The Galloway Run-Walk-Run Method

"Without breaks, I could only go three miles, with difficulty. Using breaks, I've finished three marathons feeling strong."

WALK/SHUFFLE BREAKS WILL...

...allow those who can only go two miles to go three or four and feel fine

...help beginners, older or heavy runners/walkers to increase their endurance to 5K, 10K or even the half or full marathon in as soon as six months

...bestow the endurance for runners/walkers of all abilities to go beyond "the wall"

... allow runners/walkers over the age of 40 to not only do their first half or full marathon but to improve times in most cases

...help runners/walkers of all ages to improve times because legs are strong at the end

...reduce the chance of injury and overtraining to almost nothing

As one who has pridefully run for more than four decades, it's sometimes hard to admit something, but here goes. Our bodies weren't designed to run continuously for long distances, especially distances as far as the marathon. Sure we can adapt, but there is a better way to increase endurance than by running continuously. By alternating walking and running, from the start, there's virtually no limit to the distance you can cover. Thousands of people in their 40s and 50s with no exercise background have used my run-walk-run method to complete a marathon in six months. Once we find the ideal ratio for a given distance, walk/shuffle breaks allow us to feel strong to the end and recover fast, while bestowing the same stamina and conditioning we would have received if we had run continuously.

Most runners will record significantly faster times when they take walk breaks because they don't slow down at the end of a long run. Thousands of time-goal-oriented veterans have improved by 10, 20, 30 minutes and more in half or full marathons by taking walk breaks early and often in their goal race. You can easily spot these folks in races. They're the ones who are picking up speed during the last two to six miles when everyone else is slowing down.

Walk-running is what we were designed to do

Our ancient ancestors had to walk and run thousands of miles every year to survive. Because they moved on to greener pastures and away from predators, we're here to philosophize about walk breaks. So it's a fact that each of us inherited an organism that was designed to move forward for long distances. As often happens with behaviors which enhance survival, a series of very complex and internally satisfying rewards have developed, which relax the muscles, stimulate the creative and intuitive side of our brain and energize our spirit. By

"When I moved my weekend long one up to 10 miles, I started to feel, after each long one, some primitive feelings—like I was the first one blazing a trail for others to follow."

getting out the door and moving forward three or more times a week, even the most out-of-shape couch potato will discover this enhanced sense of self worth and improved attitude.

While walking is our most efficient exercise pattern, we can adapt to running/walking and do well. Indeed, most walkers who add running to their exercise say they get a better boost in their after-exercise attitude. But running continuously can quickly push anyone beyond the capacity of leg muscles. When we alternate between walking and running, early and often, we are going back to the type of exertion that brought our forebears across continents, through deserts and over mountain ranges.

EVEN A SHORT WALK/SHUFFLE BREAK WHEN TAKEN EARLY AND REGULARLY WILL:

- Extend the capacity of the running/walking muscles at the end of the workout because you're shifting the workload between the walking and the running muscles
- Virtually erase fatigue with each early break by keeping your pace and effort level conservative in the early stages
- Allow those with some types of previous injuries to knees, ankles, hips, feet, etc. to train for half or full marathons without further injury
- Restore resiliency to the main running muscles before they fatigue—like getting a muscle strength booster shot each break
- Allow exercisers to improve 10 to 40 minutes in their full marathon compared with running continuously (3 to15 minutes in a half marathon)
- Speed up recovery from each long one even the very longest
- Leave you feeling good enough to carry on social and family activities—even after the very long long ones

WALK BREAKS WERE PART OF THE MARATHON——FROM THE BEGINNING

Ancient Greek messengers such as the original marathoner Phidippides [see his story in the first section of this book) regularly covered distances of more than 100 kilometers a day by walking and running. The accounts of the original marathon race, in the 1896 Olympics, described significant periods of walking for *all* competitors, including the winner Spiros Louis.

Elite marathoners continue to use walk breaks. The great American marathoner, Bill Rodgers, has said many times that he had to walk at water stations during his Boston and NYC marathon victories in order to get the water into his stomach (instead of wearing it on his shirt). Fabian Roncero took several walk breaks during his victory in the '98 Rotterdam Marathon to gather his resources. If anyone tells you that by taking walk breaks you are not a marathoner, he or she should be the one to tell this 2:07:26 champion that he is not a marathoner.

The label of "marathoner" has, from the beginning, been awarded to those who went the distance under their own power, whether they ran, walked, crawled or tiptoed. When you cross that finish line, you've entered an elite group. About two tenths of one percent of the population has done it. Don't let anyone take that great achievement away from you.

"I tried to train for three marathons without walk breaks and became injured each time. Walk breaks allowed me to get to the starting line and then to the marathon finish line...injury free!"

I've now done over 130 marathons, about half of them without walk breaks. On every one of the walk-break marathons, I received the same sense of accomplishment, of the internal rewards and the indescribable exhilaration of finishing as on the non-walk marathons. But when I inserted walk breaks throughout, I was able to enjoy the accomplishment afterward.

WHY DO WALK/SHUFFLE BREAKS WORK?

BY USING MUSCLES IN DIFFERENT WAYS—FROM THE BEGINNING—YOUR LEGS KEEP THEIR BOUNCE AS THEY CONSERVE RESOURCES.

Walk/shuffle breaks keep you from using up your resources early. By alternating the exertion level and the way you're using your running/walking muscles, these prime movers have a chance to recover before they accumulate fatigue. On each successive walk, most or all of the fatigue is erased, bestowing strength at the end. This reduces the damage to the muscle dramatically, allowing you to carry on your life activities even after a long distance event.

Walk/shuffle breaks force you to slow down early in the session so that you don't start too fast. This reduction of the intensity of muscle use from the beginning conserves your energy, fluids and muscle capacity. On each walk/shuffle break, the running/walking muscles make internal adaptations, which give you the option to finish under control, increase the pace or go even further.

When a muscle group, such as your calf, is used continuously step by step, it fatigues relatively soon. The weak areas get over-used and force you to slow down later or scream at you in pain afterward. By shifting back and forth between walking and running muscles (walking and shuffling muscles), you distribute the workload among a variety of muscles, increasing your overall performance capacity. For veteran marathoners, this is often the difference between achieving a time goal... or not.

Walk/shuffle breaks will significantly speed up recovery because there is less damage to repair. The early breaks erase fatigue, and the later breaks will reduce or eliminate overuse muscle breakdown.

WALK/SHUFFLE BREAKS CAN ELIMINATE INJURY

Many exercisers who were injured during previous training programs (because they ran continuously) have stayed injury-free when they add breaks to long ones. Without taking breaks from the beginning, the leg muscles fatigue more quickly and can't keep these lower extremities moving efficiently in their proper range of motion. The resulting "wobble" allows the leg to extend too far forward in an overstride. This abuses the tendons and injures the small muscle groups which try to keep the body on its proper mechanical track but don't have the horsepower to completely control the body weight moving forward.

Walk/shuffle breaks taken early in the workout keep the muscles strong and resilient enough so that the legs can move with strength and efficiency throughout. This will significantly reduce or eliminate the excess stress around the knees, ankles, feet, etc., which produces injury. The little "back-up" muscle groups can stay in reserve and fine-tune the run/walk motion after fatigue sets in.

How walk breaks and shuffle breaks can speed you up

A survey of veteran marathoners showed an average improvement of 13 minutes when they put walk breaks into their marathon, compared with running continuously under the same conditions. By saving the strength and efficiency of the running muscles through early walk breaks, you'll avoid the slowdown in the last six miles, where most continuous runners lose their momentum. You'll be passing people and picking up speed if you paced yourself conservatively and walked enough from the first mile.

Why do you speed up with walk breaks or shuffle breaks?

When you pace yourself correctly and take the walk/shuffle breaks you need in the first mile of a race, you'll virtually erase the fatigue of mile one. By continuing to walk/shuffle before you get tired, you conserve resources and can go with strength to the finish line. Most runners who don't take walk breaks slow down significantly during the last six to eight miles. Walk/shuffle-break-takers at least avoid the 7 to 15-minute slowdown at the end.

A game of "chase"

After a few miles into your event, you'll settle into a pace and notice some of the folks around you. As you take your break, track one or two of them so that you catch up with them by the time you start your next break.

The mental benefit: Breaking distance into segments which you know you can do

Even sub-three-hour runners continue to take their walk breaks to the end. One of them explained it this way: "Instead of thinking at 20 miles that I had six more gut-wrenching miles to go, I was saying to myself 'one more mile until my break.' Even when it was tough, I always felt that I could go one more mile." A three-minute run/one minute walk person told me that she got over the tough parts by saying "three more minutes."

Walk and shuffle breaks: How long and how often?

The following is recommended until 18 miles (9 for half) in the marathon. After that point, breaks can be reduced or eliminated as desired.

Beginners should follow the program you've used in training as long as you aren't slowing down at the end of the long ones. If you struggled during the last few miles, take breaks more often from the beginning.

Run-Walk-Run Ratios for runners

Here are my recommended ratios of running and walking, based upon your pace per mile. These ratios are in effect for both training runs and during the marathon itself.

Runners: Remember that long ones should be at least 2 min/mi slower than your projected finish pace in the half or full marathon. An additional slowdown should be made for increased temperature: 30 sec per mile slower for each 5 degrees of temperature increase above 60˚ F. It is always safer to take more frequent breaks.

Walkers: Shuffle for 30 seconds after 2 to 4 minutes of regular walking – from the beginning.

Recommended Ratios for Running: Walking

7 min/mi	1 mile	30 seconds
8 min/mi	4 min	30 seconds
9 min/mi	4 min	1 minute
10 min/mi	3 min	1 minute
11 min/mi	2:30	1 minute
12 min/mi	2 min	1 minute
13 min/mi	1 min	1 minute
14 min/mi	30 sec	30 sec
15 min/mi	30 sec	45 sec
16 min/mi	30 sec	60 sec
17 min/mi	20 sec	60 sec
18 min/mi	15 sec	60 sec
19 min/mi	10 sec	60 sec
20 min/mi	5-10 sec	60 sec