

mental TRAINING

Setting and achieving goals, staying focused during long runs and calming sleep-depriving nerves the night before a race.

By Paige Dunn



I'm not very active, but I'd love to start running and maybe even participate in a half marathon one day. But I'm overwhelmed thinking about where to start. Can you help?

Sounds like you've already started! Just considering an accomplishment like finishing a half marathon is part of the goal-making process. It's important to give yourself permission to explore your options, decide what your goal will be, commit to it and then develop a strategy. For a half-marathon training plan, read the article on page 48. You may also want to consult books, such as Jeff Galloway's *Half-Marathon: You Can Do It* (jeffgalloway.com/merchandise), and Web resources, like the Active Trainer (activetrainer.com).

Create a training schedule that includes small daily and weekly goals. A daily goal may be something as simple as running at a certain pace or completing a certain distance. A weekly goal may include adding a speed or hill workout to the week's training and making that workout a priority.

This gives you something to focus on that is immediately achievable. By accomplishing intermediary goals, you'll stay motivated to keep working toward your ultimate goal without feeling overwhelmed.

I'd also suggest spending some time thinking about why you want to accomplish this goal. What's motivating you: To complete a new challenge? To lose weight? To raise money for charity? Training can become challenging, and remembering why you set out to do it in the first place can help motivate you along the way.

I've run a few marathons and enjoy the training, but sometimes my long runs are hard because I get really bored. Is there anything I can do to stay focused and enjoy my runs more?

Long runs are definitely a challenge—both physically and mentally. There's no doubt they can get monotonous, and it