

FREE MARATHON RESOURCE

The Marathon Wall-Proof Checklist

A practical pacing, fueling, training, and recovery check for runners who want to finish their marathon stronger.

The wall usually is not a toughness problem. It is often the result of pacing, fueling, training load, or recovery mistakes that started long before mile 20.

Coach Greg Barber

ACE-Certified Personal Trainer and Running Coach
10+ years of experience | 200+ clients helped

1. Pace the race you trained for

Going out only 10-15 seconds per mile too fast can feel harmless early and become expensive late. Your opening miles should feel controlled.

[]	Set a realistic target pace Base it on recent training and race evidence - not your best-case goal.
[]	Plan the first 3 miles Start slightly slower than target pace while breathing and effort settle.
[]	Use an effort ceiling If pace requires straining early, slow down even when the watch says you are behind.
[]	Account for weather and hills Heat, humidity, wind, and elevation may require an effort-based adjustment.
[]	Practice restraint Use long runs to rehearse finishing stronger rather than proving fitness in the first half.

Quick check

Can you explain exactly how your first 10K should feel? If not, your pacing plan is probably too vague.

2. Fuel before you feel empty

Fueling works best when it begins early and follows a practiced schedule. Waiting for hunger or fatigue is usually too late.

[]	Practice breakfast Use the same familiar pre-run meal before key long runs and race day.
[]	Start early Take your first carbohydrates before energy drops instead of trying to recover later.
[]	Use a repeatable schedule Many runners benefit from roughly 30-60 grams of carbohydrate per hour; individual needs and tolerance vary.
[]	Pair fluids with conditions Plan hydration around sweat rate, temperature, humidity, course support, and product concentration.
[]	Train your gut Test gels, chews, drink mix, and timing repeatedly. Do not introduce a new race-day strategy.

Long-run fueling log

Run	Carbs/hr	Fluids	Energy at finish	Stomach notes
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

3. Build marathon-specific durability

The goal is not one heroic long run. It is enough consistent training to hold form, pace, and decision-making when fatigue arrives.

[]	Stack consistent weeks Avoid repeatedly making up missed miles with sudden mileage spikes.
[]	Protect easy running Easy days should support recovery so quality sessions and long runs are productive.
[]	Practice marathon effort Include controlled race-specific work only when your base and recovery support it.
[]	Strength train consistently Use 1-2 concise sessions for calves, hips, hamstrings, quads, core, and single-leg control.
[]	Taper without panicking Reduce workload while preserving some frequency and rhythm before race day.

Warning signs your plan needs adjustment

Repeated long-run breakdowns, declining performance, persistent soreness, loss of sleep, unusually high effort at easy pace, or an inability to recover between key sessions.

4. Run your race-day system

Make the important decisions before the race. Your checklist should be simple enough to follow when you are tired.

[]	The night before Lay out tested gear, fuel, fluids, timing, transportation, and backup items.
[]	Before the start Eat your practiced meal, arrive early, and avoid wasting energy on your feet.
[]	Miles 1-3 Stay patient. Let runners go. Follow the pace and effort ceiling.
[]	Middle miles Fuel on schedule, relax your shoulders, and check breathing and form.
[]	Final 10K Make decisions from current effort. Increase only if you are still controlled and fueling has gone well.

My three race-day rules

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Do you know what is causing your wall?

If your long runs repeatedly fall apart, a personalized review can help separate a pacing problem from a fueling, training-load, strength, or recovery problem.

**DM MARATHON on Instagram
for a personalized next step**

GTB Performance

Personalized online running coaching for first-time marathoners and runners who want to finish stronger. Coaching can include running, pacing, fueling, runner-specific strength, recovery, and weekly accountability.

Educational disclaimer

This guide provides general educational information and is not medical or individualized nutrition advice. Consult a qualified healthcare professional before training if you have medical concerns, significant pain, chest discomfort, dizziness, or other symptoms. Fueling and hydration needs vary by runner and conditions.