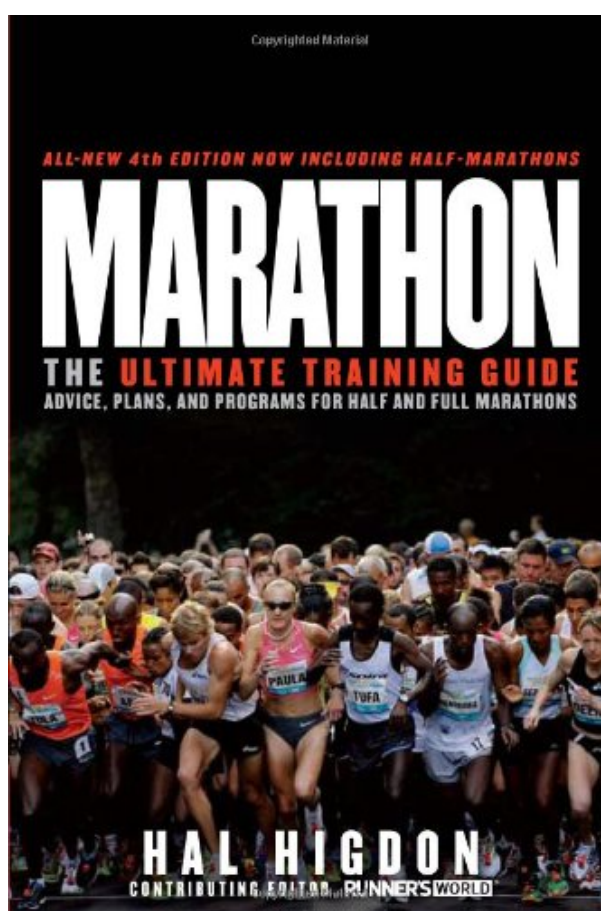


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From Library Journal

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- Susan L. Patton, Tennessee Valley Authority, Knoxville

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Review

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MARATHON: THE ULTIMATE TRAINING GUIDE: ADVICE, PLANS, AND PROGRAMS FOR HALF AND FULL MARATHONS BY HAL HIGDON PDF

Especially in tough economic times, running offers an affordable and positive way to relieve stress and gain a sense of accomplishment. Marathons and more than ever half-marathons are the ultimate achievement for runners and have experienced an unprecedented boom in the last several years.

New hunger for reliable information on marathon and half-marathon training, as well as new technologies that have revolutionized ordinary people's ability to train intelligently, means the time is right for a new edition of longtime Runner's World contributor Hal Higdon's classic guide to taking the guesswork out of preparing for a marathon, whether it's a reader's first or fiftieth.

Since its original publication in 1993, Higdon's definitive manual has sold over a quarter of a million copies through all channels. The book is such a consistent seller for many reasons, but above and beyond all the others is this one: It works. At the core of the book remains Higdon's clear and essential information on training, injury prevention, and nutrition. With more than 25 percent new material, this fourth edition of a running classic will be a must-own for both longtime runners and those new to the sport.

- Sales Rank: #34353 in Books
- Published on: 2011-09-27
- Released on: 2011-09-27
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.00" h x .81" w x 6.08" l, .95 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 304 pages

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From the Publisher

"This is a competent, well-organized guide for runners of all levels." --Booklist

Most helpful customer reviews

72 of 75 people found the following review helpful.

This book revolutionized my running...

By TheColorBlindNebula

This book changed my running life...probably forever. Yes, Hal's advice could be considered "anecdotal," but anyone who runs long-distance will tell you that all credible running advice is anecdotal; it comes from personal experience or observation. There are no "textbook" right-or-wrong answers in running, and if anyone tries to tell you the "right" way or the "proven way" to do something, they probably don't run much! After I made the decision to run a marathon, a friend recommended that I check out Hal's website. I downloaded one of his free training plans, but ultimately decided that I wanted more in-depth information on how to train (I had only run 3 5k races, ever). So, I got the book. When I officially started training for my first marathon last spring, I could barely run 3 miles without walking or resting. Roughly 32 weeks (and a few social media contacts with Hal regarding my questions) later, I ran my first marathon (26.2 miles). I didn't hit the wall; I didn't feel the need to walk or stop to rest; I had no aches or pains during the race; I had fun; and most importantly: I actually finished the race! I used his Novice Supreme plan, which is very doable for an inexperienced runner; some runs were as short as 1.5 miles. Also, that specific plan doesn't really require speed work or hill repeats, you just go out and...run. Some days are labeled with a general pace guideline, like "marathon pace" or "easy." In addition to the NS plan, I followed Hal's advice on food, fluids, race day prep, and recovery. By day 4 of my post-marathon recovery, I felt great!

One of things that I love about the book is that Hal's writing style is very conversational. His advice is simple, practical, and to-the-point - no flowery language included! Also, I really appreciated the advice he passed along from real-life runners (elite and not so elite) as well as other running experts (coaches, medical professionals). Hal himself is an accomplished runner and coach, but in a highly individualized sport, what works for him may not work for someone else. His collaborative approach to certain topics really rounded out his advice. I liked the book so much that I actually laminated it with contact paper and started carrying it around in my purse! Now that I have one successful marathon under my belt, I'm looking forward to signing up for another race. I will likely bump up to another one of Hal's novice plans, perhaps Novice 1 or Novice 2. I highly recommend his training plans and books to anyone looking for a simple, effective way to train for their first few marathons, or just looking to PR at their next race. Oh, and by the way - if you're like me and think of every question under the sun, Hal himself is very "available" online. As I mentioned above, I posted several comments on his Facebook page and received a quick reply every time. I definitely appreciated his help!

143 of 167 people found the following review helpful.

Principles based on anecdotal evidence

By D. Roth

This book has 221 pages. I think the useful information could be condensed down to 20 pages or so. This book makes heavy use of the anecdote pattern. Chapters begin with little stories about elite athletes and experienced runners from which general principles of running are drawn. The problem is that the stories are incomplete and entirely anecdotal. Elite athletes and experienced runners don't need this book and the principles that apply to them don't apply to middle-aged people who truly are beginners. The book doesn't address the subjects of weight and size (very important in long distance running), and it only addresses age at a very superficial level. The good things in this book are: the focus on staying injury free; the incorporation of easy running and rest days into your training schedule; some sample training schedules; some diet advice; and some seemingly useful information about race logistics toward the end. On the negative side, a lot of space is devoted to fluffy stories; evidence to support advice is almost entirely anecdotal; there is practically no advice on runner injuries and how that affects your schedule; and no talk about weight/age; Put simply, this book contains a lot of anecdotal, unscientific, irrelevant, happy, feel-good fluff. The training schedules may work for you, but if they don't you will not have gained enough knowledge from this book to understand how to adapt them to fit your needs.

EDIT: As the author of the book notes in the comments to my review, my review is of the 1999 edition. I haven't seen any of the subsequent editions and can't speak to them.

16 of 16 people found the following review helpful.

Fourth Edition: New and Improved

By E. Levy

I think I have owned every edition of this book at one time or another. The first edition got me through my first marathon. I followed it to the letter and enjoyed a successful race. Loaned it out and didn't get it back, so I bought the second edition to have as a reference. Loaned that version out and had to go buy the third edition...you get the picture.

The fourth edition is a return to simplicity. Marathon is still a comprehensive guide to how to train for and run a marathon, suitable for newbies and experienced runners alike, but now it is more succinct. The basic information is there, the schedules, my favorite part, are there, but the writing is tighter and there are fewer anecdotes. A couple of new chapters have been added to take into account changes in the running world, such as the increased popularity of the half marathon. Yes, there are schedules for the half, and advice on how to approach this type of race.

Reading Higdon's guide again, I realized I had forgotten how thorough he is. I have a library of marathon/running books now, some much longer and more technical, but this basic reference covers pretty much all the bases. It isn't too complicated and so doesn't scare off the new runner, but isn't too simplistic for the experienced runner. I am still running marathons, and still using Higdon's schedules to get ready, with some modification based on my experience now. When some friend comes to me asking how to train for the marathon, I'll offer him this book and find myself having to buy a replacement copy again.

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