

# 5 Mental Tips for Half Marathon Training

By Selene Yeager

You finally took the plunge and signed up for the half [marathon](#) that you've been talking about for months. Okay, *years*. Now, as you contemplate the reality of the run, the giddiness you felt after filing your entry form has transformed into a heavy-duty "what have I done?" hangover. Don't sweat it. You're not alone, and you most definitely can do it.

Just keep your head, says Howard Rankin, Ph.D., a clinical psychologist who offers advice on the website [scienceofyou.com](#). "People often sign up for an event because they're excited about the personal challenge," he said. "Then it hits them, what they've actually signed up for." Things move from the anticipated emotional reward to the practical consideration of what they actually have to do, Rankin says. From psyched up to scared, in an instant.

Here's how to turn it back around to excited—and keep it locked there:

**Plan for today.** If you could run 13 miles today, you wouldn't need weeks to build up to it. But you *will* build up to it, day by day. "That's how you need to approach it, one day, one hour, even one step at a time," Rankin said. "Just concern yourself with the next step, and don't look too far down the road. Today is all that matters."

**Chunk it into bite-sized pieces.** Looking at those [long-run](#) numbers can be daunting. "The best thing to do is break it down into small parts, or what is called chunking," Rankin said. That's a strategy even the pros use. If 8 miles feels overwhelming, envision it as two 4-mile runs. It will automatically feel more manageable.

**Take "quit" out of the equation.** "Training for a race isn't just about the [physical challenge](#); it's about your ability to stick with a regimen and see it through," said Rankin. "Quitting is not an option. Don't worry if your training isn't perfect—it almost certainly won't be. This is as much about your adaptability and resilience as anything else."

**Remember the big Why.** Keep your eye on your motivation, Rankin says. "Remind yourself daily *why* you want to do this." This is about personal [achievement and accomplishment](#). "Every day, think, even visualize, how good you will feel when you have achieved your goal, and what that will mean to you," he said.

**Keep perspective.** Even after hearing all of this, still have some lingering [self-doubt](#)? Remember that you're not the first person to tackle this training or chased this goal. "Think about all the other people— some of whom have less ability and more limitations than you—who have successfully completed the same level of training," Rankin said. It all boils down to this: If they can do it, so can you.