

Comrades 2026 Finishers Program by Coach Parry – Official coach of the Comrades Marathon Association:

To Ask Questions sign up to: www.coachparry.com

It is only 11 months until the 2026 UP Comrades Marathon. The UP RUN is known for The Big Five Hills: Kowies Hill, Fields Hill, Bothas Hill, Inchanga and Polly Shortts. The 1st 3 are all run in the 1st 40km with Inchanga taking you to 50km and Polly Shortts with a little over 10km to go. There are also many other climbs like 45th cutting, Little Polly's and Umlaas Road, however it's the unnamed hills that get you down and creep into your mind. In summary: The UP Run is an enormous challenge.

It is important to prepare physically for the challenge, and equally important to prepare mentally for the challenge of running 87 odd kilometers from Durban to Pietermaritzburg.

The focus this year is to run consistently and regularly. Some running must be done in the winter to lay a platform for spring and summer. If you completed the 2025 down run or are a regular runner with a 21km PB of 2:20 or faster, this programme will be too easy for you, so add a bit more than what is on the programme but do not get too carried away, in the coming months less is more, and the focus is on improving your half marathon time in November, your Marathon time in January and we focus on Comrades from March/April.

If you are a true beginner to running, then this is where you start, with a very slow but consistent build up to race day in June 2026.

This programme is time based so people of more experience and greater running ability will get relatively more out of the programme and progress faster. Time based programmes also prevent you from settling on a route that you need to run faster every time you run that route. It is easier to maintain discipline and run easy on easy days. The aim is to be able to run a sub 5:00 marathon before Comrades.

Because you will employ a run walk strategy for your Qualifier, Long run and Comrades we will use this strategy in training. Very important to note about using a run walk strategy is that the walk is not a Sunday stroll but fast walking with purpose. It is a change in focus on the muscles not a "rest". DO NOT add extra running, it will however be massively beneficial if you add cross training or strength training to your schedule.

Note that training days are interchangeable, if your club does hill training on a different day or club long runs on a different day then you can change days around.

Training Paces for a 2:20 half marathon:

Recovery:	7:51-8:28/km (12:38-13:38/mile)
Easy:	7:13-7:51/km (11:37-12:38/mile)
Long Runs:	7:24-8:10/km (11:55-13:08/mile)
Time Trials:	
4km	23:45
5km	30:15
8km	50:00

Start at the slower end of the training paces and move towards the faster end as you progress through the coming months of training.

Please note that if you cannot run the Time Trial times this does not mean you are not capable of a 2hr20 half Marathon. These are guidelines so there is some room either side.

July 2025:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
1 July	REST	Walk 5min easy; Jog 5min walk 1min x 4	REST	Walk 5min easy; Jog 3min walk 2min x 5	REST	Walk 5min easy; Jog 9min walk 1min x 5	Walk 5min easy; Jog 5min walk 1min x 5
7 July	REST	Walk 5min easy; Jog 5min walk 1min x 5	REST	Walk 5min easy; Jog 3min walk 2min x 6	REST	Walk 5min easy; Jog 9min walk 1min x 6	Walk 5min easy; Jog 5min walk 1min x 6
14 July	REST	Walk 5min easy; Jog 5min walk 1min x 6	REST	Walk 5min easy; Jog 3min walk 2min x 7	REST	Walk 5min easy; Jog 9min walk 1min x 7	Walk 5min easy; Jog 5min walk 1min x 7
21 July	REST	Walk 5min easy; Jog 5min walk 1min x 5	REST	Walk 5min easy; Jog 3min walk 2min x 5	REST	Walk 5min easy; Jog 9min walk 1min x 5	Walk 5min easy; Jog 5min walk 1min x 6
28 July	REST	Walk 5min easy; Jog 6min walk 1min x 4	REST	Walk 5min easy; Jog 5min walk 2min x 7			

August 2025:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
1 Aug					REST	Walk 5min easy; Jog 10min walk 1min x 6	Walk 5min easy; Jog 6min walk 1min x 4
4 Aug	REST	Walk 5min easy; Jog 7min walk 1min x 4	REST	Walk 5min easy; Jog 6min walk 1min x 5	REST	Walk 5min easy; Jog 12min walk 1min x 6	Walk 5min easy; Jog 7min walk 1min x 5
11 Aug	REST	Walk 5min easy; Jog 8min walk 1min x 5	REST	Walk 5min easy; Jog 7min walk 1min x 5	REST	Walk 5min easy; Jog 15min walk 1min x 4	Walk 5min easy; Jog 8min walk 1min x 6
18 Aug	REST	Walk 5min easy; Jog 7min walk 1min x 6	REST	Walk 5min easy; Jog 6min walk 1min x 6	REST	Walk 5min easy; Jog 15min walk 1min x 3	Walk 5min easy; Jog 7min walk 1min x 5
25 Aug	REST	Walk 5min easy; Jog 10min walk 1min x 3	REST	Walk 5min easy; Jog 8min walk 1min x 5	REST	Walk 5min easy; Jog 20min walk 1min x 4	Walk 5min easy; Jog 10min walk 1min x 5

September 2025:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
1 Sep	REST	Walk 5min easy; Jog 12min walk 1min x 4	REST	Walk 5min easy; Jog 10min walk 1min x 4	REST	Walk 5min easy; Jog 25min walk 1min x 4	Walk 5min easy; Jog 12min walk 1min x 4
8 Sep	REST	Walk 5min easy; Jog 14min walk 1min x 4	REST	Walk 5min easy; Jog 12min walk 1min x 4	REST	Walk 5min easy; Jog 30min walk 1min x 2	Walk 5min easy; Jog 15min walk 1min x 3
15 Sep	REST	Walk 5min easy; Jog 12min walk 1min x 3	REST	5km Time trial, do this to the best of your ability, walk if you need to. DO NOT go 100% effort	REST	Walk 5min easy; Jog 20min, walk 1min x 3	Walk 5min easy; Jog 15min walk 1min x 2
22 Sep	REST	Walk 5min easy; Jog 20min walk 1min x 2; Walk 5min	REST	Walk 5min easy; Jog 15min walk 1min x 2; Walk 5min	REST	Walk 5min easy; Jog 40min, walk 1min x 3	Walk 5min easy; Jog 20min walk 1min x 3
29 Sep	REST	Walk 5min easy; 55min E run; Walk 5min					

October 2025:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
1 Oct			REST	Walk 5min easy; 45min E; Walk 5min	REST	Walk 5min easy; Jog 50min, walk 1min x 3	Walk 5min easy; Jog 20min walk 1min x 3
6 Oct	REST	Walk 5min easy; 1hr E run; Walk 5min	REST	Walk 5min easy; 50min E; Walk 5min	REST	Walk 5min easy; Jog 1hr walk 1min x 3	Walk 5min easy; Jog 20min walk 1min x 2
13 Oct	REST	Walk 5min easy; 45 E run; Walk 5min	REST	5km Time trial, do this to the best of your ability, walk if you need to.	REST	Walk 5min easy; Jog 60min walk 1min x 2	Walk 5min easy; Jog 20min walk 1min x 3
20 Oct	REST	Walk 5min easy; 1hr10 E run; Walk 5min	REST	Walk 5min easy; 55min E; Walk 5min	REST	Walk 5min easy; 2hrs LSD walk as needed	Walk 5min easy; Jog 20min walk 1min x 4
27 Oct	REST	Walk 5min easy; 1hr15 E run; Walk 5min	REST	Walk 5min easy; 1hr E; Walk 5min	REST		

***continue to walk as needed every 15-30min during your runs**

November 2025:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
1 Nov						Walk 5min easy; 2hrs15 LSD walk as needed	Walk 5min easy; Jog 20min walk 1min x 4
3 Nov	REST	Walk 5min easy; 1hr20 E run; Walk 5min	REST	Walk 5min easy; 1hr E; Walk 5min	REST	Walk 5min easy; 2hrs30 LSD walk as needed	Walk 5min easy; Jog 20min walk 1min x 3
10 Nov	REST	Walk 5min easy; 1hr E run; Walk 5min	REST	5km Time trial, do this to the best of your ability, walk if you need to.	REST	Walk 5min; 1hr E running walk as needed	Walk 5min easy; Jog 20min walk 1min x 2
17 Nov	REST	Walk 5min easy; 45min E run; Walk 5min	REST	Walk 5min easy; Jog 20min; Walk 5min	REST	21km Race Or REST	21km Race Or REST
24 Nov	REST	REST	REST	REST	REST	REST	REST

***continue to walk as needed every 15-30min during your runs**

December 2025:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
1 Dec	REST	REST	REST	REST	REST	REST	REST
8 Dec	REST	Walk 5min easy; 20min E run; Walk 5min	REST	Walk 5min easy; 20min E run; Walk 5min	REST	Walk 5min easy; 30min E, walk as needed	Walk 5min easy; 20min E, walk as needed
15 Dec	REST	Walk 5min easy; 30min E run; Walk 5min	REST	Walk 5min easy; 30min E run; Walk 5min	REST	Walk 5min easy; 45min E, walk as needed	Walk 5min easy; 40min E, walk as needed
22 Dec	REST	Walk 5min easy; 45min E run; Walk 5min	REST	Merry Christmas	REST	Walk 5min easy; 1hr30 L, walk as needed	Walk 5min easy; 1hr E, walk as needed
29 Dec	REST	REST	Walk 5min easy; 1hr E run; Walk 5min	Happy New Year!	REST	Walk 5min easy; 2hr L, walk as needed	Walk 5min easy; 1hr15 E, walk as needed

***continue to walk as needed every 15-30min during your runs**