

# Couch to 5k Guide



This guide is for those of you who have done very little running or NO running at all. Although a 5K is a short distance (3.1 miles), it is still long enough of a race to require proper training and planning before jumping in. Although it is entirely possible to enter a 5K and walk or jog your way to the finish, this guide isn't for that type of person. This couch to 5K guide is for those of you that want to give your best effort and not just show up for the T-Shirt. Although it does not sound like a long time, 6 weeks is ample time to get your body in shape for a 5K and also happens to be the length of the Couch to 5K training plan.

## Things to Keep In Mind:

- ◆ If you need more build-up time, take brisk walks on your off days or a few extra days per week.
- ◆ Make sure you alternate between run days and off days, especially in the beginning, to give your body plenty of recovery time.
- ◆ Good running shoes go a long way! If you find yourself getting leg cramps or shin splints, take a look at your shoes. If they are looking ragged, try getting a new pair. A nice pair of good fitting running shoes makes a big difference.
- ◆ Don't be afraid to work up a sweat! The only way to improve is to work harder than what is comfortable. Don't let comfort get in the way of your goals.
- ◆ Always warm up. Taking the time to stretch and warm up your legs with a jog/walk is important.

## Race Day Tips:

- ◆ Do NOT try anything new on race day. This includes new shoes, shoelaces, socks, foods and drinks, shirts, etc. If you do want to try something new, be sure to do it on training runs at least two to three weeks before the race.
- ◆ Eat a light, low-fiber low-fat, high-carbohydrate meal two to three hours before the race. For example, a bagel with jelly, oatmeal with raisins, or cereal with a banana. Test what works for you during training.
- ◆ Hydrate before the race. It's difficult to drink while running. One tip is to squeeze the cup mostly closed and take small sips. When you're done, toss the cup on the ground if you've passed the trash can. The race official will pick it up.

## Starting Line Etiquette:

As the runners line up, stay towards the back right side of the pack so that the competitive types don't have to try and navigate around you. Remember, your first 5K is solely about finishing the race. Tell yourself it is okay to be passed by other runners.

## Pace Yourself:

Don't get struck with a case of race day adrenaline and pack mentality and find yourself one of those runners who will become walkers, huffing and puffing and wondering why they couldn't finish running the race they spent months preparing for. The best way to overcome this is through your training routine.

During your 5K training runs, it's important to find a pace that works for you. The best way to do this is to run your 5K and begin counting your steps as though they were beating a rhythm on a drum. If counting doesn't work for you then find a song you like that matches the rhythm of your feet. If music is not your thing, then look into getting a heart rate monitor and set your pace according to your heart rate.

On race day, when everyone else bolts off the starting line, you can focus your mind on counting steps, singing, or monitoring your heart rate and gently settle into a pace that will allow you to successfully run the race.

# Couch To 5K Training Schedule

Week	Workout 1	Workout 2	Workout 3	Workout 4
1	Start off at a nice easy pace and run for 6 minutes at a pace you can handle. Take 2 minutes to walk or jog to lower the heart rate, and then repeat this cycle.	Run for 8 minutes at a pace you can handle and again take 2 minutes to walk or jog until your heart rate slows. Repeat this one time for a total of 20 minutes.	Start off at a nice easy pace and run for 6 minutes at a pace you can handle. Take 2 minutes to walk or jog to lower the heart rate, and then repeat this cycle.	
2	Run for 8 minutes at a nice pace and walk/jog for 2 minutes. Repeat once for a total of 20 minutes.	Run for 10 minutes and walk/jog for 2 minutes. Repeat once for a total of 24 minutes.	Run for 8 minutes at a nice pace and walk/jog for 2 minutes. Repeat once for a total of 20 minutes.	
3	Run for 12 minutes and walk for 3 minutes. Repeat once for a total of 30 minutes.	Run for 15 minutes straight and then stop and rest for 5 minutes. Repeat the 15 minute run for a total of 30 minutes of running.	Run for 12 minutes and walk for 3 minutes. Repeat once for a total of 30 minutes.	
4	Run for 15 minutes, slow down to a jog for 5 minutes, and then run for 10 minutes.	Run for 18 minutes, walk for 2 minutes, then repeat for a total of 40 minutes.	Alternate between 100m sprints and 100m walks for a total of 15 minutes. Finish this off with an easy jog of 5 minutes to keep your heart rate up.	
5	Run for 20 minutes straight and then rest until your heart rate returns to normal. Repeat for a total of 40 minutes of running	Alternate between sprints of 100m and jogs of 100m. Repeat this for a total of 20 minutes. Finish this off with a light run of 10 minutes.	Run for time: Run for 10 minutes as fast as you can while keeping a steady pace, and track your time. Repeat this once. When you are finished, measure the distance with your car. Use this to try and estimate your 1 mile pace.	You'll need this extra day for a recovery run. Jog for 25 minutes at a low pace and focus on breathing and form. Find what works best for you.
6	Go for a moderately paced run for 30 minutes and keep an eye on your time. Measure the distance with your car to see how far you can cover in 30 minutes. This will help you find a manageable pace for the race.	Alternate between 1 minute sprints and 1 minute jogs. Focus on form and breathing trying to keep your heart rate up the entire time.	Repeat day 3 from last week and see if your time is improving. You should be seeing major gains by this point.	
<b>RACE WEEK</b>	(Monday or Tuesday): Take a long jog for about 25-30 minutes and again relax and work on breathing and pace. Don't push yourself too hard.	Taper down to a 15-20 minute jog just to keep your legs ready for the race. This should be a confidence run because by now if you have followed the program you are running great!	Go out there and give it your all and have fun! Don't take off too fast, get into a nice rhythm, and then let your legs take you to the finish. You will know how hard to push yourself once your heart slows down from the adrenaline rush and your legs stop feeling like jelly.	