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Beginner 5k training plan 5 weeks

This five-week training plan was made for beginners who have logged a couple months of running and are ready for a new challenge. Image Credit: LIVESTRONG.com Creative You've started running, and it feels good. Good enough that you're considering running a 5K — a smart choice, considering the 5K (or 3.1 miles) is a great distance for new runners and established athletes alike. It's fun and doable, and if you've been walking, running or run/walking two to three days a week for at least two months, you're ready. Building your mileage can still be challenging, and there might be days when you don't feel like running at all, but the reward is worth it: You'll feel fitter and stronger and amazed that a distance or pace that used to be hard now feels comfortable. If you've been toying with the idea of running your first 5K — either on your own or as part of our Best 5K Ever Challenge — you'll get everything you need to build endurance and stay motivated with the five-week training program below, created by Andrew Kastor, coach of the High Sierra Striders in Mammoth Lakes, California. Your goal: Run your first 5K. You're ready if: You've been running, walking or run/walking two to three days a week for at least two months. Image Credit: LIVESTRONG.com Creative Print out your training calendar here or save it on your phone so you'll see it every day and stay on track. This plan builds from an easy run/walk to 2.5 miles of steady running, giving you the distance you'll need to hit the big 3.1 on race day. Each week, you'll increase the amount you run. You'll run four days each week for the next five weeks, with a rest or cross-training day in between. "The every-other-day schedule minimizes the risk of injury and provides a mental break," Kastor says. Alternating running days also ensures rest days fall on weekdays and weekends, so that the plan can fit into your work and family life. Your weekday workouts are all measured by time, because it's often easier to check the clock rather than calculate mileage. Sunday's run is in miles so that you can begin to gain a sense of your pace per mile. "Mile workouts are also confidence builders," Kastor says. "Knowing how far you've run offers assurance that you can cover the distance on race day." Each run begins with five minutes of brisk walking and ends with five minutes of easy walking. You might be tempted to skip these — but warming up and cooling down help you transition into and out of exercise safely, Kastor says. Warm-ups and cooldowns also increase your total workout time, which helps build the endurance you'll need on race day. "For new runners, the goal is to increase the time you spend on your feet while avoiding injury and having fun." All runs should be done at an easy effort — about a 5 on a scale of 1 to 10. Aim for a conversational pace: It's OK to be a bit out of breath, but you should feel like you could still carry on a conversation. Faster, harder running increases injury risk, Kastor says. During the first two weeks, the workouts alternate running with a minute of walking. So, "2 x 5 minutes running, 1 minute walk" means you'll run for 5 minutes, walk for 1 and then repeat. Similarly, "3 x 5" means you do that three times. Those walking breaks are strategic: They help you build distance safely and make adapting to running easier and more enjoyable. These workouts are steady runs done at a comfortable pace. If you're struggling to finish these runs, slow down. Long runs build endurance, the base of all distance running. If you don't live near a walking path that has miles marked, measure the distance in your car, head to a local track (four laps equals one mile), use U.S. Track and Field's mapping tool, download an app like MapMyRun or consider investing in a fitness tracker. Your long runs should closely mimic race conditions, so if you plan to run your 5K outside, try to do these training sessions outdoors, too — but you can also run on a treadmill. Rest days are full days off from exercise. If you're feeling fresh enough for some cross-training activity, do a workout other than running, such as yoga, swimming, biking, dancing or anything else that you enjoy. Just keep this added exercise easy on the days before your long runs so that you don't start these key workouts fatigued. Plans change sometimes. You can rearrange your training for different days of the week to best fit your schedule. Just do your best to preserve the every-other-day routine. This Novice 5K Training Plan is designed for beginning runners or for runners who want to take a low-mileage approach to their training. Never run before? This one's for you. This program works best if you have a goal 5K in 8 weeks. Set that race as your end date and use it as a focus of your training. Even if you do not have a goal 5K at the end of 8 weeks, Hal Higdon's 5K Novice program is a great way to begin your life as a runner. The following 5K novice training program lasts eight weeks and climaxes at the end of Week 8 with a 5K (3.1 mile) race. It is among the easiest programs I offer both online and in books. If you are a beginning runner, just about to take your first running step, this is the program for you. "Do you need to race to call yourself a runner?" I ask in my book, RunFast. Not really. Nevertheless, nailing a fast time in a 5K and comparing it a few months or years later to a time previously run can be an important motivational tool. 5K Novice assumes that you have no major health problems, are in reasonably good shape, and have done at least some jogging or walking. If running 1.5 miles for your first workout in Week 1 seems too difficult, you might want to begin with my Beginning Runner's Guide. If 5K Novice seems too easy, consider 5K intermediate or even 5K advanced. The terms used in the training schedule are somewhat obvious, but let me explain what I mean anyway. Rest: Rest days are as vital as training days. They give your muscles time to recover so you can run again. Actually, your muscles will build in strength as you rest. Run: Don't worry about how fast you run; just cover the distance-or approximately the distance suggested. Ideally, you should be able to run at a pace that allows you to converse comfortably while you do so. Run/Walk: There's nothing in the rules that suggests you have to run continuously, either in training or in the 5K race itself. Run until fatigued; walk until recovered. Walk: Don't worry about how fast you walk, or how much distance you cover. Begin with about 30 minutes and add 5 minutes a week until you peak with a full hour in Week 7. The following schedule is only a guide. Feel free to make minor modifications to suit your work and family schedule. You will find more information on 5K training in my book, RunFast. This easy plan, designed by Jeff Gaudette, head coach for RunnersConnect in Boston, will get you race-ready fast. (Not the competitive type? Just call it your "5 Weeks to a Hot Body" program instead.) The running sessions may be done outdoors or on a treadmill. Running a Farther Distance? Stick with it for a few more weeks and make your high-mileage dreams come true. To do a 10K.... Repeat weeks 1 through 5 from the plan below, adding 1 mile to every workout. For a half marathon... Follow the 10K directions, then repeat it, adding an additional mile to every workout. Cross training: Do any cardio activity, except running, for 30 to 45 minutes. Hiking, the elliptical, stair climbing, swimming, and biking are all great choices. Distance workout: Run far at a moderate pace, which increases your endurance. Recover: Walk or jog at an easy pace. Run-walk: Run at an easy pace, and walk when you need to catch your breath. Speed Workout: Run a short distance fast, recover, then repeat. This type of training increases your quickness and endurance. Strength training: Do 1 or 2 sets of a resistance move for every major muscle group. Stride: Run fast (not quite a sprint) for a short distance. Tempo workout: Run at a steady, moderately hard intensity for the entire session. It increases the amount of time you can spend moving fast. Check out the calendar below for your complete training plan. (If you're printing the plan, be sure to use landscape layout for best resolution.) Download the 5 weeks to 5K training plan here Verywell This four-week 5K training schedule is perfect if you're a beginner with a race scheduled a month away. It's specifically designed for beginner run/walkers who want to build up to continuously running a 5K (3.1 miles) race. If you're a more experienced runner, you should use a four-week intermediate 5K schedule, a four-week advanced 5K schedule, or a two-week 5K training schedule if you are short on time. For best results and, more importantly, to prevent injury, use this plan only if you've been active in the past month. Ideally, to start this training program, you should have either completed the four weeks to 1 mile program, been active a couple of days a week, or can already comfortably run a half mile. With this plan you'll make slight increases in your running distance while making small decreases in your walking distance each week. After four weeks, you'll be able to run the 5K distance without a walking break. Of course, if you want to take a walking break during your 5K, that's OK too. You don't have to do your runs on specific days; however, you should try not to run two days in a row. Either take a complete rest day or do cross-training on the days in between runs. Cross-training can be cycling, yoga, swimming, or any other activity (other than running) that you enjoy. Strength training two to three times a week is also very beneficial for runners. If you find that this training program is progressing too quickly for you, you can add a week and repeat the workouts before moving on to the next week. There isn't an exact pace you should be striving for in your runs (or your 5K race, for that matter) since everyone's fitness and ability vary greatly. As a beginner runner, you should focus on running at a conversational pace, as you build your running endurance and confidence. Conversational pace means that you should be able to speak in complete sentences while running—you shouldn't be breathing too heavily or gasping for air. If you find yourself out of breath, slow your pace or take a walk break. If you're running on a treadmill and you're not sure where to start your pace, begin at 4.0 mph and make slight increases until you feel like you've reached your comfortable, conversational pace. Try our pace calculator to track your times and celebrate your improvements. If you follow this week-by-week plan, you should be able to complete a 5K race by the end of week four, and without stopping to walk. Day 1: Run 10 minutes, walk 1 minute, repeatDay 2: Rest or cross-trainDay 3: Run 12 minutes, walk 1 minute, repeatDay 4: RestDay 5: Run 13 minutes, walk 1 minute, repeatDay 6: Rest or cross-trainDay 7: Rest Day 1: Run 15 minutes, walk 1 minute, repeatDay 2: Rest or cross-trainDay 3: Run 17 minutes, walk 1 minute, run 7 minDay 4: RestDay 5: Run 19 minutes, walk 1 minute, run 7 minDay 6: Rest or cross-trainDay 7: Rest Day 1: Run 20 minutes, walk 1 minute, run 6 minutesDay 2: Rest or cross-trainDay 3: Run 24 minutesDay 4: RestDay 5: Run 26 minutesDay 6: Rest or cross-trainDay 7: Rest Day 1: Run 28 minutesDay 2: Rest or cross-trainDay 3: Run 30 minutesDay 4: RestDay 5: Run 20 minutesDay 6: RestDay 7: Race! Run 3.1 miles As you prepare for your 5K, here are some tips to make sure you're race-ready. You don't have to carbohydrate load for a 5K race. Overeating may lead to gastrointestinal distress or other issues. Just eat normal-size portions of a regular, healthy dinner the night before. Try to stick to foods that you've eaten—nothing new. The golden rule of racing is nothing new on race day. Make sure that you're wearing clothes and gear that you've already tested during training runs. You don't want to be surprised by uncomfortable clothes or painful chafing issues on race day. If you've never raced before, learn how to put your race bib on before the race. In a shorter race like a 5K, it's a good idea to do a warmup, so you slowly raise your heart rate and get your muscles warmed up. About 15 minutes before the race start, do a slow jog for about five minutes or do some warmup exercises, then walk briskly to the starting line. Training for a 5K is a very achievable goal for beginner runners, but that doesn't mean that you won't run into challenges along the way. Do your best to stay motivated to keep going with your training. And when you're not feeling motivated, rely on your discipline and habits to train anyway. If you're nervous about your race, you're not alone. There are plenty of commonly asked questions about 5K racing that you can have answered beforehand. Once you successfully run your race, perhaps you'll be ready for your next challenge. Try a beginner 10K or beginner half marathon. Thanks for your feedback! What are your concerns?

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