

TRAINING FOR A NORDIC WALKING MARATHON PORTLAND 2007

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Nordic Walking in the USA has come a long way in the past few years. Just 6 years ago, we were begging the Miami Marathon officials to let Nordic Walkers participate and were told if we started at the very end of the line, they would allow it. I'm not even sure they would have let us in at all if not for the fact that it was the first year for this marathon and they were very hungry for participants. Now **The Portland Marathon** has stepped up to the plate for the third year in a row and not only opened a **Nordic Walking Division**, but also started the **Nordic Walking Championships**. Hopefully this is the tip of the iceberg and many of the other running events, including trail runs, will follow Portland's lead. Therefore, in addition to being a great experience, your participation and support of The Portland Marathon this October 7th will keep this event going and open the doors to other events for Nordic Walking

With that said, let's get going. The training schedule at the bottom of the page was designed to cover a 19 week training program, but you should first have a base before starting it.

It is a good idea to have a physical exam and get the green light from your health care professional to do the marathon, especially if you have any health concerns.

THE BASE

For sure Nordic Walkers vary greatly in ability and training. However, before starting a marathon program, you should have been Nordic Walking for about a year (okay, a half year), averaging at least 15 miles per week, preferably 20 to 25. You should be Nordic Walking 4 or more times a week. For example: 4 miles for 3 Nordic Walks during the week and an 8 miler on the weekend. If you don't already have this base, you have plenty of time to build it, but the longer you have had the base, the better, so start creating one now!

If you need help, email Dr. Tony Weaver at tony@nordicwalkingclubs.com.

It also would be good to have had some experience Nordic Walking some shorter events, such as 5Ks, 10Ks or preferably a Half Marathon.

When you have your base, you can use Training Schedule shown below and which starts on May 28th, 19 weeks before the marathon. If you start your training after the first scheduled weeks, you should still be able to jump in as long as you more than 10 weeks before the marathon. Adjust the remaining schedule as best you can to your needs.

THE LONG NORDIC WALK ("LNW")

The Long Nordic Walk, which increases over the weeks of training, is the key to your success. It is the main factor that will give you the endurance you will need and is the most critical part of your training week, so make sure you do the LNW every week. These Nordic Walks are done below your anticipated race pace, but it's a good idea, if possible, to increase the pace for the last few miles of the LNW. Even though this may be a little tough to do, it can pay off big time in reserve stamina for the end of the marathon; plus it will help build you confidence as you do the LNWs.

I cannot emphasize enough the importance of the LNW. For the marathon distance, doing the LNW is the "make or break" ingredient in training. If you get a group to train with you, these LNW'S can be a lot of fun. If you're having trouble with the long distances at first, one trick is to Nordic Walk to a location where you can get a bit to eat, and then after you've recovered a bit, trek back. Drawing on the experience of marathon runners, many slower runners have found that it helps them to go longer on their long runs. Jeff Galloway, for example,

suggests the longest long training run should be marathon distance, (26.2 miles). Since Nordic Walkers go at an even slower pace than slow runners, it makes sense to extend the long day even further. I'm recommending 28 miles, but don't hesitate to go longer if you want just make sure you don't over train, see below. In addition to building endurance, this is a super confidence builder.

THE BUILDUP

The buildup takes place during most of the training until about 4 weeks before the marathon. During this period both your LNW and total weekly miles are increased. In general, it's a good idea to keep these increases to about 10% or less of the miles done the previous week or the week previous to that.

THE TAPER

Tapering takes place for the last 3 or 4 weeks before the actual marathon. During the weeks the mileage is decreased for both the LNW and the week. Its purpose is to allow you body to recover from the buildup of the previous weeks, resulting in a strong marathon performance. However, note that the long Nordic Walks scheduled for 1 and 2 weeks before the marathon break the steady decay pattern in volume seen in most running marathon schedules. My experience with Nordic Walking, as opposed to running, has been that these longer miles help in the maintenance of endurance adaptations.

THE TRAINING SCHEDULE

Week	Date	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun	Total
1	05/28/07	3 m	5 m	3 m	5 m	3 m	Rest	8 m	27 m
2	06/04/07	4 m	5 m	3 m	5 m	3 m	Rest	9 m	29 m
3	06/11/07	4 m	5 m	3 m	5 m	5 m	Rest	10 m	32 m
4	06/18/07	5 m	5 m	5 m	5 m	5 m	Rest	8 m	33 m
5	06/25/07	5 m	5 m	5 m	5 m	5 m	Rest	11 m	36 m
6	07/02/07	5 m	5 m	7 m	5 m	5 m	Rest	9 m	36 m
7	07/09/07	5 m	5 m	7 m	5 m	5 m	Rest	13 m	40 m
8	07/16/07	5 m	5 m	7 m	5 m	5 m	Rest	10 m	37 m
9	07/23/07	5 m	5 m	7 m	5 m	5 m	Rest	15 m	42 m
10	07/30/07	5 m	5 m	8 m	5 m	5 m	Rest	11 m	39 m
11	08/06/07	5 m	5 m	7 m	5 m	5 m	Rest	19 m	46 m
12	08/13/07	5 m	5 m	8 m	5 m	5 m	Rest	14 m	42 m
13	08/20/07	4 m	5 m	8 m	5 m	5 m	Rest	23 m	50 m
14	08/27/07	5 m	5 m	8 m	5 m	5 m	Rest	14 m	42 m
15	09/03/07	4 m	5 m	8 m	5 m	5 m	Rest	28 m	55 m
16	09/10/07	5 m	5 m	5 m	5 m	5 m	Rest	14 m	39 m
17	09/17/07	4 m	5 m	5 m	5 m	3 m	Rest	24 m	46 m
18	09/24/07	3 m	3 m	5 m	3 m	3 m	Rest	16 m	27 m
19	10/01/07	Rest	5 m	3 m	4 m	Rest	2 opt	26.2	40.2m

Notes:

1. See "The Base" above
2. The above schedule was drafted to suit an existing walking schedule for a group that presently Nordic Walks Monday through Friday, does longer walks on Sunday, taking Saturday off. Feel free to do the Long Nordic Walks on another day of the week. Just try to make a rest day before the LNW and the shortest walk of the week on the following day of LNW or visa versa.
3. This schedule is not "cast in stone," so feel free to customize it to your needs. However, make sure you do you weekly LNW.

4. Estimating Distances

- a) Pre-measure the course with a car or bike odometer
- b) Use a PEDOMETER or GPS DEVICE to measure the distance while under way.
- c) Time yourself for how long it takes you to Nordic Walk 1 measured mile (measure it with a car/bike odometer or go to a high school or college track). Multiply this time by the number of miles scheduled above.

FORM

I recommend that, unless you have lower body concerns such as “bad” knees, you do as much of your training as possible using the **FULL POWER** technique because it will recruit and build up the most muscles. **FULL POWER – pole length** In this style, the poles are adjusted to a length that positions the forearms in an upward slope. If you are having trouble with the tips slipping, you can shorten the poles.

The tips should plant about 10 to 20 inches behind the lead foot. Arms remain almost straight.

To go faster, you can decrease the stride length by bringing the arms up less high at the same time increasing the leg turnover rate (cadence).

For more information on form please visit the technique section of www.fittrek.com and the the pdf library section- download Race Director’s Guide

HILL WORK

You’ll be happy to hear that the Portland Marathon starts with the first mile going downhill and miles 21 through 25 are all downhill as well. However, what goes down also goes up and there are 3 uphills on the Portland Marathon course to deal with, the steepest one being about 2 miles in length. While these hills are hardly mountainous, they do present a challenge to many participants, but a little hill training will help flatten them out for you. I recommend you find a hill that is about one-quarter to one half-mile in length. It should take about four to ten minutes to Nordic Walk up at your race pace effort or slightly faster. Go up hard and go down easy to for recovery. Do about three to five repeats, five to 10 for more experienced competitors. If you can’t find a hill try a bridge. Do these repeats once a week.

SPEED WORK

One of the best types of speed work is to enter 5K Road Race and go as fast as you can. This will help you build sustainable speed. It will also give you a better idea of a realistic pace for the Marathon. Schedule the 5Ks on the weeks of your shorter LNWs and reschedule the LNW for a weekday. Fartleks and intervals of 30 seconds to 5 minutes are also great to do more intensive, but shorter speed work. I think that Nordic Running some of these intervals is helpful. Nordic Running them gets you used to having your legs turn over faster and gets your heart rate up rapidly as well. If you want to try Nordic Running, you should shorten your pole length and use more elbow similar to the **FAST** technique described above. While Nordic Running may be great for speed work, don’t try it during the marathon or you will be quickly disqualified.

HYDRATION

Make sure you drink water before during and after your Nordic Walks – especially during the LNWs. Consider getting and using one of the hydration packs such as a Camelback. These systems are excellent for LNWs and also for marathons. You do not need to break your stride and/or stop to get water and you can avoid the wet areas around the water stations that often cause the poles to slip. However, make sure you use the water stations to remind you to take a drink when you pass them. Additionally, if you use a hydration pack, you will have a place to stash that lightweight jacket you use to stay warm while waiting for the marathon to start. During LNWs, you can use the pack to carry food, extra pole tips, dry sock, duct tape, etc.

REST

It’s very important to take at least one day a week off from any training. Some think that 2 days are better, so take the rest day off and don’t try to sneak in more miles. If you think you have overtraining symptoms (see below) take 2 days off per week until you feel stronger. It’s also important to get enough sleep. Many marathoners get up earlier than usual to train, but if you do this, make sure that you get to bed earlier too and

don't rob your hours of sleep when you need them the most. Many people find it beneficial to take a nap following the LNW, especially the longer ones.

OVERTRAINING

Overtraining in itself is fairly simple, not to mention self explanatory. In a nutshell, it is training above and beyond your body's ability to adapt positively. Some of the common symptoms of overtraining are general fatigue, lack of motivation and/or energy, slower Nordic Walking times, headaches, poor concentration, general lethargy, slow recovery after workouts and insomnia. In my opinion, lack of proper rest, especially sleep, is a major cause of these symptoms. Of course, it's a "devil's circle," because insomnia is one of the common symptoms and leads to lose of sleep. If you are experiencing these symptoms, try taking a few days off from training and/or taking naps. Additionally, you might try supplementing with a smoothie containing a banana, about 15 almonds and a scoop whey protein immediately after you training walks. This will help speed your recovery.

MORE TIPS AND INFORMATION

I will be periodically emailing out more training tips and advice. If you're interested in receiving them, email me at tony@nordicwalkingclubs.com and put "tips and info" in the subject line.

Good luck!

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