

TRAIL RUNNING TRAINING PLAN 15-20 km

Requirement: You're running regularly on roads or easy paths, around 5-10 km.

Goal: Your first trail running race over 15-20 km with 800-1,200 m of elevation gain.

Week	Phase	Session 1	Session 2	Session 3	Strength & Stability
1	Base	40 min easy run on road or path	30 min trail session on flat terrain, focus on technique	35 min easy run	2x basic strength: lunges, calf raises, plank
2	Base	45 min easy run	35 min trail run with the first small climbs	40 min easy run	2x basic strength plus single leg squats
3	Base	50 min easy run	40 min trail run, consciously practising climbs and descents	40 min easy run	2x basic strength plus step ups
4	Recovery	35 min easy run	30 min trail run on easy terrain	Rest day or 20 min walk	1x light mobility session
5	Build	55 min easy run	45 min trail run with 3 short hill intervals, 2 min uphill each	45 min easy run	2x strength with a focus on single leg exercises
6	Build	60 min easy run	50 min trail run with hill intervals and downhill sections	45 min easy run	2x strength plus core stability
7	Build	65 min easy run	55 min trail run with 4 hill intervals, 3 min uphill each	50 min easy run	2x strength: step ups and single leg lunges
8	Recovery	40 min easy run	35 min trail run on easy terrain	Rest day	1x light mobility session

9	Development	70 min easy run	60 min trail run with your first longer climb, 200–300 m elevation gain	55 min easy run	2x strength plus balance exercises
10	Development	70 min easy run	65 min trail run with hill intervals and a technical downhill	55 min easy run	2x strength: single leg exercises plus plank variations
11	Development	75 min easy run	70 min trail run with 400–500 m elevation gain, consciously practising uphill hiking	60 min easy run	2x strength plus ankle stability
12	Recovery	45 min easy run	40 min trail run on easy terrain	Rest day	1x light mobility session
13	Specific	75 min easy run	75 min trail run with 500–600 m elevation gain, test your race pace	60 min easy run	2x race specific strength
14	Specific	80 min easy run	80 min trail run with a long climb and downhill focus	65 min easy run	2x strength plus core
15	Specific	80 min easy run	85 min trail run with 700–800 m elevation gain, using your race gear	65 min easy run	2x strength
16	Recovery	50 min easy run	45 min trail run on easy terrain	Rest day	1x light mobility session
17	Peak	85 min easy run	90 min trail run with 800–900 m elevation gain, test your nutrition	70 min easy run	2x light strength, focus on stability
18	Peak	85 min easy run	95 min trail run, your longest run, 900–1,000 m elevation gain	70 min easy run	2x strength
19	Peak	80 min easy run	90 min trail run, simulate the race course where possible	65 min easy run	1x light strength
20	Recovery	50 min easy run	40 min trail run on easy terrain	Rest day	1x light mobility session

21	Tapering	70 min easy run	60 min trail run with 400–500 m elevation gain at an easy pace	55 min easy run	1x light strength
22	Tapering	60 min easy run	50 min trail run with 300 m elevation gain, easy pace	45 min easy run	1x light mobility session
23	Tapering	45 min easy run	35 min easy trail run with a few short pick ups	30 min easy run	1x light mobility session
24	Race	20 min easy warm up jog	Race day	Recovery	No strength training

Notes on the Plan:

- An easy run means an effort of around RPE 4–5 out of 10. You should still be able to hold a conversation comfortably.
- Run hill intervals uphill at a strong, controlled effort, around RPE 7–8. Walk or jog back down easily for recovery.
- Start hiking practice from week 1. On steep sections above 20–25 %, make a conscious effort to hike briskly instead of running.
- Recovery weeks every 4 weeks are essential, not optional.
- From week 15 onwards, use your race gear consistently during longer sessions, including shoes, running pack and nutrition.

And most importantly: listen to your body. It is always better to shorten a session than to push through at all costs. If you notice signs of overload, irritation or similar issues, speak to a medical professional sooner rather than later so you can react properly.