, beware of burn out! It can be difficult to remain in peak form while keeping up everyday responsibilities.
- **Begin in the General Conditioning phase** If you can easily jog 8-10kms at a moderate pace. If this is out of your reach right now, begin with the Preparatory Phase.
- **Please see your GP** prior to commencing this training program if you have any pre-existing medical conditions or are over 55 years. If you have any pre-existing soft tissue injuries, please see your physio.
- **Look after yourself and listen to your body** – get regular massages and physio to keep you on track, and rest when you need it

Your endurance training should gradually increase throughout your program to ensure that you continue to improve your fitness with minimal risk of injury. This process is called periodisation, where training is broken down into blocks of time known as 'phases'. Over each phase, increase the total time of your exercise. In the final week of the



phase, significantly decrease the total time. Training with these 'unloading' segments allows your body to recover from the previous weeks of exercise, reducing the chance of injury and fatigue while giving excellent results.

Phase	Week	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Prep	1	Intervals 30mins	3kms moderate	Active recovery	Intervals 30mins	Active recovery	5kms moderate	Rest
	2	Intervals 30mins	5kms moderate	Active recovery	Intervals 30mins	Active recovery	8kms moderate	Rest
	3	Intervals 30mins	8kms moderate	Active recovery	Intervals 30mins	Active recovery	10kms moderate	Rest
	4	Intervals 30mins	5kms moderate	Active recovery	Intervals 30mins	Active recovery	8kms moderate	Rest
General Conditioning	5	Intervals 45mins	8kms moderate	Active recovery	Intervals 45mins	Active recovery	12kms speed	Rest
	6	Intervals 45mins	10kms moderate	Active recovery	Intervals 45mins	Active recovery	15kms hills	Rest
	7	Intervals 45mins	10kms moderate	Active recovery	Intervals 45mins	Active recovery	18kms speed	Rest
	8	Intervals 45mins	10kms moderate	Active recovery	Intervals 45mins	Active recovery	22kms hills	Rest
	9	Intervals 30mins	8kms moderate	Active recovery	Intervals 30mins	Active recovery	15kms moderate	Rest
Specific Conditioning	10	Intervals 1 hr	12kms moderate	Active recovery	Intervals 1 hr	Active recovery	24kms hills	Rest
	11	Intervals 1 hr	12kms moderate	Active recovery	Intervals 1 hr	Active recovery	28kms speed	Rest
	12	Intervals 1 hr	15kms moderate	Active recovery	Intervals 1 hr	Active recovery	30kms hills	Rest
	13	Intervals 1 hr	18kms moderate	Active recovery	Intervals 1 hr	Active recovery	35kms speed	Rest
	14	Intervals 45mins	15kms moderate	Active recovery	Intervals 45mins	Active recovery	25kms moderate	Rest
Peak	15	Intervals 1 hr	18kms moderate	Active recovery	Intervals 1 hr	Active recovery	32kms speed	Rest
	16	Intervals 1 hr	20kms moderate	Active recovery	Intervals 1 hr	Active recovery	38kms hills	Rest
	17	Intervals 1 hr	18kms moderate	Active recovery	Intervals 1 hr	Active recovery	35kms speed	Rest
Taper	18	Intervals 45mins	15kms moderate	Active recovery	Intervals 45mins	Active recovery	20kms moderate	Rest
	19	Intervals 30mins	12kms moderate	Active recovery	Intervals 30mins	Active recovery	10kms moderate	Rest
Event	20	5kms moderate	Rest	Active recovery	Rest	42kms	You're done 😊	Phew!

Rest	Means rest!
Active recovery	Easy swim, low intensity yoga session, foam rolling, walk
Moderate	Easy running at 70-80% MHR
Intervals	Interval training at 80-90% MHR (Can be combination sprints/jog, weights, agility exercises, stairs – e.g. boot camp or circuit training)
Hills	On a trail with average 10% grade (i.e. 100m elevation change over 1km)
Speed	On a road/path between 80-90% MHR

A little bit about Metabolism & MHR....

So we need to get a bit technical here....The anaerobic threshold (AT) is the exertion level between aerobic and anaerobic training.

- During **aerobic** metabolism, your body creates energy by burning carbohydrates and fats in the presence of oxygen, producing carbon dioxide and water as by-products through breathing and sweating.
- **Anaerobic** metabolism kicks in when exercise intensity is increased, and the aerobic system can no longer keep up with the body's energy demand. This is the point at which we cross the AT. During anaerobic metabolism, the body burns stored sugars to supply the additional energy needed, and lactic acid is produced faster than it can be metabolized. Muscle pain, burning and fatigue make anaerobic energy expenditure difficult to sustain for longer than a few minutes, and you conk out.

The fitter you are, the longer you can fuel your body with the aerobic system before the anaerobic system needs to take over. You can improve your aerobic efficiency—and thus raise your AT—by doing high-intensity aerobic work at a level just below your current AT. Interval training is excellent for this. Calculating and monitoring your heart rate will help you determine what your current AT is.

The basic way to calculate your MHR (maximum heart rate) is to subtract your age from 220.

Your AT is approximately 85% of MHR

For example, if you're 40 years old, subtract 40 from 220 to get a maximum heart rate of 180bpm. Your AT is approx. 153bpm.

If you want to be more basic, you can do the 'talk test'.

Run type	% of Maximum HR	How to estimate	Metabolic state
Moderate	65-75%	You can have a full conversation	Aerobic
Long runs	75-85%	You can still speak sentences	
Intervals	85-88%	You can speak single words	Anaerobic
Speed run	88-90%	You can't speak comfortably	

Therefore if you're at your anaerobic threshold during a run, you should only just be able to talk in single words

Remember the essentials

Each workout should be bookended by a warm-up and cool-down/stretch to prevent muscle soreness. This can look something like this.

	Exercises	Timing	Purpose
Dynamic warm up	skipping, lateral shuffles, high knees, butt flicks etc.	5 mins before session	Warm up muscles through a range of movements
Cool Down	Slow jog or walk	3-5 mins at end	Slowly allow muscles to cool to avoid lactic acid build-up
Static stretches	Concentrate on biggest and least flexible muscles e.g. quads, hamstrings, glutes	5-10 mins after	Improve flexibility, decrease recovery time

Final bits and bobs

- Keep your workouts interesting – exercise with a friend or in a group
- Train on a trail at least half the time – **the best way to prepare for a long run in the mountains is to go on long runs in the mountains!**
- stretch or roller tight muscles every day
- consult a trail running coach or exercise physiologist for further advice

See you out on the trail soon 😊

Helen Cooper
and the team at [Primal Adventures](https://www.primaladventures.com.au/)

