

Runners description of The Great Wall Marathon - 5 KM

Stretch No. 1

1.1 km level start and climb to The Wall

The shot has just been fired and you have set out on one of the biggest challenges of your life: *The Great Wall 5 KM*
Up ahead The Great Wall of China awaits you. After a level start at Taipingzhai the course quickly gets tough. A series of steps will take you up to the Wall. These are uneven and should be negotiated with care. It would be a pity to leave the race this early before even setting foot on the Wall itself!
Enjoy the view as you climb, and before long you will be on The Great Wall itself and on Stretch No. 2.

Stretch No. 2

3.2 km 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 dangerous. After taking the first flight of steps uphill, you begin running on The Wall itself at point W1.

Do not change your speed, 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 for starting out at too fast a pace. Instead, concentrate on coming through this stretch of 3.2 kilometers of the Wall safely. There are plenty of people in this world who take wild risks, and you do not need to imitate them. Keep this in mind.

Point W1 - Tower 3

At point W1 pass through a stone portal, then turn to your left at a 90-degree angle, continue going uphill again on a short stretch of

steps, then 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, you still need to watch out! Please also 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 water station in Tower 4. Make sure to take advantage of it!

Tower 4 - Tower 5 (The Blind Tower)

By now you are at approximately 100 meters above the entrance sign. This is one of the highest points of the Great Wall 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)

The runners must cross this stretch in single file. Therefore, no overtaking! Please help a fellow contestant if necessary. For quite a while along this stretch there will be no wall on your left hand side that means a potential free fall!

At some points the downward slope of The Wall is quite steep, and some heavy ropes with knots have been fastened here to help runners whose shoes do not grip the stone foundation very well. Slow down in order not to get rope burn or lose your foothold. Medics, an emergency squad and assistants will be ready at this point in case of accidents.

Tower 6 (The Widow's 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 a 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 up of bricks again and has a shielding parapet on each side. You still have to be very careful though, as the lengths and heights of the steps vary a great deal. This makes it almost impossible to get into a rhythmic pace on this stretch of The Wall.
Tower 7 has no roof and no superstructure, but is still considered to be a tower by the Chinese. Just run straight through.

Tower 8 - Tower 9

After having left medical and water station in Tower 8, you go downhill towards Tower 9. In Tower 9, on this first passage, you turn left at a 90-degree angle, going south. Like at many other spots along the way, an assistant will be posted here to direct you.

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 of your fellow contestants -with some care. Soon The Wall changes again, with tough climbs and descents. Here is where you get some of the most fantastic views of the whole stretch on The Wall. On the last of the descents is a treacherous place, which has to be passed extremely cautiously. It is a sort of plateau, from which the route breaks at an angle of 90 degrees and continues downhill to your left. There are guides to direct you at this spot. Set your pace according to the conditions and get going for a while, because later The Wall will narrow, there will be a water station and you will have to slow down anyway. After the water station, make two turns at 90-degree angles in rapid succession. The first turn of 90 degrees is to your right. Guides will be telling you to slow down and pointing to a descent of 11 steps, and after that to a turn of 90 degrees to the left. Be sure to go slowly here, as right after the steps there is a long steep descent, so be careful! You are now

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running along a narrow goat path, where again you are only allowed to go single file for safety reasons - no overtaking!

Even though the route is swept, there is still a risk of stumbling over loose pebbles - so watch out - but be sure to also enjoy the magnificent view! From here you can see a river that you will pass later on. You will also be able to see the finishing area of the fort, so there is something to look forward to.

The path changes from being a goat path of dirt and clay back to The Wall path made of bricks, and here you might again have to make use of the rope to descend. The Wall takes a wide swing her 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 you now have 576 descending steps without any shielding brickwork!

Keep your own pace, and do not worry about the daredevils who decide to race downhill. If your descent is giving you trouble, if you lose your rhythm or your eyes play a trick on you ó 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 the run on The Wall.

Tower 12 - Tower 13

After getting down the steps safely and soundly, you must turn 90 degrees to your right inside the tower in order to get to the bridge that you saw from the top of the mountain and of The Wall. Crossing Bridge 1 you easily pass 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

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, leaving Tower 13, and are now passing a pagoda tower with a directional guide. Exit to the left of the souvenir stall inside the tower.

At Tower 14, you make a 90-degree turn to the right and from there you go up a short flight of stairs to get to Tower 15, also a pagoda tower, with a directional 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 will enter a wide curve of 90 degrees, and it might feel a little 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 leading straight ahead, and then again a rather long curve.

Both curves swing to the right. While tearing along you will see the Wall Museum on your right. Next to it, among many other things, is a great maze, and some of your fellow travelers might be here, taking the opportunity for a walk in the museum garden. Be ready to wave at somebody you know!

Straight up ahead is a long stretch, climbing slightly up towards Tower 16. Shortly before the tower, there is a big notch to your left, an ideal place for a cheering section to take position. There is enough room for about 50 people.

Inside of Tower 16, go to your RIGHT around the stall (The passageway around the left of the stall is extremely difficult, as it is made up of stone steps right out of the brickwork).

Watch out now, just 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 the steps, make a right turn at a T-crossing

of the Wall. There will be a directional guide there. (We probably won't see you later today if you turn left, as this stretch on the Wall runs towards Beijing for the next 55 km.) 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. Technical or artistic skills will not buy you time here!

A little further ahead you will see Tower 17 as you are making a right hand turn, go down stone steps to reach the Yin Yang Square. There will be a guide to direct you, but watch out, the steps are steep, and you will find going down 'the tunnel' rather dark after the full sunlight on the Wall.

The finishing line is situated on the Yin Yang symbol in the area with many towers that we call the square.

You are now on the Square where the finishing line is located but the ordeal is not over yet. Before plunging into Stretch 4 and setting a good rhythmic pace, there is an opportunity visit to a medical stand, though there is not much left of your 5 kilometres distance. You also have the option of ending the race here, but who can imagine already being exhausted at this point in the marathon? 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. 3

Section A - A

0.7 km on highway and ðVillage Zoneó

This consists of running a bit further south and then turning right into the village just south of the old fort. You can look directly into the homes of ordinary Chinese people while you are running down a narrow alley. Next is a sharp swing onto the old main street of the village, which leads directly to the southern end of the Fort and the

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parking lot where you got off of the bus a few hours ago. Now it is just a matter of crossing the square in the direction of the main road and heading for your goal. Remember that this time you will run on the left side of the little path that runs along the road. Now you can hear the

speaker on the square and there are not many meters left before you reach your goal on Yin Yang Square.

Enjoy your personal triumph when crossing the remaining meters towards the finish line. Enjoy the applause - you deserve it! Should it happen that your

finishing time is a bit longer than what you expected, you will surely find comfort in having overcome the challenge of finishing *The Great Wall 5 KM*

**THE MEDAL
IS YOURS TO KEEP!**

