

CHASING EXTRAORDINARY

A 'HOW TO' GUIDE FOR NEWBIE MARATHON RUNNERS



NICOLA LOVE

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**A 'HOW TO' GUIDE FOR NEWBIE
MARATHON RUNNERS**

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You should be in good physical condition and be able to participate in the exercise.

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You should understand that when participating in any exercise or exercise program, there is the possibility of physical injury.

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*'If you want to run, run a mile.
If you want to experience a different life,
run a marathon.'
~ Emil Zatopek*

INTRODUCTION

ABOUT ME

Hey, Nikki here... howdy.

When I was a young girl I had big dreams of travelling the world. I wanted to see all the places.

I was also a runny, bouncy, jumpy thingy with lots of energy to burn.



That little girl has grown into a woman who still has a desire to run and bounce and jump and, with my love of running, I intend to discover all the places by foot. Pushing my physical boundaries by running, jogging, walking, staggering, crawling – and yes I've moved in all of these ways – I will simply do whatever it takes to achieve my goals.

Why do I push myself and then want to share the 'how to' tools I've gathered and the stories I've gained?

I have shelves full of books written by other runners and adventurers telling stories of their physical challenges. These books stoked a flame inside me to want to go and do something similar.

My hope is that I can do the same for someone who is like me – someone who has looked out into the world to find other people who have said – I can do that, other people who have dreamt big and then followed through and achieved.

I'm really a very average runner. I've placed in some races. I've middled in most. I've come last. Truthfully, I don't care about these things now. When I was younger I cared.



These days my love for adventure running, getting out in the world, seeing new places and challenging myself is what it's all about for me.

I'm ambitious, that's true. I'm ambitious to push my boundaries and see how far I can go.

How far is that?

I don't know. The best answer I can give is to say 'til the end'.

This gives me my drive, my purpose, my get up and go every day.

If I can help people along the way – encourage, support, inspire – then that is most definitely the icing on the cake.

So, here's my little guide that I'm throwing into the mix. If you want to run a marathon, stay less injured, seek adventures, and care for your body with running, here's my 'How To'.

And now it's over to you.

Think Big. Then Do.

I'd love for us to meet and run one day.

After all, anything is possible when you're Chasing Extraordinary!

WHO THIS BOOK IS FOR

You want to do it – that ultimate distance which runners aspire too.

It's a thought that's been running around inside your mind now for quite some time?

You want to run a marathon, but you wonder – Can you really?

So, I'm asking...

Can you imagine this?

*You're covered in sweat. You've grimaced at times
and yet your smile is as broad as your face.*

You hurt and yet you feel totally elated.

*You questioned if you really could, but you're about
to make it.*

*This race pushed you. You gave it everything you've
got. You dedicated 6 months (and more) to making
this big dream a reality.*

*It challenged and tested your physical boundaries,
but you've taken every single step of the 26.2 miles
to go above and beyond them.*

*You hear the crowd clapping and cheering as you
head towards that finish line.*

*You see the sea of smiling faces watching in awe of
what you're about to do.*

*And as you finally cross that 26.2 mile finish line you
prove to yourself that you can do anything that you
set your mind too.*

It's now time for you to make this dream a reality!

Not everyone will understand your need to fulfil this dream.

Are you crazy? Do you have a death wish? What are you running
away from? Why?

These are questions that will be asked of you.

I know, because I've heard them all.

You'll question yourself – Why do I want to train today? It's too
cold, it's too wet, it's snowing, it's too hot, it's too dark.

Your dedication will be questioned by others – Do you really need to run today? Come out with us and run on another day. Why do you need to run for that long? Blah, blah, blah.

Knowing your why will be key during these times.

Knowing your why will help you stay dedicated to making the time and energy available to train.

Knowing your why will keep you focussed and motivated.

Yes, I know that many people run marathons to raise money for charity or in dedication to important people in their lives.

However, ultimately it is you and only you who will do the months and months of training.

It will be you and only you who will take every single step of the 26.2 miles of a marathon.

It's crucial to understand WHY this is so important to you.

This book is for people who not only want to dream and imagine but want to experience that feeling of pride, of utter joy, of total self-belief that you can run a marathon.

MARATHON – HOW DO YOU DO THAT

I remember running my first half-marathon. It was during the Melbourne Marathon sometime in the '90s... I'm getting old I don't remember the exact year but I do remember doing it.

What I remember is finishing that race and watching the folk who continued on to complete the full marathon.

I was completely spent and I wondered how the hell you ever go twice that distance.

That was my first thoughts about marathon running, and that's when my inner running program began.

If you haven't got the inner game going on – the mind, the nutrition, the training, the resting and the mind (yep said it twice because it's so, so important), then you'll struggle to run long.

I've struggled on many occasions, despite having had some great coaching and being a fitness professional.

I've made lots of mistakes over the years, but an alternative way of looking at it is that I've had a lot of 'learning experiences'.

Hopefully, by reading this, you'll have a shorter learning curve than me.

WHAT THIS BOOK COVERS

This book provides all the tools you need to run a marathon including how to stay motivated, how to improve your technique, how to nourish your body and, of course, the training plans.

There's a week by week training plan that takes you from 10k to half-marathon to full marathon distance.

But hey, if you're starting as a complete newbie runner, I've totally got you covered. There's also a 0-5k-10k plan in there too.

It also provides a simple but effective understanding of how your body works, how it performs better, feels better, lasts longer when you look after it so that running becomes and stays a part of your life forever.

My aim for this book is to provide you with all the technical stuff, but hey I'm a real person who's gone through many ups and downs and sideways and tumbles.

That's why, in amongst the technical stuff, I've added a few of my own chasing extraordinary stories that have impacted my life for the better.

In terms of running marathons, my results are average.

However, what I lack in speed, I make up for with determination, dedication, education and life experiences.

I'm a body movement geek, who indulges her passion for running by running marathons and I believe anyone can run a marathon without facing these issues:

- overtraining
- falling out of love with running
- suffering excessive injuries
- always feeling totally knackered
- losing motivation
- feeling not ready

You just need a plan and some tools.

Let's take a look at the chapters in a little more detail.

CHAPTER 1: THE WHY

KNOW YOUR MOTIVATION, STAY FOCUSED AND OVERCOME YOUR SELF-DOUBTS

Apparently, not everybody wants to run a marathon – who knew?... but I know you do and I want to help you stay totally connected to your goal.

Here are the benefits you get from running marathons.

A true understanding of dedication, devotion and commitment to yourself. You have to give these to yourself to train, to rest, to push your boundaries.

Self-love, self-appreciation, self-confidence. These are all super-powers you build by pushing your boundaries to run a marathon.

Self-love is definitely top of the agenda. You really have to care for yourself to be able to run that distance. You need to train,

nourish, rest, believe and of course, dedicate yourself to your cause and your cause is you.

It saddens me when people say I'd love to run but 'things' get in the way. They either don't get going or they lose the motivation to keep going.

Issues like:

- lack of time
- work
- family life
- injuries
- age

are the most common roadblocks that come up, and may surface in your thoughts.

However, by working on your WHY, you'll have the mindset to stay true to your goal.

If you were to watch the London Marathon or any other marathon, and really look closely at the runners who challenge themselves to run 26.2 miles, then I'm pretty sure most in that crowd will have had to overcome one or several of these roadblocks.

If they can, then why not you?

Personally, there have been 3 times in my life when I've been unable to run. I've broken my leg twice and I've been pregnant once.

Without running I'm a bit of a pain in the ass to live with (so I've been told).

This is part of my WHY. I know it, I accept it and I 'run' with it.

CHAPTER 2: THE BASICS

THE 7 ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS AND WHAT, HOW, WHEN AND WHY THEY HELP YOU TO RUN AND REDUCE OVERTRAINING AND INJURIES

By basics I mean, what you train, how you train and why these all come together so nicely and neatly to reduce the risk of overtraining and preventable injuries.

I say preventable simply because I have broken my leg. Twice. Both times accidentally, not through excessive training.

Just wanted you to know in case you'd seen me in a cast and thought 'hey that running lark can't be all that great, you've broken your leg... twice'.

Anyhoo...

What you train and why – I'll introduce you to the 7 essential ingredients:

- endurance
- speed
- strength
- power
- flexibility
- mobility
- agility

These are all the technical terms and sound a bit boring. In plain talk these things will help you run longer, stronger, with less stress and strain on your body – hope you agree, that sounds better.

How you train and why, using the 3-week block system. It's a system I was taught by my first running coach, Tony Benson, many moons ago.

Over the years and with added learning and life experiences (ie., having to juggle work, family and ageing), I've tweaked and changed the system to include my body movement geeky stuff.

However, the principal of training hard for 2 weeks then easing, testing and consolidating for one week remains the same.

The training plans combine all of these things and help me and the people I coach, to run marathons without overtraining, without falling out of love with running and staying as injury free as possible.

When you train and why – Ok, you want to run a marathon. Which means you'll need to train. Which means you'll need to know your lead time.

Which means you'll need to know where you're starting from, how much time you'll need to prepare for your race and how much time you'll need to commit each week.

You can enter a marathon then work out a training plan to fit into that timeframe.

Or you can work out the optimal lead time you'll need to train to achieve your marathon goal.

Either way works.

How you feel during the run and after the run may differ.

CHAPTER 3: THE TECHNIQUE

IMPROVE YOUR RUNNING PATTERN TO GET FASTER, STRONGER AND REDUCE INJURIES

Most runners start by heading out the door and running until they stop or get back home again, whichever comes first.

They give little or no thought to optimum technique.

It's just go forward until you get puffed. Walk a bit. Then go again. Until you're done for the session.

I get it.

It's exactly the way I started.

Though I had a cheeky little head start.

I had done ballet from the age of four, and from that age, I was taught to pull my tummy in, squeeze my butt, stand tall, relax the upper body, look graceful and then move – POSTURE!

These 'posture' techniques were drummed into me pretty much on a daily basis for twelve years. They became a positive habit and a pretty solid base to start running from.

It's my turn now to drum them into you... they really are that important!

Ever heard anyone say running's bad for your knees, bad for your joints, bad for your back?

Well, it's true if you have poor technique and poor posture.

Many injuries occur due to weaknesses in the body and poor technique.

We'll discuss standing posture, running posture.

Then we'll get into the spicy added ingredients that help you look and feel better when you're running including:

- cadence
- foot landing
- arm swing

I love watching people change their running pattern and seeing how different they look. When I follow up later and ask how their running is progressing, I pretty much always hear how good their body feels.

That makes me happy.

CHAPTER 4: THE RECOVERY

SMARTEN UP YOUR RECOVERY PLAN AND FEEL GOOD

As I mentioned, running a marathon, or running any distance for that matter is all about self-love, and self-love is giving your body the TLC it needs.

You're asking it to do extraordinary things, and it will when it's cared for.

Like the training part, the recovery part is up to you. Take time, listen and feel your body. Your body will thank you for it.

We'll cover:

- stretching and tuning into your body
- foam rolling
- self-massage

Taking the time to do the pre-run care and the after-run care will help keep you feeling good, moving good and running good.

CHAPTER 5: THE NUTRITION

FUEL YOUR BODY TO RUN LONGER AND FEEL MORE ENERGETIC

There's no way around it, your body needs food to function.

It's all about creating lifetime eating habits (no fad diets here) that fuel your body and give it the nourishment it needs to keep you running long and strong.

In this chapter I'll show you how simple it is to:

- build a plate at each meal that works for your body
- plate up meals with foods that tickle your tastebuds

- get all the proteins, fats and carbohydrates that you specifically need – we are all different

I've tried so many fad diets including the one where you simply don't eat – it was not a wise choice but I was young and silly.

Thankfully, it led to a fascination to learn a more sustainable way of eating that cares for my body rather than breaks it – a way that gives me the energy I need and keeps me in a shape that I'm happy with.

What I've learned is how to balance life with some of my favourite things (cake and chocolate) using the 80/20 rule and my food mantra.

CHAPTER 6: THE PLAN

LAST BUT NOT LEAST, YOUR MARATHON TRAINING PLAN

To get to marathon distance you have to hit all the milestones along the way. There are no shortcuts (I've checked).

The key is to start.

And once you start, keep going.

You'll need to pass the 5k, the 10k and the half-marathon distances. So, I've provided training plans for all of them.

Running is going to be a part of your life for at least the next 6 months and my hope is that you'll fall so in love with running that you'll continue it on after you've run your first marathon.

Perhaps we'll even get the opportunity to run a marathon together?

All the training plans that you'll need include:

- 0-5k-10k training plan
- 10k to half-marathon training plan
- half-marathon to full marathon training plan
- warm ups
- body workouts

- stretches

CHAPTER 7: THE DAY

WHAT HAPPENS ON RACE DAY AND LOTS OF OTHER FAQs ABOUT RUNNING AND TRAINING FOR A MARATHON

It's finally race day and you want to be fully prepared.

In this chapter, I give you all the hints and tips I've picked up along the way that will help your day run smoothly.

I also touch on other frequently asked questions that pop up during your training including:

- dealing with illnesses and injuries
- bucket list marathons (yep I'm that confident you'll want to do another)

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

As you read through this book you'll be prompted to do some tasks:

- some writing regarding your WHY
- some technical tasks to help with your HOW
- oh, and of course, there's the practical week by week training plan of the WHAT to do

To make this easy for you, I've created PDFs that you can download and either type onto and print off, or print off and write on.

There are click links to the PDFs throughout the document for you to click through and print off as you go.



Or, if you're like me and want to read everything first and then access the resources, all the PDFs are also listed again at the end of the book in the resources section. Look out for this icon.

Whilst the book is a do it yourself 'how to' guide that takes you from start to finish to become a marathon runner, I would still love to be a part of your marathon team.

As well as downloading all the PDFs in the Resources section there's a [Let's get social](#) section with all the magic links for us to meet up.

I'd love to say howdy, hear what you're up to and for you to meet up with other newbies, who soon become experienced marathon runners, just like you.

ON YOUR MARKS, GET SET, GO!

So, now you know where we're heading, let's get your marathon on!

*'At mile 20 I thought I was dead
At mile 22 I wished I was dead
At mile 24 I knew I was dead
At mile 26.2 I realised I'd become too tough to kill'
~ Anon*

ASPIRING TO ACHIEVE THE ULTIMATE RUNNING DISTANCE?

26.219 miles or 42.195 kilometres or more simply ...a MARATHON!

It'll take up at least 6 months of your life and only 1% of the world's population will ever run that distance... but a little birdy told me that you fancy being in that 1%.

Wouldn't it be handy if you could keep your:

- motivation levels sky high
- energy levels supercharged
- body strong and injury free
- family and social life on the go

You bet! So, let's get you strapped into your trainers and taking the steps to get your marathon on! Wherever your starting point – couch to 5km, 10km to half-marathon, half-marathon to the motherload marathon - this 'how to guide for newbie marathon runners' gives you:

- a running training plan
- a body strength, balance and conditioning plan to help keep the injuries away
- an eating and recovery plan to get you into great shape, keep you energised and keep you raring to train

Packed with little hints, tips, the gear you need, and marathon-related stories in between all the techy stuff to inspire and show you that running really is an adventure full of love, fun and exciting moments - perfect for an excited newbie.

Accompanied by host of downloadable resources, the only thing this book doesn't do is take the steps for you (bah!), but with an accompanying online Facebook support group, Nikki will be there taking the steps with you.



Nikki Love is a body movement geek (qualified personal trainer, running coach and sports massage therapist) who not only talks the talk, she walks the walk – or in this case – runs. She is an adventure ultrarunner, mummy of one super-duper kiddo, freelance author, total non-domestic goddess (don't ever invite her over and let her loose in your kitchen) and loves to help others chase their extraordinary. For more visit <http://www.nikkilove.co.uk/>.

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