

Runners description of The Great Wall Half Marathon

Stretch No. 1 Section A - B

0.8 kilometres on highway Village Zone

You have just heard the starting signal and you will be passing this particular stretch of 0.8 kilometres 3 times in all.

The first time is NOW.

The second time you pass you will be heading in the same direction just after descending the Wall.

The third time you are on this stretch, it will have changed into the homestretch!

You must watch out for traffic at all times and keep to the left hand side of the lane along the river. Stay on the roadway facing the river, even if it means that you will be running almost in the middle of the road.

Keep a sharp eye on all traffic on the road. Be aware of the locals, especially the children.

Remember to smile and wave at other fellow travellers and family members. You are about to perform the athletic feat of your life and may be envied by many... Enjoy the contact with the road & before you realize it, you will be on Stretch 2. To get there, make a 90 degree turn to your LEFT, through the magnificent, colourful wooden portal that indicates the sloping approach to the Wall. Follow the directions of the guides and you will progress quickly.

Stretch No. 2 Section B - C

4.5 kilometres uphill on a very steep paved mountain road

You are going to face the second greatest challenge of the tour & but you will already have an idea of what is in store, as you will have gone along this stretch by bus on the Inspection Day. But making the trip by sightseeing bus is one thing, walking or maybe even taking it at a running pace is quite another! You will have plenty of time to consider your strategy though, because there is a distance of 4.5 kilometres before you meet the Wall for the first time. Take care

not to overtax your strength & it sure would be a letdown NOT to reach the Wall.

We have made sure that you will not boil over or dry out by placing a drink station at the beginning of Stretch 2- just after the bridge, and another one just before the transition from Stretch 2 to Stretch 3, which is on the Wall itself. But even with these stations available, please remember to tank up thoroughly before starting out. It is absolutely necessary!

You also have to watch carefully out for traffic here. This very steep stretch of road with many curves and bends you will be very tempted to cross the road several times in order to make it easy on yourself. Be prepared for traffic coming downhill - the drivers cannot see around the sharp bends. Look out! Listen for a honking horn, which may indicate that a car is approaching at full throttle from around the next bend. You did not come to China to be run over by a car! We want you to complete The Great Wall Half Marathon. Enjoy the view as you climb and before long you will be on The Great Wall itself and reach Stretch No. 3. Shortly before reaching The Wall, you will run through a great white portal with 3 engraved characters in Chinese and then cross a big open square. And if you need to pay a visit to a rest room before facing The Wall, be sure to do so here!

Stretch No. 3 Section C - A 3.2 kilometres on The Great Wall

At the very end of the big open square, after climbing a paved approach, you will see a sign attached to a wall of uneven stones that says "Entrance to The Great Wall." Now we are getting down to serious business! Right after the entrance sign is the start of several sequences of the many many steps that you will traverse & either running or walking! Please note that going

downhill on these steps is especially dangerous. After taking the first flight of steps up hill, you begin running on The Wall itself at point W1.

Do not change your pace, even if you feel pressed by people passing by you on the first leg of The Wall. You may be the one passing many of them later on, as they will pay the price for starting out at too fast a pace. Instead, concentrate on coming through this stretch of 3.2 kilometres of the Wall safe and sound. There are plenty of people in this world who take wild risks, and you do not need to imitate them. Keep this in mind now.

Point W1 - Tower 3

At point W1, you pass through a stone portal, then turn to your left at an angle of 90 degrees and continue going uphill on a short stretch of steps. Hereafter you will be on The Wall. Be sure to enjoy the view to your right (north) & it is magnificent! Watch out for the rain furrows that cut across. A foot might easily be caught in one of these. We organizers have tried to carefully indicate all these rain drainages with white paint, but as a runner, keep your eyes on the path as well! Please take note that The Wall slopes slightly downwards on the sides.

Tower 3 - Tower 4

Here you go up and down a lot of steps. There is already a drink station in Tower 4. Make sure to take advantage of it!

Tower 4 - Tower 5 (The Blind Tower)

By now you are approximately 100 metres above the entrance sign. This is also one of the highest points of the Marathon - after this the route is more or less downhill. After passing Tower 5 you will reach a very strenuous stretch!

Tower 5 - Tower 6 (The Widow's Tower)

Runners must pass this stretch in single file. Therefore, no overtaking! Please help out a

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fellow contestant if necessary. For quite a while along this stretch there will be no wall on your left hand side, and that means a potential free fall! At certain points the downward slope of The Wall is quite steep, and some heavy ropes with knots have been fastened here to help runners wearing shoes that do not grip the stone foundation. Slow down here in order not to get rope burn or lose your foothold. There will be medics, an emergency squad and assistants at the ready at this point in case of accidents.

Tower 6 (The Widows Tower) - Tower 7 - Tower 8

After passing Tower 6 you have to be extremely careful. All at once there will be giant steps going downhill, and there will be the risk of a free fall to your left! For a short while you will be running on uneven stones, but before long The Wall is made of bricks and has a shielding parapet again on each side. You still have to be very careful though, as the lengths and heights of the steps vary greatly! This makes it almost impossible to fall into a rhythmic pace on this stretch of The Wall. Tower 7 has no roof and no superstructure but is still considered a tower by the Chinese. Just run straight through.

Tower 8 - Tower 9

After having left the medical and drink stations in Tower 8, you go downhill towards Tower 9. In Tower 9, you turn left at an angle of 90 degrees, going south. Like at many other points along the way, an assistant will be here to show you the way.

Tower 9 - W2

After having passed Tower 9 and turning left, The Wall becomes very wide and rather level. If you are game, this is the place to slip past some fellow contestants with caution. Soon The Wall transform into a series of tough climbs and descents. This is where you get some of the most fantastic views

of the whole stretch on The Wall. The final descent is a treacherous place that has to be passed extremely cautiously. It is a sort of plateau, from which the route öbreaksö at an angle of 90 degrees and continues downhill to your left. There will be guides to direct you at this spot. Set your pace according to the conditions and you can pick up your pace for a while. Later The Wall will narrow and there will be a drink station and you will have to slow down anyway. After the drink station, make two turns at 90-degree angles in rapid succession! The first turn of 90 degrees is to your right. There will be guides telling you to slow down and pointing to a descent of 11 steps, and after that to a turn of 90 degrees going left. Be sure to go slowly here, as right after the steps there is a long steep descent, so be careful! You are now running along a narrow goat path, where you are only allowed to go single file for security reasons, no overtaking!

Even though the route is swept, there is still a risk of stumbling over loose pebbles, so keep a sharp watch out ö but be sure to also enjoy the magnificent view. From here you can see a river, which you are going to pass later on, and you are also able to see the finishing area of the fort, so there is something to look forward to.

The path changes from a goat path of dirt and clay to the brick path of The Wall again. Once again, you may have to make use of the rope to descend. The Wall takes a wide swing with a free fall on one side!

Before long though, you will be leaving the wall again by turning 90 degrees to your right, descending 2-3 steps, and then turning 90 degrees to your left. Follow the indications of the guides and adjust your speed accordingly, as now you will face 576 descending steps without any shielding brickwork!

Keep at your own pace and do not worry about the daredevils who decide to go downhill quickly. If your descent is giving you

trouble, if you lose your rhythm or your eyes play a trick on you ö then step aside, take a break, enjoy the view and then get back to work again. You are now on the last part of Stretch 3, which means you will soon have finished your run on The Wall.

Tower 12 - Tower 13

After descending the steps safely and soundly, you must turn 90 degrees to your right inside the tower in order to get to the bridge you saw from the top of the mountain and of The Wall. Crossing Bridge 1, you pass nice and easily over both the river and the north-south highway. At the end of the bridge is Tower 13. Coming out of the tower make a 90-degree turn to your left.

Tower 13 - Tower 14 - Tower 15 - Tower 16 - Tower 17

This stretch is passed only once. The route goes all around the Great Wall Complex and renders a fine and comprehensive view of how the buildings are positioned in relation to each other. At the same time you circle Yin Yang Square and will be able to wave to your friends on the square. You enter the Castle Wall as you turn 90 degrees to your left, leave Tower 13 and pass a pagoda tower with a guide to point your way. Exit to the left of the souvenir stall inside the tower. At Tower 14 make a 90 degree turn to the right and from there go up a short flight of stairs to get to Tower 15, also a pagoda tower with a guide, then turn left around the tower, go down another flight of steps from Tower 15, and immediately afterwards turn 90 degrees to your left. You enter a wide curve of 90 degrees, and it may seem a bit strange to be running in this direction, but you will probably not have enough time to get dizzy before the curve ends. There will be a short stretch going straight ahead, and then another rather long curve.

Both curves swing to the right. While tearing along you will see a Great Wall Museum to your right. Next to it, among many

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other things, is a great maze. Some of your fellow travellers might be here taking the opportunity to stroll around in the museum garden. Be prepared to wave at somebody you know! Next comes a long stretch leading straight ahead, climbing slightly upwards toward Tower 16. Shortly before the tower, there is a big notch on your left, an ideal place for a cheering squad to take position. There is enough room there for about 50 people. In Tower 16, go to your right around the stall in here. The passageway around to the left of it is extremely difficult because it is made up of stone steps right out to the brickwork. Watch out because right after Tower 16 there are about 20 steps going down. Be alert in order to avoid stumbling, as they turn up all of a sudden! Shortly after these steps, make a right turn at a T-crossing of the Wall. There will be a guide at the crossing (If you turn left we will probably not see you again today, as this stretch of the Wall runs towards Beijing for the next 55 kilometres!) Be sure to follow the directions of the guide. On the next even stretch there are two canons, over which you might consider hopping over, but only make the attempt if you are an able-bodied gymnast, as they will probably hit you hard if you do not succeed. Technical and artistic skills will not buy you time here! A bit further ahead you will see Tower 17, you make a right hand turn, going down the stone steps to reach Yin Yang Square. There will be a guide to send you off in the right direction, but watch out, the steps are steep, and you will find going down the tunnel, which seems rather dark after the full sunlight on the Wall. Before plunging into Stretch 4 and setting a good rhythmic pace, there is an opportunity visit to a medical stand here and visit a rest room, as the next one is approximately 7 km further ahead. You also have the possibility of ending the Half Marathon here, but who can imagine already

being exhausted at this point in the race? Quite soon you will be going onto the Highway Stretch for good, where there are no steps, towers, or hikers to slow you down.

Stretch No. 4 Section A - B 0.8 km on highway Village Zone

This Highway Stretch of 0.8 km will be passed 3 times in all.

The first time is over and done with.

The second time - you are on this stretch now and still going in the same direction as the first time - is right after having left the Wall and passed through Yin Yang Square.

The third time you get here, this stretch will have transformed into the home stretch!

Being of great importance, we will repeat the lesson from the first time on this stretch, which you must remember well: You must watch out for traffic on the road at all times and keep to the left hand side of the lane facing the river! So stay on the roadway facing the river, even if it means that you will be running almost in the middle of the road.

Keep a sharp watch out for all traffic on the road. Be aware of the locals, especially the children. Remember to smile and wave at other fellow travellers and family members. Some of the locals might even recognize you after having seen you pass by on the first run ó quite an extraordinary thought that can really keep you going! You have come quite far in your attempt to perform the athletic feat of your life.

Enjoy the contact with the paved road ó and before you realize it, you will be on Stretch 5, which begins right after the magnificent colourful wooden portal that indicates the sloping approach to The Wall. Remember that this time you will have to run straight ahead and past the portal. Follow the directions of the guides, and soon you will be running along unknown stretches.

Stretch No. 5 Section B - D 2.7 km on

mixed highway

Very quickly you will be outside of the built-up area and face a short stretch of 2.7 km asphalt road ahead. You will be able to see the river on your left most of the way.

At the point where you go from stretch 5 to 6 - point D - you will find Drink station 9 as well as a shuttle bus stop for the busses that ferry spectators around the course.

You have to go through Stretch 5 once in each direction. Pay careful attention to any traffic and do not cut corners! If you are not among the very fastest, you might meet runners coming at you here, but do not pay any attention to them. Remember to keep your own good pace, or you will pay for it later.

Stretch No. 6 Section D - E 1 km on unpaved road from the Highway to the Village

Having left Drink station 9, you also have lost one of the sure signs of civilisation: the asphalt road ends! From this point and for the next 5.7 km on you will be running on dirt roads and this might stir up some dust, especially if cars are sneaking by.

The police are here to keep order, and cars will be going at very low speeds, and spectators will be kept well off to the side of the road. Still, remember to run more or less in the middle of the road, and step aside to your left if pressed. You are running along right next to an irrigation canal. Allow yourself a moment to look at this means of agricultural improvement.

Further on you will be running along the river and you might see some strange goings on, as there will be a lot of people and tractors in the riverbed. It may look as if they are dredging the river. In fact they are gathering gravel and sand from the riverbed to be used for building materials. They will probably not be distracted by you

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rushing by, but try waving at them anyway.

Getting to the end of Stretch No. 6 you will reach Point F and Bridge 3. You still have to carry on due south towards point G.

Stretch No. 7

Section E - F

0.4 km on unpaved road from Bridge 3 to 4

When you reach Bridge 3 you can see the houses of Duanzhuang village across the river. Carry on due south to Bridge 4, make a sharp 90-degree turn to your left, cross Bridge No. 4, and you are in the village and entering Stretch 8.

Stretch No. 8

Section F - G

0.4 km on paved road into Duanzhuang Village

Stretch No. 8, which you have reached after crossing Bridge No. 4, takes you into the village of Duanzhuang along a newly paved road. Follow the road along a long curve and carry on for a few hundred meters. When you reach the last houses of the village you have reached the point where the half and full marathoners go their separate ways. In a second you will take a sharp **turn to the left** whereas those runners doing the full marathon will carry on straight ahead. Watch for the guides showing the way or you will be on your way to complete the full marathon. At this turn you will find Drink station 11 and just beyond that a primitive toilet.

Stretch No. 9

Section G - E

3 km on mixed road surfaces through Duanzhuang Village

After leaving the paved road and the full marathoners behind, the route now follows a narrow and slightly uneven dirt road, which leads you through the village. Pay attention. As you press on along the narrow alley with houses and doorways on both sides, look out! The villagers will watch out for you but keep an eye out for the occasional chicken or duck darting out the doorways. Once

outside the village, you have to climb a little path that the village residents use when they go to work in the fields. Watch your step, as the path is very narrow and stony. Continue upwards until you come across the full marathon route. You may meet up with some of the fast marathon runners. Stick to your own tempo and don't let yourself be influenced by their tempo. After a few hundred meters, you will return to the village.

If you have any energy left for people watching, look at the locals and they will be closely watching you. Several of the oldest women had their feet bound when they were young. A narrow path with willow fences and orchards in front of the small farmhouses leads us around the village itself. Soon you come to a small crossroads. Follow the paved road to the left for approximately 200 meters until this road leads to a larger road. Continue until you reach the river. Turn right and follow the river to Bridge No. 3 (the northernmost bridge across the river). Cross Bridge 3 towards Point F, Drink station 10 and the Stretch 10. Watch out as you have to make a **sharp turn to the right** when you have crossed Bridge 3 and from there you head north.

Stretch No. 10

Section E - D

0.9 km of gravel road from the village to the highway

Passing Point E there will be about 1 km of country and gravel road before you once again feel asphalt under your feet. This will not bother you at all, when you realize that you have only 12 km to go before reaching the finish! It is still a bit too early to consider a spurt though. Again you will be running along the river, and soon you must say good-bye to another steady runner - the water in the irrigation canal. At the end of Stretch 10 you will be back on the Beijing Highway. Here at Point D you will find Drink station No. 9, and also the

bus stop for the pick-up bus.

Little by little you are approaching the finishing area, which includes the second run on The Wall, so consider your well being, and drink a lot of water! Do not forget that now you have to run on the right hand sides of the lane facing the river, and also that you have to run to your right when leaving the drink station - or you will be led up the garden path for good. It is a long way to Beijing!

Stretch No. 11

Section D - B

2.7 km on mixed highway

At Point D you are back in familiar territory and closing in on the finishing stretch. In other words you are on your way to the town Huangyaguan with the Great Wall Fort and Yin Yang Square. It has also been a while since you last saw the cheering section. It will be fun seeing them again as you cross the finish line. But still you have close to 3 kilometres, or 2 miles ahead, making the short break at Drink station 9 a clever choice. As you get close to Point B and the final stretch, there is a risk of meeting runners as well as traffic dashing out from the colourful wooden portal, so watch out! On the right you will pass the portal and the road that you ascended to the Wall. You are almost there, so this may be the place to pick up some speed before entering the final stretch.

Stretch No. 12

Section B - A

0.8 km on highway through Village Zone

The third time is lucky, and this is third time! You are now so close to the town Huangyaguan and the Great Wall Fort and Yin Yang Square, that you can undoubtedly hear the speakers and the faint roar of the cheering section, and they are right around the corner - almost.

You are now only a stone's throw from the finishing line, and now you know that your thoughts about reaching the finishing line

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were realistic, that YOU DID IT!
The finishing line is waiting for
you there on the Yin Yang
symbol in the area with many
Towers that we call the square.
Even though the speed limit for

cars driving has been limited to
20 km per hour throughout the
area, you should still take care
when crossing the road for the
last time to make your last few
steps to cross the finish line.

Enjoy your sense of triumph in
the last few meters towards the
finishing line. Enjoy the applause
- you deserve it! If your finishing
time is a bit longer than what you
expected, you can find comfort in
knowing that you met the
challenge and that you have just
crossed the finish line of The
Great Wall Half Marathon.

**THE MEDAL IS
YOURS TO KEEP!**



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