RW

INTERMEDIATE 5K TRAINING PLAN

This plan is for runners who regularly run four to five times per week; can tackle a total weekly mileage of at least 13 miles and a long run of at least four miles; and who have finished a 5K race and want to finish faster.

Each week you'll have four days of running, two days of optional cross-training, and one day reserved for rest. Your weekly schedule will include a long run that starts at five miles and peaks at eight miles in the sixth week of training. The program also includes hill workouts to build leg and lung strength, and loosely structured interval workouts to build speed.

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	DAY 1 ☐	DAY 2 ☐	DAY 3 ☐	DAY 4 ☐	DAY 5 ☐	DAY 6 ☐	DAY 7 ☐
WEEK 1	2 miles Easy Run	3.5 miles Hills	Rest or Cross-Train	3.5 miles Easy Run	Rest	5 miles Long Run	Rest or Cross-Train
	DAY 8 ☐	**DAY 9** ☐	**DAY 10** ☐	**DAY 11** ☐	**DAY 12** ☐	**DAY 13** ☐	**DAY 14** ☐
WEEK 2	2 miles Easy Run	4 miles Hills	Rest or Cross-Train	4 miles Fartlek	Rest	6 miles Long Run	Rest or Cross-Train
	DAY 15 ☐	**DAY 16** ☐	**DAY 17** ☐	**DAY 18** ☐	**DAY 19** ☐	**DAY 20** ☐	**DAY 21** ☐
WEEK 3	2 miles Easy Run	4 miles Hills	Rest or Cross-Train	4 miles Fartlek	Rest	5 miles Long Run	Rest or Cross-Train
	DAY 22 ☐	**DAY 23** ☐	**DAY 24** ☐	**DAY 25** ☐	**DAY 26** ☐	**DAY 27** ☐	**DAY 28** ☐
WEEK 4	2 miles Easy Run	4.5 miles Hills	Rest or Cross-Train	4.25 miles Track	Rest	7 miles Long Run	Rest or Cross-Train
	DAY 29 ☐	**DAY 30** ☐	**DAY 31** ☐	**DAY 32** ☐	**DAY 33** ☐	**DAY 34** ☐	**DAY 35** ☐
WEEK 5	3 miles Easy Run	5 miles Hills	Rest or Cross-Train	4.75 miles Track	Rest	5 miles Long Run	Rest or Cross-Train
	DAY 36 ☐	**DAY 37** ☐	**DAY 38** ☐	**DAY 39** ☐	**DAY 40** ☐	**DAY 41** ☐	**DAY 42** ☐
WEEK 6	3 miles Easy Run	5 miles Hills	Rest or Cross-Train	4 miles Track	Rest	8 miles Long Run	Rest
	DAY 43 ☐	**DAY 44** ☐	**DAY 45** ☐	**DAY 46** ☐	**DAY 47** ☐	**DAY 48** ☐	**DAY 49** ☐
WEEK 7	3 miles Easy Run	5 miles Easy Run	Rest or Cross-Train	4.75 miles Track	Rest	6 miles Long Run	Rest or Cross-Train
	DAY 50 ☐	**DAY 51** ☐	**DAY 52** ☐	**DAY 53** ☐	**DAY 54** ☐	**DAY 55** ☐	**DAY 56** ☐
WEEK 8	3 miles Easy Run	4 miles Fartlek	Rest	3 miles Easy Run	Rest	2 miles Easy Run	**RACE DAY!**

THE WORKOUTS

▶ **Easy Run**

These workouts should feel just as they sound: easy. You want to run at an effort that allows you to have a conversation. If you're huffing and puffing, you're going too fast. Try to start them extra slow and light so you can finish strong. These allow you to increase your time on feet and weekly mileage, building endurance while lowering risk of injury. They'll also strengthen your lungs and your legs.

▶ **Hills**

Run the day's mileage on the hilliest route you can find. Don't worry too much about the length or grade of the hills. Just get a variety of inclines and descents. Hills help you boost your leg and lung power. Pay attention to the suggested effort for each hill day on the plan. Lean slightly forward from the ankles and keep your chest tall on the uphills. On the downhills, think "light, quick steps." Don't let your feet slap the pavement, and don't brake with your legs.

▶ **Cross-Train**

Cross-training can include strength workouts, cycling, swimming, yoga, exercise class, the elliptical trainer, rowing machine, or any physical activity you love that isn't running or walking. These workouts give the muscles you use in walking and running a chance to recover, while strengthening other parts of your body, boosting all-around fitness and preventing injuries. Plus, it helps prevent burnout to keep you running strong and injury-free.

▶ **Rest**

Take the day off! You can use this time to relax on the couch, do some meditation, or incorporate light mobility work or an easy yoga class. These days give your body a chance to recover from the hard work you put in, which allows you to progress, and they get you ready for the next run.

▶ **Long Run**

These workouts are all about building endurance and teaching you to run farther so you can finish your race feeling strong. Whenever you're pushing your body farther, it's extra important that you start at a pace that feels conservative. That way, you have the energy to finish feeling good. Run at a pace you can have a conversation, and start slower than you think you need to.

▶ **Fartlek**

Warm up with 1 mile of easy running. Then alternate between 1 minute of running at a pace that feels like your 5K pace, and recovering with 3 minutes of easy running. Repeat this cycle until you cover 2 miles. Cool down with 1 mile of easy running. You want to fully recover after the 1-minute bout of hard running before you start the next hard effort. At the end of the workout, you should feel invigorated, not demolished.

▶ **Track**

These are your speediest speed workouts. They're designed to get you faster via interval training. After an easy 1-mile warmup, you'll run either 400- or 800-meter repeats (that's 0.25 or 0.5 miles) at your goal 5K pace for a designated number of reps, with 400 meters of recovery between. Then you'll cooldown with another easy mile. Follow the workout prescriptions to gain the most benefits, knowing some days you won't hit the paces perfectly.

WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4	WEEK 5	WEEK 6	WEEK 7	WEEK 8

Day 1:   2 miles Easy Run

Welcome to the Runner's World 5K plan for intermediate runners! Your training plan starts today with 2 miles of easy running.

Day 2:   3.5 miles Hills

Run 3.5 miles today, and try to incorporate as many hills as you can. Run the hills with a steady level of effort. On the way up, focus on trying to maintain the same level of effort—the same rate of breathing and rate of leg turnover—as you do on level ground.

Day 3:   Rest or Cross-Train

For each day that suggests a rest day or cross-training, check in with your body. Note any aches or if you're feeling extra fatigued. If so, take the day off. If you're feeling good, go for your favorite cross-training activity.

Day 4:   3.5 Miles Easy Run

Run 3.5 miles at your easy pace today. Many people make the mistake of going out too fast and running out of energy—or getting hurt—before they go the distance for the day. To avoid that, try to get into the habit of starting slowly so you finish strong.

Day 5:   Rest

It may be tempting to run on rest days, but it's best not to. Give your body a chance to recover from the miles you've logged and get energized for the long run.

Day 6:   5 miles Long Run

Run 5 miles today at your easy pace. Because you're spending more time on your feet than you typically do, be sure to start slowly.

Day 7:   Rest or Cross-Train

Cross-train today at an easy effort or take a day of complete rest. Try different kinds of cross-training activities until you find the one that works best for you. Once you find it, stick with it.

Day 8:   2 miles Easy Run

Welcome to week 2 of training! Your runs will follow a similar pattern to last week, but you'll extend your hill and long runs. You'll also have your first fast workout—loosely structured speedwork called fartlek, which is Swedish for speed play.

Today, run 2 miles easy.

Day 9:   4 miles Hills

Run 4 miles and incorporate as many hills as you can.

Day 10:   Rest or Cross-Train

Take the day off or hop on the bike, elliptical, or into the pool.

Day 11:   4 Fartlek

Today is your first speed session. You'll cover 4 miles total.

That includes:
- 1-mile warmup
- 2 miles, alternating between 1 minute at race pace and 3 minutes of easy running
- 1-mile cooldown

Day 12:   Rest

Today is your day off!

Day 13:   6 miles Long Run

Today your long run inches up to 6 miles. Remember to start slowly, with the idea that you'll finish feeling strong.

Day 14:   Rest or Cross-Train

If you're cross-training on a rest day, don't feel like you need to up the intensity or lengthen the workout in order to compensate for the fact that you're not running. On these optional cross-training days, you should still be giving your body a break from the rigors of the running workouts. Just focus on elevating your heart rate and loosening up areas that are stiff and sore from the week's runs.

Day 15: 2 miles Easy Run

Welcome to week 3 of training! This week your training will follow the same pattern as last week, and you'll maintain the same weekly mileage. Today, run 2 miles at your easy, comfortable, conversational pace.

Day 16: 4 miles Hills

Run 4 miles and incorporate as many hills as you can.

Day 17: Rest or Cross-Train

Even when you're cross-training, it's best to get into the habit of exercising at the same time each day. If it's built into your schedule, you're less likely to skip a workout.

Day 18: 4 miles Fartlek

Today is your second speed session. You'll cover 4 miles total.

That includes:
- 1-mile warmup
- 2 miles, alternating between 1 minute at race pace, and 3 minutes of easy running
- 1-mile cooldown

Day 19: Rest

It's time to take a recovery day.

Day 20: 5 miles Long Run

Run 5 miles at your easy pace today.

Day 21: Rest or Cross-Train

Pace and heart rate don't really translate from running to gym machines. So it's best to do any given activity—cycling, swimming, elliptical or rowing machine—for the same amount of time that you'd spend running at the same level of effort. So if you'd normally run for 30 minutes at an easy effort, substitute 30 minutes on the elliptical at an easy effort.

WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	**WEEK 4**	WEEK 5	WEEK 6	WEEK 7	WEEK 8

Day 22: 2 miles Easy Run

Welcome to week 4 of training! Now that you've spent a few weeks building your foundation of fitness, it's time to step up your efforts. Your workouts will follow the same pattern as last week, but your hill and long runs will get longer. You'll also hit the track for some speed sessions. You can do these workouts on the treadmill or roads, but tracks are ideal since they're flat, traffic-free, and the distance is measured.

Today you'll run 2 miles at an easy effort. It may be tempting to lengthen or speed up these short, easy runs, but they are designed to help you recover. It's best to save your energy for the quality workouts, like track and long runs, that help you elevate your speed and endurance to the next level.

Day 23: 4.5 miles Hills

Today, run 4.5 miles on a hilly route that incorporates a variety of inclines and descents. If you're feeling strong and injury-free, you may want to challenge yourself more on today's hill workout. On the climbs, try to maintain the same pace that you run on level ground. Be aware of how the increased effort feels as you head up the hill.

Maintain good running form—push up and off the hill, keep your eyes on the horizon, keep your fists loose, and make sure your jaw stays unclenched. You don't want to hunch over or be spent by the time you get to the top.

Day 24: Rest or Cross-Train

You might want to rest today to recover from yesterday's hill workout and save your energy for tomorrow's speed session.

Day 25: 4.25 miles Track

Today you'll hit the track for some speedwork. You'll cover 4.25 miles total for the day.

The workout includes:
- 1-mile warmup
- 5 x 400 meters at 5K pace with 400-meter recovery
- 1-mile cooldown

▶ For guidance on finding your goal pace, check out our guide to pace training.

Day 26: Rest

Take the day off!

Day 27: 7 miles Long Run

Run 7 miles today at your easy pace.

Day 28: Rest or Cross-Train

Check in with yourself to determine if you need the day off or can conquer your cross-training.

Day 29: 3 miles Easy Run

Welcome to week 5 of training. This week, three of your runs will be longer. You'll hit hills again tomorrow and head back to the track on Thursday. Your long run drops back to 5 miles.

Day 30: 5 miles Hills

Today, run 5 miles on a hilly route that incorporates a variety of inclines and descents. Once again, you can challenge yourself on the climbs by trying to maintain the same pace that you run on level ground. Be aware of how the increased effort feels as you head up the hill. Try to use some control as you head downhill. While descending feels easy aerobically, it's actually harder on your leg muscles than running uphill. Avoid braking with your legs, which can cause injury.

Day 31: Rest or Cross-Train

Focus on recovery today if you need it.

Day 32: 4.75 miles Track

Today you'll head back to the track for speedwork. You'll cover 4.75 miles total for the day.

The workout includes:
- 1-mile warmup
- 6 x 400 meters at 5K pace with 400-meter recovery
- 1-mile cooldown

Day 33: Rest

When rest follows difficult bouts of work, it lets your body adapt to the work and improve.

Day 34: 5 miles Long Run

Today, run 5 miles at an easy pace. When you finish feeling good, you're more likely to feel excited about the next day's workout. If you go out too fast, and run out of gas midrun, it's going to be that much harder to be enthusiastic about the next day's workout.

Day 35: Rest or Cross-Train

Turn to your favorite cross-training activity today, like strength training. Or take the day off.

Day 36:   3 miles Easy Run

Welcome to week 6 of training! This week you'll have some new challenges. On Thursday's track workout, you'll double the length of your fast intervals to a half mile. This will help you learn to hold your race pace for a longer time, and it'll boost your aerobic fitness. Your long run will inch up to 8 miles. This will help you develop the endurance you need to finish strong on race day.

Today, run 3 miles at an easy pace.

Day 37:   5 miles Hills

Hills are optional on today's workout. Listen to your body and back off if you notice any unusual aches and pains. Save your energy for Thursday's track workout.

Day 38:   Rest or Cross-Train

Bored by cross-training? Liven up your routine with one of the following workouts on a single machine or on a combination of them. Warm up, then "run" on the elliptical machine, bike, or rowing machine at a very easy pace or resistance for two minutes. Increase the intensity or resistance for two minutes. Repeat that sequence three or four times, then cool down.

Day 39:   4 miles Track

Today you'll head back to the track for speedwork. You'll challenge yourself with a new workout, stretching your bouts of fast running to a half mile. You'll cover 4 miles total for the day.

The workout includes:
- 1-mile warmup
- 3 x 800 meters at 5K pace with 400-meter recovery
- 1-mile cooldown

Day 40:   Rest

Take the day off!

Day 41:   8 miles Long Run

Run 8 miles easy today. Treat your long runs this week and next week as race-day rehearsals. Experiment with different foods before your long training runs so you know what works for your system and what doesn't. There's no need to carb load. But plan to eat a 200- to 300-calorie meal 1 to 2 hours before the race, focusing on easy-to-digest carbs.

▶ For what to eat before a 5K run, underline check out our guide.

Day 42:   Rest

Today is a full day off so you can feel fresh for race day!

WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4	WEEK 5	WEEK 6	**WEEK 7**	WEEK 8

Day 43: 3 miles Easy Run

Welcome to week 7 of training! This week you'll follow the same pattern as last week. The only change is that your track workout will be longer.

Today, run 3 miles easy.

Day 44: 5 miles Easy Run

Today is 5 miles at an easy effort. If you tend to be a slave to the numbers, take a tech time-out and run by feel. Sometimes, trying to boost the pace your training watch is displaying can spur you to override important signals your body is sending about how hard you're working. By leaving the devices at home, you can continuously evaluate factors like your breathing, form, and how hard it feels like you're working.

Day 45: Rest or Cross-Train

Take the day to relax, hop on the elliptical or bike, or grab some dumbbells for weight training.

Day 46: 4.75 miles Track

Today you'll head back to the track for speedwork. You'll challenge yourself again by stretching your bouts of fast running to a half mile. You'll cover 4.75 miles total for the day.

The workout includes:
- 1-mile warmup
- 4 x 800 meters at 5K pace with 400-meter recovery
- 1-mile cooldown

Day 47: Rest

Rest today to recover from yesterday's speed workout and save your energy for tomorrow's long run.

Day 48: 6 miles Long Run

Today is your final long run before the race. You may want to treat it as a race-day rehearsal. Try to do the run at the same time as your race start, as the timing will affect your prerace fueling, hydration, and bathroom schedule. Test out the gear, clothing, and shoes you plan to use in the race to make sure they all work well for you. If you can, run on the race course. The time you take for race-day prep now will reduce your stress in the days before your goal event.

Day 49: Rest or Cross-Train

Check in with your body again to determine your best workout (or lack thereof) today. We're getting close to race day, so don't be afraid to take the time off!

WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4	WEEK 5	WEEK 6	WEEK 7	**WEEK 8**

Day 50: 3 miles Easy Run

Welcome to race week! You made it! Do the runs that are scheduled this week, and resist the urge to cram in extra mileage or speed: It can only hurt your performance on race day and increase your chances of getting hurt. This week you'll have just three short workouts and a speed workout. Spend the rest of the time resting for the race.

Today, run 3 miles at your easy pace. It should feel comfortable enough to maintain a conversation.

Day 51: 4 miles Fartlek

Your final bout of speedwork will get your mind and body race ready.

The workout includes:
- 1-mile warmup
- 2 miles, alternating between 1 minute at race pace and 3 minutes of easy running
- 1-mile cooldown

Day 52: Rest

It's not too early to start getting prepared for race weekend. Lay out the gear and clothing you plan to use for the race. Write down a schedule for yourself for the 24 hours before race day, including details like the times you'll eat, sleep, and leave for the race. Take some time to reflect on the goals you hope to reach on race day. It's a good idea to have a few different goals, including some you feel 100 percent confident you can accomplish, like finishing the race feeling good.

Day 53: 3 miles Easy Run

Run 3 miles today at your easy, comfortable, conversational pace. If you're feeling nervous about the race, take some time to review your training log. Count up all the miles you've logged preparing for your goal event. Draw confidence from all the distance you've covered, and all the occasions when you pushed your body farther and faster. Consider the race to be a victory lap for all your hard work.

Day 54: Rest

You're close enough to race day to start checking the weather forecast and finalizing what to wear.

▶ If you need help choosing attire, check out our What to Wear tool.

Day 55: 2 miles Easy Run

Nice and EASY shakeout run today; save your energy for tomorrow's race.

Day 56: Race Day

Good luck! Follow the prerun routine that's worked well for you in training, and try to get to the starting line at least one hour before the start so you have time to hit the bathroom and take care of last-minute details before the starting gun fires. Walk and jog to warm up. And remember to ease into your pace.

After the race, walk to cool down. Have a meal with carbs and protein within 30 minutes of finishing the race to help repair muscle tissue and restock your spent energy stores. And make sure to celebrate!

▶ After you've recovered, consider training with Runner's World again. Check out the other plans we've designed for 5Ks, 10Ks, half marathons, and marathons.