

“One of the best marathon coaching teams in the country.”

Desiree Linden, 2-time Boston Marathon top-5 finisher

HANSONS MARATHON METHOD

2ND EDITION



Now with a
Just Finish
plan for new
runners!

RUN YOUR FASTEST MARATHON
LUKE HUMPHREY WITH KEITH & KEVIN HANSON

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3002 Sterling Circle, Suite 100
Boulder, Colorado 80301-2338 USA
(303) 440-0601 · Fax (303) 444-6788 · E-mail velopress@competitorgroup.com

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HANSONS TRAINING PHILOSOPHY

KEVIN AND KEITH HAVE BUILT their marathon business with the help of exercise science research and physiological evidence. I came on board as one of their athletes in 2004, and two years later I was presenting the brothers' training programs to runners across the country. The Hansons rolled out their first marathon training programs in 1992 for the Detroit Marathon, so the Hansons Marathon Method was time-tested by the time I came into the picture. The inception of these plans was driven by a frustration the brothers had with the existing programs on the market. "We felt that those programs didn't prepare runners properly for the demands of the marathon," explains Keith. "Most focus on minimal training during the week and then pile on the mileage over the weekends when people have more time. We wanted well-rounded programs."

In the years since the Hansons first introduced their training schedules, the sport has experienced what some call a "second boom." After the jogging craze hit in the 1970s, marathon mania followed a couple decades later. Consider this: In 1976, there were roughly 25,000 marathon finishers in the United States. By 1990, the number had increased nearly tenfold to 224,000 finishers. It didn't end there. In 1995, 2000, and 2005 there were 293,000, 353,000, and 395,000 marathon finishers respectively. By 2013, there were

541,000 marathon finishers in the United States, with more than 1,100 marathons in the U.S. alone.

As the number of finishers has increased, so too have the finishing times. From 1980 to 2010, the average time for men went from 3:32 to 4:16. Since 2010, that average finish time has held steady at 4:16. Women's numbers tell a more encouraging story. From 1980 to 2002, the average time for women faded from 4:03 to 4:56. Since then, however, their times have gradually improved to 4:41 in 2013 (www.runningusa.org). The slower times and the higher finishing numbers are certainly related. In the 1970s and 1980s, the smaller marathon population largely consisted of hard-core pavement pounders who trained with time goals in mind. Today, the demographic has evolved. What was once a sport solely for serious elites and subelites is now an activity accessible to the masses, many of whom simply want to cross the finish line.

In my time both as a runner and a coach, I have encountered three types of marathon hopefuls:

- **Veteran runners:** This group has logged plenty of miles over the years and has probably run a marathon or two in the past. They are looking to take their previous marathon performances to the next level.

- **Recreational runners:** This group might or might not be new to marathoning, but they are not running newbies, as they have done a number of shorter races. This group is looking to establish a marathon baseline, usually with plans to run more marathons in the future.

- **Just Finishers:** This group includes new runners looking to knock "26.2" off their bucket list as well as those running for charity groups. Many of these runners plan to leave marathoning behind once they finish a race.

Kevin and Keith are actively involved in Team In Training, and I coach for Southeastern Michigan's DetermiNation through the American Cancer Society, so we are well acquainted with runners who are new to the marathon distance and whose goals are noncompetitive. The main issue with Just Finishers and new runners is that they are oftentimes convinced through popular media that running three days a week is the best way to train for a marathon. These approaches work to persuade them that marathon training can be done with relatively little priority shifting: Buy a new pair of shoes, make time for a run a few days a week, and you'll be ready to make the 26.2-mile journey several months down the line. But the truth is that even for those looking simply to finish the race, running only three days a week is not the optimal way to develop, regardless of aspirations. It not only creates a mass of harriers who are ill prepared for the marathon distance, but also doesn't encourage retention within the sport.

As I spoke to Kevin about this third group, he pointed out the fact that every three years, about 50 percent of the customer base of a running specialty store consists of new runners. So, if a store serves 40,000 runners, every three years 20,000 of these runners are new to the sport. While it is great that so many people are motivated to begin running, one is left to wonder what simultaneously accounts for such a high attrition rate. As we spoke, it became obvious. A good number of runners are lured into the sport by promises of big payoffs with few sacrifices. They are told they can complete a marathon with minimal adjustments to their existing schedule and lifestyle—thus the attraction of a minimalist training plan. Since these runners often have a rotten marathon experience because they are undertrained, it is no wonder so few of them return to the marathon distance.

When looking at the most popular of the minimal training programs, a number of similar characteristics arise:

- **Low mileage:** Beginning runners are assigned 35–40 miles for a couple weeks at the highest, and advanced runners hit 45–55 miles.

- **Low frequency:** Beginners are told to run 3–4 days per week and advanced runners 5–6 days.
- **Megalong runs:** Most of the programs reach 20 miles and a few max out at 26 miles. These long runs are generally prescribed during the peak mileage weeks. Most of the programs place a major run on Saturday before the long run, so that 60–75 percent of the weekly mileage is run in two days.
- **Very long duration:** Most of these plans span 24–32 weeks. This is unsurprising, because with such low mileage, the body needs that long to adapt.
- **Misplaced intensity:** In the three-day-per-week programs, all runs are very high on the intensity scale (70 percent and higher of VO_{2max}) and are accompanied by a long run that is 40–50 percent of the weekly mileage.

A training plan with minimal mileage and three running days per week can be a great way for a novice to ease into the sport of running and build a foundation without getting injured. But once a runner decides to jump into a marathon, this simply isn't enough training. These plans usually assist runners in reaching their main goal, which is to finish, but unfortunately, the by-product is oftentimes a dislike for the sport. Since the greatest predictor of adherence to any type of exercise is enjoyment, this certainly isn't a recipe for long-term success in running.

By charting a course for a strong, successful, and enjoyable marathon experience, the Hansons Marathon Method seeks to encourage the crossing of many marathon finish lines. Unlike a number of the other popular training plans out there, our approach will transform you not only into a marathon finisher, but also into a long-time marathoner. We take a straight-talk

approach when it comes to teaching you about marathon training: We won't sugarcoat, offer any supposed shortcuts, or treat you with condescension. Indeed, the marathon wouldn't be a big deal if it didn't require a little blood, a lot of sweat, and perhaps a few tears.

Cumulative fatigue is the accumulation of fatigue over days, weeks, and even months of consistent training.

What follows is a closer look at the philosophies that lay the groundwork for the Hansons Marathon Method. These building blocks rest on the teachings of famed coach Arthur Lydiard. Widely credited with popularizing the sport of running, Lydiard led a long line of runners to realize their Olympic dreams. As a result, his ideas about training had a major influence on the development of our methods. The Hansons use Lydiard's idea of cumulative fatigue as a foundation for their training plans. Put simply, cumulative fatigue results from repetitive training that doesn't allow for full recovery between training days. It emphasizes a concerted, strategic approach to marathon training, rather than a number of disparate training days strung together at random. You will notice the fundamental principle of cumulative fatigue runs throughout the Hansons Marathon Method. Without one component of the cumulative fatigue philosophy, you interfere with the others, creating a domino effect that limits physiological adaptations necessary for successful marathoning. These components include:

- Mileage
- Intensity
- Balance
- Consistency
- Recovery

Mileage: Strategic Weekly Volume

The biggest problem with many marathon training plans is that they are tailored to fit what average runners want, not what they need. These programs often place a majority of the weekly mileage on Saturday and Sunday, when runners have the most time. Roughly the same amount of mileage is then spread over a few days of the workweek. This can mean that all of the prescribed weekday runs are higher-intensity workouts, leaving few opportunities for easy runs and the accumulation of important marathon mileage. Since the weekday runs are mostly high intensity, it takes a runner longer to recover, causing the easier runs to fall to the wayside. Even if these plans did instruct runners to run on the interim days, they would likely be too tired from the previous workouts.

Adequate weekly mileage plays an important role in the cumulative fatigue process. Increasing mileage comes along with increasing training between 3 and 4 days a week to 6 days a week. This doesn't necessarily mean adding intensity, but rather more easy mileage. The Hansons Marathon Method will show you how to add that mileage, while keeping your pace in check to avoid overworking yourself. Consider the fact that runners training for a 5K will put in 4–6 times their actual race distance in mileage each week. It then makes sense that people training for a marathon would increase their mileage (see Table 1.1). Although the average marathoner won't put in 4–6 times the marathon distance on a weekly basis (100–150 miles), it is reasonable to run 2–3 times the distance per week (50–70 miles).

Most runners preparing for the marathon realize they need an increased volume of mileage to be ready to toe the starting line. What they lack is confidence. New runners will look at the distance they are scheduled to run 12 weeks into the plan and doubt their ability to reach that point. “Start at the ridiculous and work back until you reach something manageable,” suggests Kevin. “Right now, 60 miles in a week may seem ridiculous, but what are you supposed to do today? Focus on today and you will be surprised at what you can handle a few months down the line.”

TABLE 1.1 WEEKLY MILEAGE BASED ON LEVEL AND EVENTS

| | BEGINNER | COMPETITIVE | ELITE |
|----------|----------|-------------|-------|
| 5K | 20–30 | 40–50 | 90+ |
| Marathon | 40–50 | 60–70 | 110+ |

In addition to the intimidation factor, training errors can make a certain volume of mileage seem impossible. Inappropriate intensities, unbalanced training, old shoes, and adding too much mileage too soon can all doom a runner from the get-go. Again and again we have seen our athletes give their bodies adequate time to adapt to new training stresses, allowing them to tolerate much more than they ever imagined possible. Our programs work to take you up the mileage ladder one rung at a time, starting with lower mileage and gradually increasing both mileage and intensity. As I like to say to our athletes, “If you want to build a house, you must first create a structure to hold it up.” The volume of mileage builds a foundation that allows all the other variables to work.

Intensity: Physiological Adaptations

In addition to increased mileage, our plans stand apart from the rest in terms of pace and intensity. These factors are inextricably linked because if workouts are too hard, you’re going to be too tired to reach your weekly mileage quotas. In the Hansons-Brooks Distance Project, the competition can be fierce among our elite athletes. Teaching proper pacing is perhaps our biggest struggle as coaches. During workouts, Kevin and Keith always seem to know when an athlete has developed an “I know you’re fast, but I’m just a little bit faster” mentality toward another runner. As a means of emphasizing the importance of pace and punishing runners who run faster than they are instructed, the Hansons dole out push-ups for every second someone is too fast. After a few push-ups, runners always fall into step and pull back on the reins.

While we won't make you do push-ups every time you falter in your pacing, it remains an important part of the implementation of cumulative fatigue. The majority of our suggested mileage is at anaerobic threshold (lactate threshold) pace or slower. You may wonder, "How am I supposed to get faster if I'm running slower?" In Chapter 2, we will discuss the many adaptations that come with endurance training, such as mitochondria development, muscle-fiber adaptations, ability to burn fat as fuel, and more. Exercise physiologists have discovered that those adaptations are best elicited through slower-than-anaerobic-threshold pace. It improves your running by pushing the aerobic threshold, anaerobic threshold, and aerobic capacity up from the bottom, instead of trying to pull them up from the top. Whether it is an easy running day or a hard workout, executing the task at the appropriate pace is integral to our entire marathon training system.

Easy runs are often misunderstood as junk mileage or filler training. The truth is, easy runs are a big percentage of the training week and when they are run at the optimal intensities, they promote a wide array of favorable physiological adaptations. Despite this fact, both novices and experienced runners struggle with properly pacing these relaxed workouts. Newer runners tend to run their easy days too hard because the gradual training plan feels too easy. Most of the time, the intensity evens out as mileage increases and the runner is too tired to maintain that pace throughout the week. However, as a coach, I would prefer to have you adjust the pace to your marathon goal and train properly from day one. This allows you to increase your mileage and intensity safely over weeks and months. More experienced runners tend to get overzealous in their training, believing that faster is better, especially for those moving up from running competitively at shorter distances. Runners in this situation will quickly be benched as a result of overtraining if they don't temper their excitement and allow easy runs to truly be easy. Regardless of what level you're at, when we instruct you to run "easy," we really mean easy. Once you add in hard workouts, these easy days will serve as active recovery to allow your body to bounce back and prepare for the next workout.

Proper pacing during hard workouts is equally vital. We cannot stress enough that workouts are designed to spur specific physiological adaptations; they are not to be run as hard as you can to see who will be the last runner standing. Tempo runs and strength workouts develop the anaerobic threshold; however, that doesn't mean you should be running a tempo workout faster than anaerobic threshold pace. Speed workouts develop aerobic capacity and should be run just under your maximal aerobic capacity, not beyond it. For instance, imagine if you are instructed to run 6 × 800-meter repeats at 5K pace. Let's say this pace is 6:00 minutes per mile or 3:00 for 800 meters. If you do the first three intervals at 2:45, 2:45, and 2:55, there's a good chance the last three will be around 3:10, 3:15, and perhaps 3:10. While you averaged 3:00, you failed to hit a single interval at the prescribed pace. This means that you didn't accumulate any training at the desired pace, which was specifically set to stimulate aerobic capacity. The first three were too fast, which exceeded $VO_2\text{max}$, producing anaerobic energy and lactic acid. The last three were then progressively slower due to that fatigue and lactic acid buildup. In the end, you drove yourself into the ground without gaining any major physiological benefits.

Now you can see why Kevin and Keith assign push-ups. By keeping your pace in check across the training spectrum, you'll be able to tolerate higher training volumes. You'll also be more consistent in training because you won't be so worn out that you need to take unscheduled days off or modify workouts. Cumulative fatigue is designed to make you tired, but running paces faster than prescribed will put you beyond the point of being able to recover sufficiently. That really is junk mileage.

Balance: Training Equilibrium

One of the major downfalls of existing marathon training plans is that they lack balance. There tends to be a standard emphasis on the long run, with the remainder of the week spent recovering from that one workout. When

the long run serves as the primary focus, training consistency, weekly volume, recovery, and intensity are all lost. To fully reach your potential as a runner, all the physiological systems must be incorporated into training. “Nothing is make or break,” explains Kevin. “The long run is not going to make your marathon if that’s the only thing you are doing. There have to be other variables.”

The Hansons Marathon Method will present you with two types of runs: Easy and Something of Substance (SOS). SOS runs include speed workouts, strength workouts, tempo runs, and long runs. As Kevin and Keith indicate, “They are runs that require more effort than an easy day.” By varying the training, you reap the necessary physiological benefits, in addition to maintaining motivation. If variety is the spice of life, you better include a good amount of it in marathon training.

In the same way your mind gets bored with repetition, so does your body. On the other hand, when you cycle your workouts and stress each individual system, you stimulate a steady rate of physiological adaptation. By giving time and energy not just to the long run, but also to easy days, strength days, speed days, tempo days, and recovery days, you’ll be a stronger, more balanced marathoner. There is such a thing as too much of a good thing. When you balance your training, you’ll be sure to get just the right amount of each of those things.

Consistency: Sticking to the Game Plan

As a coach, I find many runners struggle with training consistency. One week they run three days, the next four days, and the next week maybe only two days. This is unsurprising as each week brings its own challenges and issues: Your boss imposes a last-minute deadline, your car breaks down, or your child gets sick. The unpredictability of life can make sticking to a training plan difficult. While training adjustments are necessary at times, a regular running schedule remains important.

Physiologically speaking, inconsistency in training makes for a never-ending struggle to maintain even a baseline of fitness. While adaptations can occur rapidly with proper training, they can also be lost with just a week or two of inconsistent running. For instance, if a runner trains five days a week for three weeks, a noticeable improvement in fitness will take place, but if those weeks are followed by two weeks of training only two or three days a week, fitness gains will begin to retreat. It then requires two more weeks of consistent running to get back to the previous level of fitness. In the end, six to eight weeks of running went by just to get back to where you were at week 3. If life does intervene, modify training, but don't skip it. Something is always better than nothing.

In order to achieve this consistency, you must establish attainable goals and plan ahead. If you set your sights too high, you're likely to get discouraged when you discover you have too much on your plate. Conversely, when you set your sights too low, you get bored. Properly placed goals will keep you motivated to get out the door each day, even when running feels like the last thing you want to do. Planning your weekly running schedule in advance also aids commitment. Rather than looking at the training schedule the morning of a workout, know what to expect for the next five to seven days. By penciling your runs into your day planner or posting them on your refrigerator, you can plan for hurdles that may be thrown at you throughout the week. If you have an early meeting Tuesday morning, plan on running after work. If your kids have a soccer tournament all weekend, find an opening to fit your run in. When you schedule your runs, you are far more likely to stick to the plan and remain consistent in your training.

Recovery: Partial Rest

When it comes to cumulative fatigue, you walk a fine line between training enough and overtraining. The goal of the Hansons Marathon Method is to take you close to the line, but not over it. The training you do during the program is

tough, but it will lead to a better, more enjoyable race-day result. Incomplete recovery is an important part of the training, as it allows you to perform well, even when you aren't 100 percent.

Whether it is a speed, strength, tempo, or long run, there is a general preoccupation with the idea of being “fresh” for workouts. That freshness, however, requires days off before and after workouts, which takes away from the crucial aerobic adaptations that easy runs offer. While we don't put hard workouts back to back, we do employ the idea of active recovery. This means that harder workouts are often followed by easy running days. This allows you to recover for the next hard workout without taking the day off from running. Think about it this way: After a hard workout, your muscles are depleted of glycogen and feel supremely fatigued. At this time it is important to replace that glycogen, hydrate, and allow the muscles to heal. This, however, doesn't mean you should lie on the couch for the next 24 hours. Easy running is done at low enough intensities that you are primarily burning fat, allowing your body time to rebuild the lost carbohydrate (glycogen) stores. In addition, your muscles learn to more efficiently burn fat because they are running at a pace that promotes fat, rather than carbohydrate, burning.

While this recovery is important, cumulative fatigue calls for only partial recuperation. Even after an easy run day, your muscles may still be somewhat fatigued and glycogen stores only moderately refueled, causing you to feel slightly sluggish. Remember, this is normal. You are training your body to withstand many miles. Just as you will feel sluggish toward the end of the marathon, it is important to learn to push through and keep moving forward. This makes cumulative fatigue an integral part of your long runs. Although you'll have the last few days of training still in your legs, you'll be recovered enough to run the long run as desired. “It all comes back to the long run,” Kevin says of plans that are solely focused on the long run. “It doesn't teach your body anything except how to be completely fatigued after the first 20 miles. Instead, we want to put fatigue in your legs and teach your body how to run at the end of a long run.”

He continues, emphasizing, “In training we want to simulate running the last 16 miles of the marathon, not the first 16 miles.” That said, the stress is not so great that you will need the following week to recover. Instead, the next day will be easy and a few days later there will be a harder workout. Through a number of physiological adaptations, cumulative fatigue trains your body to be fully prepared for the physiological stress imparted by the marathon distance. As you look at our training schedules, you’ll notice that every four weeks, the mileage increases slightly via easy days, tempo runs, and long runs. As your body adapts, you vary the stress and continue the progression upward.

Leading up to the big day, you will finally allow your body to fully recover, giving you that fresh feeling as you toe the line. Our programs are designed this way to help you to feel your best during the race, not during training. After all, you never want to execute your best performance in practice.

Cumulative Fatigue Versus Overtraining

The various elements of the cumulative fatigue formula work in concert; in essence, it is a fine balancing act. Take away one of the variables, and the whole formula becomes null. The parts are interrelated, building on and reinforcing one another. When you work to create balance in training by putting equal importance on the different aspects of running, you end up creating more mileage. If you need a long run, an easy run, a tempo run, and a speed or strength run, then you already put yourself in the four to five days per week range. But strict pacing is a key factor in the formula, as well. When you run too hard on every run, you often are forced to take time off, losing consistency and teetering toward overtraining. Adhering to the paces prescribed ensures balanced training. So while the volume may be higher than what you are used to, the intensity is spread out and that can be the biggest difference between adapting to a new workload and simply becoming overtrained.

Will you be tired? Certainly. “Fatigue” is a key word in cumulative fatigue. But tired is not the same as overtrained. Here’s a real-world example of the program in action: A local athlete, Celeste, came into our office seeking a plan to prepare her for a marathon in the spring. She had some marathon experience and was looking for a way to get a new personal best. She did a VO_2 max test in December 2014. Her VO_2 max occurred at 49 ml/kg/min. She was able to get to 7:40 per mile at the maximum level. In May 2015, after following Hansons Advanced marathon training plan (with a few personal tweaks), she was tested again. Her VO_2 max was 60 ml/kg/min. She was able to run 6:40 per mile. Incredible! Just by following a consistent, appropriately paced, balanced, moderate mileage plan, she saw massive increases in overall fitness. Certainly it was not easy, and she admitted many times that she felt tired. But she ran every workout within her guidelines, hitting her paces as planned. Had she been overtrained, she would not have been able to hit those paces. That is the difference between cumulative fatigue and overtraining. A few weeks after the test, she ran her marathon and set a personal best by almost 8 minutes.

Training for a marathon isn’t easy and it shouldn’t be taken lightly; a few curse words may be uttered, favorite television shows missed, and social outings forgone, but you will regret nothing when you successfully cross that finish line. This entire program is just that: a program. Developed by great coaches who have learned from other great coaches, it is a philosophy that can transform you from a person who wants to run a marathon into a bona fide marathoner. We’re here to get you there.

MARATHON PHYSIOLOGY

ONE OF MY PERSONAL GOALS in writing *Hansons Marathon Method* was to take the physiology chapter that we see in all running books and turn it into something that runners can really understand and employ. Sometimes when I read a journal article or a textbook, I have a hard time seeing the practical application for the average runner. I'd often find myself wondering, "does doing this or that even make sense for the average person?" I figured if I had these questions, then a lot of other people did too. So I set out to write a chapter on physiology that gives readers "aha" moments. I want you to be able to close the book, take a breath, and say, "This all makes sense now. I know what I need to do and why I need to do it."

It can all get a little confusing. And we (and by we, I mean coaches, exercise physiologists, lab rats, and brainiac runners) tend to overthink training processes. We oftentimes know too much for our own good. But you don't need a Ph.D. in exercise physiology to train better. This chapter will help you learn the basics of the physiology involved so that you can direct your attention toward the training itself. By grasping the basic physiological justification for each day's run in the Hansons Marathon Method, you will gain confidence in your training, sans information overload.

Now, as both an exercise physiologist and a coach, I know that sometimes there can be disagreement between what the science says and what the real world dictates. With this chapter, my goal is to bridge that gap, by not just telling you about science-based principles but, more importantly, by helping you connect them to your own real-world performance.

You will find that we tailor our plans specifically to entertain the many physiological adaptations your body needs to make to run a successful 26.2 miles. Keep in mind the following principles as you dive into our methods:

- Marathon muscles
- VO_2 max
- Anaerobic threshold
- Aerobic threshold
- Running economy

Marathon Muscles

When it comes to physiological movers and shakers, the musculature system is king. More than 600 muscles in your body work to create motion and force. They allow your heart to beat, your eyes to move, your food to digest, and your legs to run. The three main types of muscle fibers are: cardiac, smooth, and skeletal. While the cardiac muscle makes your heart beat and the smooth muscle lines your intestines, pushing food through your system, the skeletal muscle plays the biggest role in human locomotion. Skeletal muscles make running possible.

Not only are the skeletal muscles responsible for generating physiological movement, they are also where the majority of energy is stored. These muscles include slow-twitch fibers and fast-twitch fibers, the latter of which has several subcategories. Each muscle contains both types of muscle fiber, which are bound together like bundles of cable, each bundle consisting of a single type. Thousands of these bundles constitute a muscle, and each individual bundle

About the Authors

LUKE HUMPHREY began running track in middle school and hasn't slowed down since. After several all-state performances in high school, Luke ran for Central Michigan University from 1999 to 2004. There he was a member of several NCAA Division I top-25 cross country teams, including a 9th place team in 2002. In fall of 2004 Luke competed in his first marathon at the LaSalle Bank Chicago Marathon for the Hansons-Brooks Distance Project. He ran a debut time of 2:18:46 and was

18th overall. Since then Luke has gone on to finish 11th in the 2006 Boston Marathon, 11th in the 2008 ING New York City Marathon, and 12th in the 2010 Bank of America Chicago Marathon and has also qualified for three U.S. Olympic Trials for the marathon (2008, 2012, and 2016). Luke holds a personal best of 2:14:38 in the marathon. He has a B.A.A. in exercise science from Central Michigan University and an M.S. in exercise science from Oakland University. Luke began Hansons Coaching Services in May 2006 to help runners of all abilities reach their running goals. He and his wife, Nicole, have a daughter, Josephine.



Run your fastest marathon—or your first—with Hansons Marathon Method, the revolutionary training program from the Hansons-Brooks Distance Project.

The Hansons Marathon Method has helped thousands of runners smash their best times, using the same training approach that has turned Hansons-Brooks Distance Project runners into champions. With comprehensive training schedules for experienced runners, plus a Just Finish plan for newer runners, *Hansons Marathon Method* will prepare you for your best marathon.

The Hansons training system sets you up for a strong marathon with:

- Sensible weekly mileage based on science, not outdated traditions
- Speed, strength, and tempo workouts paced to achieve your goal
- Crucial fueling guidelines to help you run strong
- Detailed beginner, intermediate, and advanced training plans

This revised second edition answers frequently asked questions, shows how to integrate flexibility and strength work into your training week, and shares the most effective recovery methods. The new Just Finish program offers easier running and lower mileage, setting first-time marathoners up for an enjoyable marathon and a lifetime of strong, healthy running. Using the Hansons' innovative approach, you will build real marathon muscles, train your body to avoid the wall, and finish strong.

“You might expect a training program devised by the Hanson brothers to be a little different than the usual rehashing of principles and schedules. Given the success of athletes from the Hansons-Brooks Distance Project, you wouldn't be surprised if it was effective, too.”

—Runner's World

