



**8 - W E E K**

# BEGINNER 5K TRAINING PLAN

## RUN YOUR FIRST 5K

Before you start this plan, you should be able to run 30 minutes without stopping. This plan is also designed for someone who has been exercising regularly—about four times a week—for at least two months, averaging at least nine miles a week. You should be able to conquer a long run of three miles.

Each week, you'll have three short weekday runs and a longer run. You'll have one day reserved for rest, and two days that you can use for cross-training or rest, depending on how you feel.

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# BEGINNER 5K TRAINING PLAN



	DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4	DAY 5	DAY 6	DAY 7
WEEK 1	1.5 miles Easy Run	2 miles Easy Run	Rest or Cross-Train	2 miles Easy Run	Rest	3 miles Long Run	Rest or Cross-Train
WEEK 2	DAY 8	DAY 9	DAY 10	DAY 11	DAY 12	DAY 13	DAY 14
	1.5 miles Easy Run	2.5 miles Easy Run	Rest or Cross-Train	2.5 miles Easy Run	Rest	3.5 miles Long Run	Rest or Cross-Train
WEEK 3	DAY 15	DAY 16	DAY 17	DAY 18	DAY 19	DAY 20	DAY 21
	1.5 miles Easy Run	2.5 miles Hills	Rest or Cross-Train	2.5 miles Easy Run	Rest	3.5 miles Long Run	Rest or Cross-Train
WEEK 4	DAY 22	DAY 23	DAY 24	DAY 25	DAY 26	DAY 27	DAY 28
	1.5 miles Easy Run	2.5 miles Hills	Rest or Cross-Train	3 miles Fartlek	Rest	4 miles Long Run	Rest or Cross-Train
WEEK 5	DAY 29	DAY 30	DAY 31	DAY 32	DAY 33	DAY 34	DAY 35
	2 miles Easy Run	3 miles Hills	Rest or Cross-Train	3 miles Fartlek	Rest	4 miles Long Run	Rest or Cross-Train
WEEK 6	DAY 36	DAY 37	DAY 38	DAY 39	DAY 40	DAY 41	DAY 42
	2 miles Easy Run	3 miles Hills	Rest or Cross-Train	3 miles Fartlek	Rest	4.5 miles Long Run	Rest or Cross-Train
WEEK 7	DAY 43	DAY 44	DAY 45	DAY 46	DAY 47	DAY 48	DAY 49
	2 miles Easy Run	3 miles Hills	Rest or Cross-Train	3 miles Fartlek	Rest	4.5 miles Long Run	Rest or Cross-Train
WEEK 8	DAY 50	DAY 51	DAY 52	DAY 53	DAY 54	DAY 55	DAY 56
	2 miles Easy Run	3 miles Fartlek	Rest or Cross-Train	2 miles Easy Run	Rest	Rest	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.

### ► 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 a 1/2 mile of easy running, or 2 laps around the track. Then alternate between 1 minute of running at a faster pace, and recovering with 3 minutes of easy running. Repeat this cycle as many times as you need to until you cover 2 miles. After each 1-minute bout of hard running, you want to recover fully before you start the next hard effort. Cool down with a 1/2 mile of easy running. At the end of the workout, you should feel invigorated, not demolished.

### ► Hills

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. 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. On the downhills, think "light, quick steps." Don't let your feet slap the pavement, and don't brake with your legs.

WEEK 1

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## Day 1: 1.5 miles Easy Run

Welcome to week one of the Beginners 5K plan! Remember today is about keeping it easy for 1.5 miles.

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## Day 2: 2 miles Easy Run

Use this week to find a time of day that works for you to run consistently, and a route where you can clock 2 easy miles for today.

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## Day 3: Rest or Cross-Train

If you're feeling good, try out new cross-training workouts to find what you like best and what makes you want to keep coming back. An excellent choice: strength training.

► [Check out our complete list of cross-training activities for runners.](#)

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## Day 4: 2 miles Easy Run

Make sure to keep the effort light and start slow so you finish strong.

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## Day 5: Rest

Give your body a chance to recover from the miles you've logged, and get energized for tomorrow's long run.

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## Day 6: 3 miles Long Run

Your first long run is 3 miles. It's extra important that you start at a pace that feels conservative, so that you have the energy to finish feeling good.

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## Day 7: Rest or Cross-Train

Sticking with one cross-training activity makes it easier for you to track your progress and more fairly compare one workout to the next.

► If you need weight training inspiration, [check out our full list of strength workouts for runners.](#)

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## Day 8: 1.5 miles Easy Run

This week you'll build on the foundation you laid down last week, and you'll add a 1/2 mile to two of your runs. As you run 2.5 miles today, practice the talk test to make sure you're going easy.

► [Here's how to do the talk test.](#)

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## Day 9: 2.5 miles Easy Run

Check in to make sure you're keeping a conversational effort.

► Having trouble keeping effort low? [Try these coach-backed tips on slowing down.](#)

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## Day 10: Rest or Cross-Train

Remember, you can always take an easy walk today.

► Or, [try these beginner-friendly bodyweight exercises.](#)

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## Day 11: 2.5 miles Easy Run

Keep it easy for 2.5 miles. Don't let boredom derail your training by switching things up.

► Map out a new route or find a scenic trail so you feel refreshed by [trying one of these apps.](#)

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## Day 12: Rest

Take it easy today.

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## Day 13: 3.5 miles Long Run

Remember to start slowly. This run will boost your fitness as well as your confidence; after you cover 3.5 miles today, you can feel assured that you'll be able to go the 3.1-mile distance on race day.

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## Day 14: Rest or Cross-Train

Even when you're cross-training, it's smart to get into the habit of exercising at the same time each day to stay consistent.

WEEK 1

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**WEEK 3**

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**Day 15:** 1.5 miles Easy Run

This week your daily and weekly mileage remain the same, but we up the intensity a little. For today's run, make sure you can hold a conversation.

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**Day 16:** 2.5 miles Hills

Run 2.5 miles today and try to incorporate as many hills as you can. It's a good idea to periodically scan your body to release areas of tension. Keep your gaze straight ahead on the horizon. Be sure to keep your fists loose, unclench your jaw, and pull your shoulders away from your ears. As you're running uphill, push your feet up and off the ground, and think of the road rising to meet you.

► [Check out our full guide on running hills.](#)

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**Day 17:** Rest or Cross-Train

Don't be surprised if you feel a little muscle soreness, especially in your quads and calves, over the next day or two after your hill run. Take the rest day if you're sore.

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**Day 18:** 2.5 miles Easy Run

Run at your comfortable, conversational pace.

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**Day 19:** Rest

Embrace your off day.

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**Day 20:** 3.5 miles Long Run

You're repeating your long run mileage from last week. Keep it easy once again.

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**Day 21:** Rest or Cross-Train

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 or walk for 30 minutes at an easy effort, substitute 30 minutes on the elliptical at an easy effort.

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**Day 22:** 1.5 miles Easy Run

You'll up your mileage just slightly this week, and officially add in your first speed session. Today, keep your effort light for 1.5 miles.

**Day 23:** 2.5 miles Hills

Repeat the same hill workout you did last week, covering 2.5 miles, and keeping effort steady and form strong.

**Day 24:** Rest or Cross-Train

It's a good idea to rest today to recover from yesterday's hilly run and save your energy for tomorrow's speed workout. But if you're feeling good, you can also cross train, keeping effort easy.

**Day 25:** 3 miles Fartlek

You've made it to your first speed workout! Focus on effort throughout your miles.

- ½-mile warmup
- 2 miles fartlek (alternating between 1 min fast and 3 min easy)
- ½-mile cooldown

**Day 26:** Rest

Rest today to recover from yesterday's hard workout.

**Day 27:** 4 miles Long Run

Today you'll bump up your long run to 4 miles. It may sound intimidating, but it's just a half mile more than you did last week. If at all possible, do some of your training on the race course. Previewing the hills, turns, and narrow spaces will help you feel more confident and relaxed going into the event. If you're not able to run on the course, look at the course map and elevation chart, which the race should have posted on the website. Try to do some runs that simulate the same pattern of elevation change that you'll face in the race.

**Day 28:** Rest or Cross-Train

Rest today to recover from yesterday's long run.

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**Day 29:** 2 miles Easy Run

Your workouts will follow the same pattern as last week, with slightly more mileage. You'll maintain a slow and steady pace today for 2 miles.

**Day 30:** 3 miles Hills

Run 3 miles on the hilliest course you can find, keeping effort steady. Climbing longer hills makes the body recruit muscles when they're fatigued, which helps develop your finishing speed. As you approach an incline, shorten your stride while maintaining the same cadence. Small, quick steps will help reduce the effort.

**Day 31:** Rest or Cross-Train

Rest, cross train, or walk for 15 to 20 minutes.

**Day 32:** 3 miles Fartlek

This week's speed workout will follow the same pattern as last week:

- ½-mile warmup
- 2 miles fartlek (alternating between 1 min fast and 3 min easy)
- ½-mile cooldown

**Day 33:** Rest

Rest today to recover from yesterday's speed session.

**Day 34:** 4 miles Long Run

Remember to maintain a pace that feels easy to sustain over the 4-mile distance.

**Day 35:** Rest or Cross-Train

Check in with how your body feels to determine if you should rest or cross train today.

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## Day 36: 2 miles Easy Run

This week will follow the same pattern as last week, but you'll add a half mile to your long run. Today is all about conversational pace for 2 miles.

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## Day 37: 3 miles Hills

Run 3 miles today on the hilliest course you can find. Keep your effort steady throughout and remember to run relaxed, with tall posture, shoulders down and back, breathing easy.

► [For more on bettering your run form, check out our tips.](#)

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## Day 38: Rest or Cross-Train

Avoid training hard on a day when you're fatigued or feeling the soreness of an injury about to happen. If you feel overly sluggish or notice twinges, aches, or pains, ease up.

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## Day 39: 3 miles Fartlek

This week's speed workout will follow the same pattern as last week:

- ½-mile warmup
  - 2 miles fartlek (alternating between 1 min fast and 3 min easy)
  - ½-mile cooldown
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## Day 40: Rest

Rest today to recover from yesterday's speed session. You'll be pushing yourself farther tomorrow, so you'll want to save your energy for the effort.

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## Day 41: 4.5 miles Long Run

It's time to add another 1/2 mile to your long run. Start slowly, with the idea of finishing strong.

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## Day 42: Rest or Cross-Train

Check in with how your body feels to determine if you should rest or cross train today.

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**Day 43:** 2 miles Easy Run

This week you'll repeat the same pattern as last week. Next week is race week, so you want to focus on maintaining all the fitness you've built, and staying injury-free for the race. Keep your 2 miles easy today.

**Day 44:** 3 miles Hills

Just like last week, run 3 miles on the hilliest course you can find. Maintain a strong posture and a steady effort as you run up and down the hills—don't try to sprint to the top.

**Day 45:** Rest or Cross-Train

Check in with how your body feels to determine if you should rest or cross train today.

**Day 46:** 3 miles Fartlek

This week's speed workout will follow the same pattern as last week:

- ½-mile warmup
- 2 miles fartlek (alternating between 1 min fast and 3 min easy)
- ½-mile cooldown

**Day 47:** Rest

Don't underestimate the impact that the stress of work and your personal life can have on your runs. All those factors can affect your ability to recover properly. If you don't take time for proper R&R, your body won't adapt to the stress of training, and you won't get stronger or faster. So take these rest days.

**Day 48:** 4.5 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.

**Day 49:** Rest or Cross-Train

Check in with how your body feels to determine if you should rest or cross train today.

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## Day 50: 2 miles Easy Run

Welcome to race week! Do the runs that are scheduled this week, including today's easy run, 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. Reduce your stress as much as possible heading to the starting line. This week you'll have just two short workouts and a speed workout. Spend the rest of the time resting for the race.

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## Day 51: 3 miles Fartlek

This week's speed workout will follow the same pattern as last week:

- ½-mile warmup
  - 2 miles fartlek (alternating between 1 min fast and 3 min easy)
  - ½-mile cooldown
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## Day 52: Rest

Start getting prepared for race weekend. 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 your motivation for training and the goals you hope to reach on race day, making sure you have a few different goals.

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## Day 53: 2 miles Easy Run

Run 2 miles today at your easy, comfortable, conversational pace. If you're feeling nervous about the race, take some time to review your training log. Draw confidence from all the distance you've covered, and all the occasions when you pushed your body farther and faster than it's gone before. Consider the race to be a victory lap for all the hard work you did in training.

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## Day 54: Rest

Use this rest day to check the weather forecast and think about what to wear.

► Need help? [Try our what to wear tool.](#)

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## Day 55: Rest

Recover from the miles you've done and save your energy for tomorrow's race.

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## 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 starting. Walk and jog to warm up. Start slowly, with the idea of gradually gaining speed and finishing feeling strong. And make sure to celebrate afterward!

► After you've recovered, consider training with Runner's World again. Check out [runnersworld.com/plans](http://runnersworld.com/plans) to see the other plans we've designed for 5Ks, 10Ks, half marathons, and marathons.