

**WHIZZ
KIDZ**

We're here
for young
wheelchair
users



Your beginner's guide to running a marathon

What's included

Where to start?	04
Nutritional advice	06
Tracking your progress	08
Warming up	09
Thinking about your training	10
Conditioning and cooling down	12
Get in touch	13

Welcome

Whatever your motivation for running, we hope to be able to provide some support, guidance and a **16-week training plan** to improve your fitness and hopefully finish time!

This guide has been produced in close collaboration with our running coach, Graeme, and we hope it will inspire you join Team Whizz Kidz.

You can check out our events at whizz-kidz.org.uk/events





About Whizz Kidz

Whizz Kidz is the UK's leading charity for young wheelchair users.

Over 75,000 young people in the UK need to use a wheelchair to be mobile. We're here for all of them.

We create opportunities for young wheelchair users to get the equipment, skills, and confidence to go further.



Meet Coach Graeme

This guide has been written and produced together with our running coach, Graeme – a highly qualified personal trainer and sports therapist with over 25 years of experience in the fitness industry.

For more information about Graeme and all the services that GH Training offer, visit www.ghtraining.co.uk





Where to start?

If this is your first big step up from shorter distances, we recommend a few things to consider before you start your training

Your health – if you are starting, or restarting, your fitness journey, consider visiting your GP to check your heart and blood pressure. If you start feeling unwell or pick up an injury during your training, make sure you listen to your body and seek medical advice if necessary.

Running Shoes – the most important item of clothing you can buy for your training! High-quality shoes that match your “running gait” (visit a high-street running store to find this out) are essential to help reduce the chances of injuries, blisters and foot soreness. This is especially important for very long distances (think of all your training miles as well as the race itself).

Running Clothes – Longer training runs increase the need for high-quality running clothes that help reduce rubbing and better regulate your body temperature.

Here are a few other tips:

Sports Bras - Did you know that 80% of women (that's 8 out of 10) wear either no or the incorrect-sized sports bra? Breast tissue can be irreparably damaged (due to over stretched ligaments) if runners fail to wear the correct support, so make a point of visiting a high street running shop who have trained assistants who can offer you advice and guidance.



Clothing Material – Try avoiding cotton clothing (particularly socks) which can cause rubbing and blisters. Instead, opt for “sweat-wicking” materials (such as polyester or nylon) which dry faster and take sweat away from the body.

Fit – Different brands have different fits that suit different body shapes. If you try on a top or leggings from a (well-marketed) brand but it just doesn't feel comfortable, then look for an alternative. Comfort is king and the last thing you want is unwanted chaffing due to poor-fitting kit.

Gadgets – Although not essential, running gadgets such as GPS watches (Apple Watch/Garmin/Fitbit) are helpful for tracking miles and monitoring training intensity.





Nutritional advice

When training for any endurance event, what you eat and drink can have a significant impact on your performance and recovery.

Get your nutrition wrong, and you'll find your energy levels can drop, and training can become far harder, which can impact your motivation and even affect your health.

Here are three super important nutritional tips that can make a HUGE difference to your training -

Hydration – Always ensure you begin training in well-hydrated state. The easiest way to tell is by looking at the colour of your urine. If it is dark yellow, this indicates that you are dehydrated and need to consume fluids. If your urine is pale straw or clear, then this indicates that you are sufficiently hydrated.

Carbohydrates – Carbohydrate-rich foods such as rice, pasta, potatoes, and bread provide energy to help you meet the physical demands of training. If you fail to consume sufficient carbohydrates, you can

begin to feel sluggish and lethargic when training. The longer you exercise for, the more carbohydrates you need, so make sure you are eating enough to meet the demands of training.

Protein – Frequent exercise can cause microdamage in the muscles. To help rebuild and repair damaged tissue, dietary protein is essential to help improve your fitness and keep the immune system strong. If you are a vegan or vegetarian, you need to be particularly mindful about protein intake by ensuring you eat a wide variety of pulses, beans, seeds, fruits and vegetables.



When training for your event

You expend a huge amount of energy when running, and the further you run, the more energy you need to fuel your legs and sustain a good pace.

Here are a few things to keep in mind when training for your event.

Post-run meal – Even though you might not always be in the mood, always try to eat a carbohydrate-rich meal in the 2-3 hour window after a training run.

Carbs on the run – If you are out for a long training run, it's a good idea to consume a sugary snack every hour. This can help keep your energy levels up and give you a bit of a boost. Popular choices are carbohydrate gels and jelly babies.

Timing – Try to avoid eating anything at least 30-45 minutes before you begin running. Too much food in the stomach before a run can cause stomach cramps, a stitch, or worse.

Fluids – Running is very dehydrating, so for runs lasting longer than 60 minutes (or in warm conditions), make sure you drink fluids while running.





Tracking your progress

Smartphone apps and watches can be invaluable training aids to help you keep track of your training stats (heart rate, pace, distance, etc).

They are not classed as “essential”, but if you love stats and want to keep an eye on your progress, it’s worth looking into downloading one. Here are some popular apps worth considering:

Strava – whether you are in a wheel-chair, on foot or using a hand bike, Strava has everything for the recreational and more serious athlete. Recording every stat you can imagine, plus the ability to join “groups” where you can compare your progress to others, is a great feature.

Nike Run Club – If you are after a simpler App then the Nike Run Club might be for you. You use it on your smartphone (or Apple Watch) to keep an eye on your pace, distance and heart rate and you have comfort knowing your training session will be logged and recorded for future reference.

GH Training Support – as well as various training plans available through Whizz Kidz, you can also get advice on training and nutrition on Graeme’s website or contact him directly:

You can check out our events at whizz-kidz.org.uk/events

For more information about how the GH Training App is like having your own running coach and personal trainer in your pocket 24/7 - head over to the [GH Training Website](http://gh-training.org.uk)



Warming up

Whether you run first thing in the morning or late in the evening, it is essential that you warm up well before and cool down after your training.

Beginning any form of exercise without warming the muscles up risks injury. Just a five-minute warm-up is all it takes to oil those joints and fire up the muscles ready for training.

We recommend three stages of warming up –

Mobilize – Spend a minute or two moving all your key joints through a full range of movement, from your ankles to your shoulders. This helps to lubricate the joints and prepare them for more exercise.



Stretch – Dynamic stretching is the best form of stretching you can do before any form of intense physical activity. It helps warm up the muscles, wake up the nervous system and get your body ready for training. [Click here for examples of dynamic stretches.](#)

Activate – Finally, it's a good idea to "activate" the key muscles before you begin training. Some walking lunges (forwards and sideways) or some squats are ideal. This helps to wake up the muscles & prepare them for exercise.



Thinking about your Training

One thing to focus on when training and on race day is your speed.

It is so important to pace yourself and not get caught up in the moment or the crowds, or you will burn yourself out.

Our training plan aims to build up your endurance so you can be in the best shape for your race.

Our downloadable plan references your RATE OF PERCEIVED EXERTION (RPE), which should help you to gauge intensity, speed and how you 'feel' when running – this is personal to you. (you can find our plans on our website –

whizz-kidz.org.uk/trainingplans)

If you are following our training plan, most of your training runs are either an 'easy pace/RPE 3' or a 'steady pace/RPE of 4/5'. Our scale below gives a rough guide to tell you how you should 'feel' during your run.



RPE Scale

How you feel

1	Chilling. Sitting down, feet up watching a movie.
2	A steady walking pace.
3	A light jog or a brisk walk.
4	A perfect sociable pace. Quicker than a jog but able to have a chat.
5	Pretty comfortable but got a good sweat on.
6	Comfortable -ish. You feel like it's well-paced run.
7	Talking is getting difficult. Possible - but not very easy.
8	Only short answers to important questions possible.
9	Talking all but impossible.
10	Talking is impossible. You can only keep this intensity up for 10-15 seconds or so.

Runs linked to the RPE scale

Easy – This is a really gentle run, a brisk walk, or a mixture of the two, particularly in the early stages of training and/or as part of your warm-up/cool down.

RPE Scale - 2-3

Steady Run – You should aim for this to be your standard pace for the majority of your training runs/on the day – you want to feel comfortable and able to maintain for the race.

RPE Scale - 4-5

Fartlek – These sessions are so much fun. In short, throw in bursts of increased pace for as long or as far as you like - whenever you like.

For example, if you want to do a “fartlek” session during a 45-minute or 4-mile run, after a 10-minute warm-up, you could start throwing in random lengthened intervals at an increased pace.

Popular “fartlek” intervals include”

- Increasing pace (up to an RPE of 8) for 2-3 mins, then recover at a light jog pace (RPE 3) until you’ve caught your breath, then repeat.
- Increase pace to a landmark in the distance e.g. a lamppost, a street corner, a bridge or a park bench. You then ease the pace back until you’ve recovered - and go again.
- For music lovers, why not increase your pace every time the chorus of an inspirational song comes on? It’s amazing how you can lose yourself in the music and how it can inspire you to put some good speed in those short intervals.

For more information on fartlek sessions – [check out this video](#)

RPE Scale - 3 (during the rest periods) up to 8 (during the intervals)



Conditioning and cooling down

Conditioning – As part of your plan, we recommend conditioning exercises on Days 4 and 6. These are other forms of exercise that you can do at the gym or at home and are essential for all runners to build up their fitness and endurance. They could include strengthening and stability exercises, stretching, yoga, and the use of a foam roller.

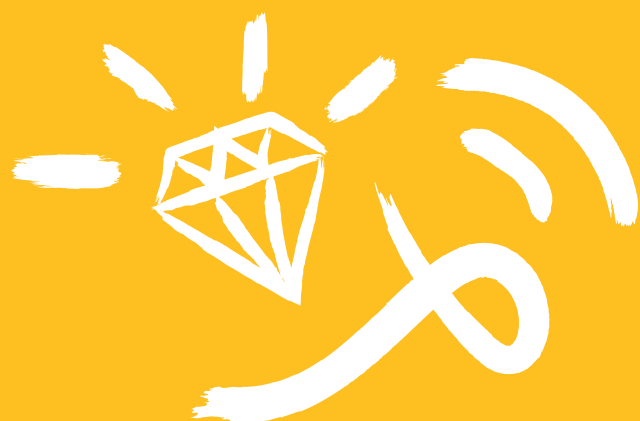
These exercises will help keep your hard-working muscles and joints balanced, strong, and stable, helping to prevent injuries and make you a more efficient runner. Here is just one great example of a brilliant conditioning exercise you could do, specifically for glutes:

How Strong are your Glutes?

Cooling down – When cooling down, there are two main parts to any cooling down regime we recommend you do for 5-10 mins after your training -

Walk slowly – Regardless of the type of exercise you have done, walking around slowly after training helps to redistribute blood to the rest of the body and helps to calm your nervous system down.

Stretch—It's also essential to take some time to stretch some of the key muscles you've used during exercise, such as the thighs, calves, hamstrings, and glutes.



Thank you for downloading and reading our Training guide – we hope you found it useful and you are feeling ready to get out there!

You can find all our training plans here – whizz-kidz.org.uk/trainingplans

And you can explore and sign up to one of our incredible running events to support Whizz Kidz here – whizz-kidz.org.uk/events



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