



PROGRAM MANUAL

WELCOME!

Congratulations! Today you have made the first step to commit to a new lifestyle of mental and physical fitness. You have joined a wonderful group and are about to meet a great group of people. Whether this is your first time or your twentieth full or half marathon you have shown the desire to take the first step in “changing your life.”

Our motto is “*Change Your Life*” and your life WILL be forever changed as you train through our running & walking programs, in small but ever-increasing doses. Our goal is to help you understand the benefits of running and walking in an atmosphere that is encouraging and non-intimidating. Our running and walking programs include experienced and inexperienced runners and walkers who all have one thing in common - to reach a personal goal. We promise you will not be alone in this process! You will find others who will be sharing your triumphs, hardships, pain, and euphoria.

Our experienced Head Coaches and Assistant Coaches are here to help you these next 29 weeks to meet the goals you have established. We are here to encourage, laugh, cry, and to share with you the joys of accomplishment. Please do not hesitate to ask questions or discuss your training with any of our Coaches. We are here for YOU!!

Sincerely,

Gay Gulledge, Co-Organizer, Houston Fit

Bette Lehmborg, Co-Organizer, Houston Fit

Felix Lugo, Co-Organizer, Houston Fit

Head Coaches:

PRx – Jenn Sabin

ATP – Ashley Edwards Mangin

Red Group – Joy Hughes and Rebecca Yzquierdo

Yellow Group – Jennifer Alpard, Dennis Slate, Mike Clark

Green Group – John McClung

Purple Full Marathon Group – Sara Pressel

Purple Half Marathon Group – Sara Jacobson

Half Marathon Group – Bubba Thames

Fall Marathon Group – Sonia Stabinsky

Fall Half Marathon Group – Sylvia Lugo

Fall Purple Group – Elaine O’Gorman

REGISTRATION “YES” AND “NO’S”

This page is intended to inform you about what the Houston Fit Registration fee does and does not include:

What you can expect to receive from us:

- ❖ Encouragement, cheerleading, friendship and camaraderie
- ❖ Ability-based group workouts
- ❖ Experienced coaching staff
- ❖ Frequent educational seminars
- ❖ Supervised Hill and Speed Training
- ❖ On-site sports medicine personnel to answer your questions
- ❖ Weekly schedules and a full season “at a glance” schedule
- ❖ Weekly informative email newsletters for those who register on our website
- ❖ Exciting and helpful on-line discussion forum for questions and announcements
- ❖ Houston Fit Program technical shirt
- ❖ Shoe ID tag
- ❖ Member discounts at Luke’s Locker & Koala Wellness , two of our super sponsors
- ❖ Social events
- ❖ Water and GatorAde at the finish and on the course for longer runs & walks
- ❖ Access to USA FIT Programs in over 50 cities across the U.S.A.

What you SHOULD not expect to receive from us:

- ❖ Entry fee for any races, including your goal race (i.e. Chevron Houston Marathon, Aramco Half Marathon)
- ❖ Shoes or running clothes (other than the program shirt)
- ❖ Special services such as faxing schedules, making travel arrangements, etc.
- ❖ REFUNDS: You may get sick, change jobs, move to a new city, or get injured, all good reasons to stop training with us, but please accept the fact that we cannot offer you a program refund.

WEEKLY ROUTINE

- Know your route and distance (provided for you in the newsletter).
 - Arrive at Memorial Park no later than 15 minutes before your group begins to find a place to park and for any group announcements and warm-up.
 - We encourage you to warm-up prior to the posted time for your group. You can use the Warm-up Routine in this Manual.
 - Follow safety rules of Road Training (see attached).
 - Once you finish, grab your gear (see next point) and head back to the Meeting Area to begin your CORE exercises.
 - After completing your CORE exercises, prepare to stay for our seminars and/or color group meetings.
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WEEKLY PREPARATION

The key to a successful SATURDAY morning training session is "true" preparation. What this means to you, is that you are mentally, physically and emotionally prepared for your Saturday morning training session. Below are the steps each of you should follow to ensure success. Let's begin...

- Beginning Thursday, you should increase the amount of water, reduce the amount of caffeine intake and avoid alcohol; do the same for Friday. The early morning heat and humidity will increase your sweat performance. Being properly hydrated will help to offset, but not eliminate and total body heat retention.
- Beginning Thursday, you should be eating foods that are high in carbs and proteins; do the same for Friday. Doing so will give you the needed energy for your Saturday morning training session.
- By Thursday, you should have printed the route and become familiar with the twists and turns of the course.
- Target Thursday night for your best night's sleep ever; try and do the same for Friday. Nerves or over-excitement on Friday, might lead to a restless night's sleep, so target Thursday.
- Review your Saturday morning runner's/walker's checklist in this manual.
- Prepare your Saturday morning clothes. Items include top, shorts (sports bra), hat, socks, shoes, shoe ID tag. Select performance fabrics, such as cool-max, dri-fit, not cotton. Try everything on to check for comfort, and jog/walk around a few seconds to check for rub points.
- If you have rub points (bicep/tricep arm areas, thighs, waist, knees) you might want to invest in a stick of BODY GLIDE. This item can be purchased at most sporting goods stores. If you have Vaseline in rub on/roll on tube form, that will work as well. This is needed to reduce or eliminate CHAFING.
- **MEN, PLEASE READ THIS NEXT LINE:** Guys you may need to use Body Glide or Chapstick, wear band-aids or nip guards on your chest. The constant friction on your chest from running/walking can create a very sensitive and bloody mess - TRUST ME. Don't be shy about wearing band-aids to protect yourself, as everyone will know when you don't.

The most important things you bring with you are your self-confidence, positive attitude, and motivation to succeed... if you can't locate them, your coaches and friends at Houston Fit will lend you some of theirs!

Running / Race Checklist

Set-Up Night Before:	
Jogbra	
Shirt	
Shorts/Pants	
Socks	
Shoes	
Watch/Heart Rate Monitor	
Hat	
Bandana (Tucked in waist of shorts for wiping sweat)	
Sunglasses	
Bodyglide	
Sunscreen	
Insect Repellent	
Lip balm	
Fuel Belt w/ Water & Gatorade	
Gu Gel	
Blinky Light	
Drivers License	
Money	
Cell Phone	
Gloves (Cold Weather)	
Hat (Cold Weather)	
Tyvek Jacket (Cold Weather)	
Rain Poncho/Garbage Bag (Rainy Weather)	
Post Run / Race:	
Bag (for clothes)	
Towel	
T-Shirt/Jacket for After	
Pants for After	
Sandals/Shoes for After	
Water or Gatorade Bottle	
Energy Bar or Other Food	
Tylenol	
Biofreeze	
Race Only:	
Race Packet (Race #, Chip)	
Race Belt or Safety Pins	
Support Bag for Family & Friends on Race Day:	
Sign	
Lg Balloon	
Pretzels, Hershey's Miniatures or Favorite Race Food	
Bananas or Oranges	
Gu Gel	
Water	
Gatorade	
Tylenol	
Kleenex	
Body Glide or Vaseline	

PURPLE GROUP CHECKLIST

FRIDAY NIGHT CHECKLIST

Shoe Tag (MANDATORY & MUST BE FILLED OUT)

Blinker(s) (one MANDATORY, two recommended - front & back)

Water bottle / fuel belt (MANDATORY)

Small Flashlight

Food (when indicated by distance)

Sports Bra / Athletic Supporter

Shirt (wicking)

Shorts / pants (wicking)

Socks

Shoes

Laminated Copy of ID and insurance card (both sides) (MANDATORY)

Hat / visor (optional)

Sunglasses

Contacts / eyeglasses (if needed)

Cell phone

Bandana

Tissues

Bug spray

Suntan lotion

Lip balm

Rain Poncho (if needed)

NOTE: NO HEADPHONES PERMITTED FOR SAFETY REASONS

AFTER WALK:

Towel (mat) for core work

Flip flops / open-toed shoes

More water / sports drink

HOUSTON FIT / MEMORIAL PARK SAFETY and PARKING RULES and SUGGESTIONS

Houston Fit is concerned for your safety and well-being. The Houston Fit Saturday morning training runs/walks will begin and end at Memorial Park Picnic Lane. Please read the following safety and parking rules as outlined by Jay Roberts of the Houston Police Department.

PARKING – Please arrive early to find an authorized parking spot. This may mean leaving your home early to arrive at the Park, find a place to park and to be on time for your color group meetings. Parking is allowed in designated, outlined parking spots or along the street, close to the Houston Fit meeting area. **YOU WILL BE FINED IF YOU PARK IN A HANDICAPPED AREA, ALONG THE WOODEN POSTS INSIDE THE PARKING LOT ACROSS FROM THE HOUSTON FIT MEETING PLACE, IN DESIGNATED “NO PARKING ZONES” OR ANY AREA OUTSIDE THE DESIGNATED PARKING LINES!**

PERSONAL BELONGINGS – LEAVE NOTHING ON OR UNDER YOUR CAR SEATS. Leave your personal belongings at home. This includes your purses, wallets, laptop computers, or other items of personal value that may be in view of and tempt a passerby. If you need to take something of personal value to the Park, place such items in your car trunk **BEFORE YOU LEAVE YOUR HOME** to avoid being observed doing this at the Park.

CAR KEYS – CARRY YOUR CAR KEY WITH YOU AT ALL TIMES. DO NOT PLACE YOUR CAR KEYS IN YOUR GAS CAP, WINDSHIELD WIPER, ON YOUR CAR TIRE, TRAILER HITCH OR ANYWHERE ON THE OUTSIDE OF YOUR VEHICLE. Luke’s Locker carries several security belts, pouches or shoe clips for you to keep your car key with you at all times. If you have a valet key, they are usually smaller and easier to carry.

IDENTIFICATION – In addition to writing information on the back side of your official Houston Fit color group shoe tag, it is a good idea to laminate a copy of your driver’s license, your insurance card and personal contact information to carry with you during the run in case of an emergency.

LIGHTING & REFLECTIVE GEAR – Many of our Saturday morning runs/walks begin well before sunrise. It is imperative that vehicles can see you from a distance when approaching from in front or, most importantly, behind you. Most running shoes and hydration belts have some reflective material. Additional reflective material is available in the form of wrist/arm bands, vests and some apparel, but all of these are only effective when the headlights are shining on them. Small flashing “blinky” lights clipped to your waist or hat can be seen from several blocks away. Small flashlights can be used to light the path before you and help you navigate or avoid cracks, holes and other obstacles. They can also be used to warn oncoming traffic that there are people ahead. However, cars are bigger and tougher than humans and contact should be avoided; i.e., yield to them.

HEAD PHONES OR EARPLUGS - No headphones or earplugs are allowed on group runs so that all runners can hear traffic, bicycle & runner warnings.

Houston Fit's Bad Weather Policy is simple: we run in rain but not in lightning!

We sometimes run/walk in cold, windy rain. As uncomfortable as that may be, it is not likely to hurt you. Running/walking when lightning is present is very dangerous even if it is not raining. If you think it can't happen here, it can.

It is often difficult to tell if a run/walk is go or no-go (old NASA speak). On Saturday runs/walks or weekday speed or hill training or tempo runs a call on the weather is made just before the run/walk. Unless it is clearly stormy all over, you should show up. If the run is canceled, you can always enjoy a meal together!

If a Saturday run/walk is canceled, an informal makeup run/walk may be held on Sunday morning. You can check the discussion forum for information about any makeups planned.

We at Houston Fit strongly suggest that you adopt our policy as your own. Safety should be first in your mind. You can always get the run/walk in another time.

HOW TO SIGN UP FOR OUR WEEKLY E-MAILS

Here are the directions to sign up for the Houston FIT newsletter. You will automatically receive a copy each week that will include the route for the following Saturday and the start times for the walkers and runners. You will also receive important announcements.

First, go to the Houston FIT website, www.houstonfit.com. On the home page, click on the blue box on the upper right-hand side of the page that says "Newsletter":

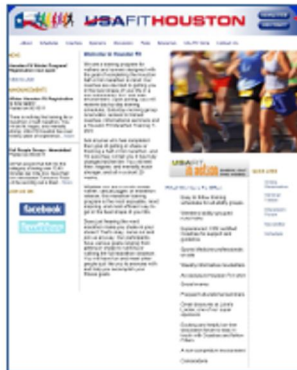
Instructions

Houston Fit Newsletter How To's

- [For New Members](#)
- [For Returning Members](#)

For New Members:

1. Your Houston Fit group newsletter will help you to stay informed, get helpful tips, and receive announcements from your head coach about upcoming training runs and events. To subscribe to your Houston Fit group newsletter, go to www.houstonfit.com.
2. Click on the **Newsletter** button in the upper right corner of the Houston Fit home page.



3. On the subsequent page, enter your email address and click "Go."

4. On the next screen, click the check box next to the group newsletter you would like to receive. For example, if you wish to receive the Marathon Group newsletter, then click its box. You can receive multiple groups' newsletters, if you like. *If you do not choose a specific group, you will not receive that group's newsletter!* You can leave the "Houston Fit email database" check box selected to receive announcements which are distributed to all color groups. Under Your Information, enter your first and last name. Click "Save Profile Changes."

5. You will then be brought to a screen that says "Thank you." Please check your e-mail and review the confirmation notice to confirm your subscription. *If any changes are needed, you must return to the Subscription Center to make adjustments (see below additional instructions).*

For Returning Members:

1. To change your newsletter subscription preferences, follow steps 1 through 3 above. You will receive an email shortly thereafter which contains a link to update your Newsletter settings. So go to your email, receive the email from Houston Fit and click on that link.
2. You will then be brought to a screen which indicates that you are already a member of the Houston Fit mailing list and asks if you would like to update your profile. To change your newsletter subscription preferences, check appropriate boxes and click "Save Profile Changes."
3. Please check your e-mail and review the confirmation notice to confirm your subscription. *If any changes are needed, you must return to the Subscription Center link in the email to make adjustments.*

Warm-up Routine

- 1) **JOG** - Easy and relaxed for 10 minutes to loosen up.
- 2) **TOES** - Walk on your toes with your feet pointed straight ahead for 35 steps, getting as high up on your toes as you possibly can. Your legs should be relatively straight as you do this and you should take fairly small steps.
Then, cover another 35 steps high upon your toes, but with your feet pointed outward at 45 degrees or more. Your legs should rotate FROM THE HIPS when you perform this movement, don't merely turn each foot out at the ankle. The whole leg should be involved.
Finally, walk another 35 steps high up on your toes with your feet pointed inwards. Again, rotate from the hips to engage the entire leg, not just from your ankles.
- 3) **HEELS** - Walk on your heels with your feet pointed straight ahead for 35 steps, getting as high up on your heels as you possibly can. Your legs should be relatively straight as you do this and you should – at least initially – take fairly small steps.
Then, simply do what you did with the toe walks, taking 35 steps with your toes pointed out and 35 more with your toes pointed in – rotating from the hips.
- 4) **Jumping Jacks** – 20 reps
- 5) **Wind Mills**- Stand feet slightly wider than shoulder width apart. Extend your arms so that they are extending straight out on either side of your body. Bend at the waist touching left hand to right foot, move back to starting position, bend at waist touch right hand to left foot, repeat for 10 reps on each foot.
- 6) **HIP CIRCLES** – With hands on your hips and feet shoulder width apart, roll your hips clockwise for 12 revolutions. Then, repeat the circles in the opposite direction. Try to roll your hips (like a spinning quarter wobbles on a table) rather than simply rotating in a circle.
- 7) **HOT STOVE (Stomp Grapes)** – Start with 10 jumps in place at a moderate speed and medium height, using mostly your ankles – very little knee or hip action. Then immediately switch to very small hops (less than one inch) and complete 20 hops as fast as you can (think hot stove). Rest for 5 seconds, and do another set.
- 8) **SWINGERS** – Leaning against a pole or wall and with your weight on your left leg, swing your right leg in front of your body pointing your toe up as it reaches it's farthest point. Then swing it back outside your body as far as you comfortably can, again pointing your toe up and out. Do 15 reps with each leg.
This warm up is geared towards stretching and strengthening muscle groups critical to running / walking exercise. If done properly, each warm up should result in your breaking a sweat and leave you slightly fatigued. If not, you haven't truly warmed up and are at an increased risk of nagging little injuries.
Then again, if you find a certain movement difficult or painful do fewer reps or less intensity until your body develops strength in that area. In case of sharp pain, stop the exercise and discuss it with your coach later.

Core and Strength Routine

There are many approaches to improving your fitness, but one of the most popular over the past few years has been that of improving your core stability. The “core” of the body is simply what is between the shoulders and the hips-the trunk and pelvis. Core training is a system that re-educates your body so that you use it effectively. The core is a crucial group of muscles, not only for sports but for everyday life. It is essential to have a strong core because it comes into play just about every time you move.

Core training will also tone your torso and abdominal muscles, improve your posture, balance and coordination. Most important, core stability will help keep your spine healthy and flexible throughout life.

Prone Plank

Technique

Begin by lying on your stomach with your forearms on the floor pointing forward, elbows shoulder width apart and directly under the shoulders.

Your feet should be touching or slightly apart. The closer together they are the more difficult the exercise.

Your spine should be in a neutral position.

Your head in alignment with the spine (do not look ahead or to the side).

Hold this position while breathing normally.

Structure

Perform holds starting at 30 seconds with a 15 second rest period. Perform 2 repetitions. Our goal is to hold for 2 minutes!

Special Instructions

Don't let your hips/knees drop, your butt raise, or shift weight to one forearm. This can also be executed with knees on the ground.

Muscles Worked: Abs

Side Plank

Technique

Begin by lying on your side with the elbow of the support arm and the outside edge of the bottom foot touching the floor.

The elbow should be placed on the ground inline with the shoulders.

It is important to keep your body in a straight line if viewed from the front as well as if someone was looking from the top of the head to the feet.

Attempt to hold position without letting the hips sag.

Structure

Perform hold starting at 15 seconds then switch sides and hold for 15 seconds with a 15 second rest between sets. Perform 2 sets (a set is both sides complete). Our goal is to hold for 1 minute on each side with a 15 second rest between the two sets!

Special Instructions

Be sure not to hold breath. Exercise will be easier if feet are staggered instead of stacked. Check with your coach for options, shoulder roll.

Muscles Worked: Abs, Obliques

Bodyweight High Bridge

Technique

Begin by lying on your back with your arms by your sides and your knees bent (feet flat on the floor).

Feet are hip width apart with toes pointing directly ahead.

Lift hips off the ground and push as high in the air as possible.

Squeeze your gluteus as you hold the top position for 5 seconds.

Lower your hips back to the ground, rest briefly and repeat.

(To make this exercise more difficult cross your arms over the chest reducing stability)

Structure

Perform 8-10 repetitions, holding each repetition for 5 seconds. Resting 1-2 seconds between repetitions.

Muscles Worked: Gluteus, lower back

Superman or Swan

Technique

Lie on your front with your arms extended in front of you and your legs extended behind.

Keep your spine in neutral and tighten your abdominal muscles.

Raise your shoulders and feet a few inches off the ground and hold.

Structure

Perform hold for 15 seconds with a 15 second rest period between repetitions. Perform 2 repetitions. Our goal 30 seconds for each repetition!

Muscles Worked: Abs, lower back

Abdominal Crunch

Technique

Lie on the floor with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor.

Hands behind your head (but not clasped).

Push your lower back into the floor.

Inhale; lift your head, shoulders, and upper back off the floor

Concentrate on curling your upper trunk

Exhale and slowly return to the start position.

During the entire movement the neck should be held straight with the eyes looking at the ceiling/sky. (Touch the roof of your mouth with your tongue if your neck feels strained)

Structure

Try for 2 sets of 20 with a 30 second rest between sets. Our goal muscle fatigue!! Concentrate on keeping the repetitions slow and controlled....quality not quantity.

Muscles Worked: Abs

Lunge

Technique

Stand with your hands on your hips and your feet parallel and hip-width apart. Squeeze your abdominal muscles.

Take a big step forward, keeping your weight evenly balanced between both legs.

Bend both knees as far as is comfortable so that you lower your torso down, then return to the starting position.

Repeat on the other leg.

Structure

Perform 8-10 repetitions.

Muscles Worked: Quads, Hamstrings

Basic Squat

Technique

Start by standing in a level position hands on your hips, with your feet parallel and shoulder width apart. Keep your spine in neutral alignment and tighten your abdominal muscles. Bend at your knees as if you're about to sit down.

Squat down as far as you can without losing your balance or arching your back. You want to keep your knees in line with your feet; they should not go past your toes.

Hold for a count of 1, and then push through your heels to return to the starting position.

Structure

Perform 8-10 repetitions.

Muscles Worked: Quads, Hamstrings

Push-up

Technique

Start in a press-up position with hands directly under shoulders, feet hip width apart or together for a greater challenge.

Lower into a position where your arms are bent to 90 degrees and elbows are close to your sides.

Hold this position for 10 seconds and return to the top again.

Structure

As you become stronger you can hold each repetition for a longer duration. What is your goal!?!

Muscles Worked: Triceps

Stretching Routine

Quadriceps Stretch:

- Lie on your stomach, hands at your sides, legs fully extended.
- Bend one leg at the knee toward the buttocks.
- With the arm of the side you bent your knee, grab the foot and pull toward your bottom.
- 3 Sets, 30 seconds, each leg - maintain breathing.

Hamstring Stretch:

- Sit down, with one leg extended straight, the other bent so that the sole of your shoe touches the inner thigh of the leg extended.
- Slowly lean from the waist toward the extended leg. Try to touch the toes of the extended leg.
- 3 Sets, 30 seconds, each leg - maintain breathing.

Calf Muscle: Bent Knee

- Stand with the palms of your hands flat against a wall at eye level.
- With one foot slightly in front of the other bend both knees keeping your feet flat on the floor.
- Using your body weight over the back leg, stretch the calf muscle.
- Repeat for the opposite side. 3 Sets, 30 seconds, each leg - maintain breathing.

Buttocks:

- Lie on your back with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor.
- Cross one leg over the other, resting your ankle on the opposite knee.
- Hold the bent knee and pull it towards your chest while lying back on the floor. Repeat for the other leg. 3 Sets, 30 seconds, each leg - maintain breathing.

I.T. Band:

- Standing upright cross one leg behind the other, placing the feet together and keeping your hands by your sides. Bend your upper body away from the back leg, pushing your hip outwards.
- Repeat for the other side.
- 3 Sets, 30 seconds, each leg - maintain breathing.

Triangle Stretch:

- Stand with your feet wide and both slightly pointed to the left.
- Keeping your legs and back straight, bend from the waist and try to place your left hand on the floor near your left foot or on your left shin.
- Stand up again and repeat on the right side.

Butterfly:

- Sitting upright on the floor with good lower back posture, bend your knees outward placing the soles of your feet together.
- Gently push down on your thighs with your elbows while pulling your feet in with your hands.
- This stretches your inner thigh muscles. Hold for 10 to 20 seconds rest 10 seconds and repeat 3 sets.

RUNNING/TRAINING TERMS

EASY (e): A slow run done at a conversational pace.

TEMPO (t): After a warm up for about 5 - 10 minutes, maintain a pace about 10 to 15 seconds per mile slower than 10-K race pace. Another way to gauge the pace of tempo runs: a pace about midway between short-interval training speed and your easy running pace.

SPEED WORK: “8x30-30” means “30 seconds fast, 30 seconds slow, eight times in a row.” After a thorough warm-up, run for 30 seconds at about 90-95% intensity, then do a 30-second recovery jog. Make sure that you don’t slow down during the workout, so you are running your last 30 seconds about as fast or even a little faster than your first 30 seconds. When you are done, jog or walk slowly for a while to cool-down.

CHIP TIME: The “chip” is a tiny electronic chip that’s programmed with your specific runner identification. You attach the chip to your shoe laces or it may be already attached to your bib. It sends a signal to an electronic reading device at the START and FINISH Lines. Your exact time is recorded automatically.

MP: Marathon Pace

INTERVALS: Training in which short, fast “repeats” often 200 to 800 meters, are alternated with slow “intervals” of jogging for recovery; interval training builds speed and endurance.

LSD: An abbreviation for “long slow distance” which refers to the practice of running longer distances at an “easy” pace. The slower pace allows the runner to go longer to build up endurance and leg strength.

NEGATIVE SPLITS: Running the second half of a run faster than the first half.

PR: Personal Record

SPLITS: Refers to your times at mile markers or other pre-planned checkpoints along the route.

TAPER: A cut back in mileage or taper for a period of time before an event. Tapering helps muscles rest so that they are ready for peak performance on race day.