

The Manchester Marathon is one of the UK's most popular spring marathons, attracting tens of thousands of runners each year. If you're planning to take part in this event, you might be wondering: **Can I pick up my Manchester Marathon race pack on race day?** This post provides a thorough rundown of the Manchester Marathon's entry process, pack collection rules, course details, and related essentials to ensure your race day runs smoothly. Spoiler: *There are no packs issued on race day.*

Manchester Marathon Basics: Date, Scale, and Time Limits

The 2024 Manchester Marathon is set for **Sunday 14 April 2024**. This annual event regularly draws over 30,000 runners, making it one of the UK's largest marathons outside London. The city's scale and infrastructure make it a highlight of the UK marathon calendar.

Time limit: The race uses a six-hour limit to accommodate walkers and slower runners while clearing roads on schedule. The start line opens at 9:00 AM, with waves released until mid-morning. Six hours gives a comfortable pace cutoff of around 13:30 minutes per mile.

Entry Process and Sell-Out Reality

Entry to the Manchester Marathon is highly competitive each year. Places sell out quickly after the ballot or registration opens. The entry process typically includes:

1. **Ballot Entry:** Available months in advance but usually oversubscribed.
2. **Charity Entries:** Allocated to official charity partners.
3. **Guaranteed Entry:** Through time qualification or charity sponsorship.

Regular entries often close months ahead due to demand, with the ballot oversubscribed within days. This means early registration and staying alert to announcements is vital.

Charity Places & Real Costs

Charity entries offer an alternative to raise funds while securing a guaranteed spot. However, the actual fundraising and registration costs aren't trivial. For example, the *MS Trust* charity places require runners to pay a **£40 registration fee** plus a **£500 minimum sponsorship**. This can bring total costs over £540 plus fundraising effort.

Bear in [metrolink old trafford stop](#) mind that charity places also adhere to the same pack collection rules as regular entrants.

Manchester Marathon Pack Collection Rules: No Packs on Race Day

This is a key point to understand well in advance: **Manchester Marathon does not allow race pack pickup on race day.** All runners must collect their bib number, timing chip, and race pack *in-person and in advance*.

Pack collection typically takes place on the Friday and Saturday before race day:

- **Friday:** Usually the first day of pack pickup.
- **Saturday:** The final day to collect your pack.

The exact location and hours are published well in advance by the race organisers, usually near Manchester city centre or the event expo hall. Late pickup or failure to collect your race number before Sunday morning will mean you cannot start the race, as no bibs are issued or replaced on the day.



Common FAQs about pack collection:

- **Can a friend or family member pick up my pack?** Usually the answer is yes, but only with written authorisation and your ID (check the official pack pickup rules).
- **What if I lose my timing chip?** You must inform the race organisers during pack collection hours; replacements on race day are unlikely.
- **Can I run without a chip or bib?** No, this is strictly prohibited.

Manchester Marathon Course Route, Elevation, and Certification History

The Manchester Marathon course is famed for being a relatively flat and fast urban marathon, suitable for PB chasing and first-timers alike. Some runners praise it as a spring contender for personal bests, although large crowds can add complexity.

Route highlights:

- Start near Manchester City Centre, close to Castlefield.
- A southbound loop through Wythenshawe, the city's southern suburb.
- Return through Whalley Range, Chorlton, and Fallowfield.
- Finish back in Manchester city centre on Deansgate.

The official course map and elevation profile are certified by UK Athletics and the Association of International Marathons and Distance Races (AIMS), ensuring accuracy for record and qualification purposes.

Elevation

The elevation gain is modest—around 40 meters over the 26.2 miles—with the most noticeable hills appearing around mile 18 (Chorlton area) but nothing too demanding.

Using GPS and Route Tools

If you want to preview the Manchester Marathon route on your GPS device, you can find third-party GPX files on sites like goandrace.com. However, note that these are unofficial files and not provided by the organisers.

For example, to load a GPX onto a Garmin device:

1. Download the GPX file from goandrace.com to your computer.
2. Connect your Garmin device (e.g. Forerunner 945) to the computer via USB.
3. Copy the GPX file into the 'NewFiles' folder on the device.
4. Safely eject the Garmin and open its navigation menu to load the new course.

Remember: Only use official published data for final race planning. Third-party GPX downloads often miss updated course changes or road closure details.

Summary Table: Manchester Marathon Pack Collection at a Glance

Aspect Details Race Date Sunday 14 April 2024 Race Start Time 9:00 AM (wave starts until late morning) Time Limit Six hours Entry Types Ballot, Charity, Guaranteed (time qualif.) Example Charity Cost (MS Trust) £40 registration + £500 minimum sponsorship Pack Collection Friday & Saturday before race day only Race Day Pack Pickup No packs issued on race day Course Certification UK Athletics & AIMS certified Elevation Gain Approx. 40 metres total

Final Tips to Avoid Race Day Pack Hassles

- **Don't delay pack pickup:** Mark your diary for Friday/Saturday collection days and get your pack before race day.
- **Bring ID:** You'll generally need official photo ID plus your race confirmation.
- **Know your transport options:** The nearest train station to the expo and pack collection hub is *Manchester Piccadilly*, minimising walking distances.
- **Confirm bib pickup rules:** Check official race emails and the Manchester Marathon website for any updates or additional requirements.
- **Prepare for weather:** Pack collection is indoors but be ready for spring showers if queuing outside.
- **Pre-load your GPS route:** Use a reliable device like Garmin with an official or well-reviewed course GPX ahead of the event.

Conclusion

Planning carefully is essential for a great Manchester Marathon experience. The key takeaway for new and returning runners is clear: **Manchester Marathon does not permit any pack collection on race day.** You must collect your bib and timing chip *on the Friday or Saturday before the race* to be eligible to start.

Knowing this avoids last-minute stress and ensures you spend race morning focused on warming up and enjoying the atmosphere rather than scrambling for your race pack. With tens of thousands of participants and a bustling city centre setting, preparation around entry, collection, and course knowledge will set you up for success on race day.

Happy running, and see you in Manchester in April!

