

TRAINING GUIDE



TIPS FOR 5-K SUCCESS

Race one to reboot your routine, rev up your fitness, and have a little fun

SIGN UP SOON

→ To find a race near you, call your local running store, or check out the racefinder at runnersworld.com/racefinder. You'll likely pay a small fee to enter (usually \$10 to \$20), but consider that extra incentive to keep you accountable to your training.

GET ORGANIZED

→ Find a solid training plan (like the one on page 2 of this guide), and follow it. Scout out some safe, traffic-free routes to run. Parks, bike paths, and tracks are better than high-traffic streets, and soft surfaces like grass and dirt are better than paved ones. To map out some routes near you, go to runnersworld.com/routefinder.

BUY THE RIGHT SHOES

→ Worn-out or ill-fitting shoes can lead to injury. If you're not sure whether your running shoes are in shape for 5-K training, go to a specialty running store to get help finding the pair that offers the support and fit your feet need.

DON'T DO TOO MUCH TOO SOON

→ When you sign up for a race, it's tempting to go out and run as much as you can, as fast as you can. But doing so can lead to injury. Follow the plan and listen to your body. If you're sore or tired the day after a workout, rest or cut back.

REWARD YOURSELF ALONG THE WAY

→ When you hit milestones—like completing the training in the weeks leading up to your 5-K race, or running longer than you ever have before—give yourself a treat to stay motivated, such as a new pair of running socks or a 30-minute massage.

FIND A TRAINING PARTNER

→ Having a running date, with one person or a group, is a strong motivator when you're training. Ask about groups at your local running store, or

5 Weeks to Your First 5-K

Any runner can become a competitor. This package will get you to the starting and finish lines feeling good

WANT TO RUN a race but don't know where to start? Need a kick in the butt to prop up your sagging workout motivation? Training for your first 5-K can give you a reason to get out the door. The good news? If you can run for 10 minutes, you can run a 5-K five weeks from now. Chances are, no matter where you live, there's a 5-K nearby soon. It's the most popular race distance around. In the following guide you'll find everything you need to know to get to the starting and finish lines feeling fit, healthy, and ready to run your best.

TRAINING PLAN NEXT PAGE →

check with the Road Runners Club of America (rrca.org). An online community can also be effective. Relatedly, it's also important to enlist the help and support of your family. A 5-K race goal is great, but it's even better and more motivating when it's shared.

STICK TO THE PLAN

→ Even if you have a good plan to follow, you still need to be diligent about following it. Resist the urge to pile miles on to the plan, even if you're feeling great. Doing too much before your body is ready puts you at risk for getting hurt, and often you don't know that you're overdoing it until it's too late. After you make it to the starting line, then you can add on mileage and intensity.

SCHEDULE YOUR WORKOUTS

→ You won't ever find time for your runs unless you make some time for them in your schedule. Plug your workouts into your phone, computer, daily appointment planner, on the front of your refrigerator, or treat them as unbreakable appointments that you can't miss. Tell family and friends about your 5-K goal so that they can help keep you accountable during training.



DON'T GO OUT TOO FAST

→ The greatest challenge of getting through training and the race is finding the right pace that you can sustain and go the distance. Start out too

fast and you'll likely struggle to finish, and dread the next run. Start each run at a pace that feels very comfortable with the idea that you want to finish the distance feeling strong.



Get Ready to Run

By logging just three runs per week, you can be ready to toe the line of a 5-K in just five weeks

WITH A LITTLE PLANNING, you can run—comfortably—every step of the way of a 5-K. The slow buildup of this five-week plan will allow your body to adapt to running 3.1 miles continuously, and the three-mile dress-rehearsal runs will give you the confidence that you can go the distance on race day, says Susan Paul, coach of Track Shack Fitness Club in Orlando. (If you haven't been exercising, first spend several weeks running and walking until you can run for 10 minutes.) Keep the pace easy enough to talk. You can do the runs on different days than listed below, just avoid running on consecutive days. Twice a week, cross-train by cycling, walking briskly, or taking a fitness class.

WEEK	TUESDAY	THURSDAY	SATURDAY
1	1.5 miles	1.5 miles	2 miles
2	2 miles	2 miles	2.5 miles
3	2 miles	2.5 miles	3 miles
4	2.5 miles	2.5 miles	3 miles
5	2.5 miles	2 miles	RACE 3.1 miles!

Preventive Steps

A few aches and pains are unavoidable on the way to the start. Here's how to keep them from sidelining your racing plans

1 FIND THE RIGHT PACE

In training, proper pacing is everything. You can use a heart-rate monitor and do most of your runs at 65 to 75 percent of your maximum heart rate. Or, even more simply, listen to your breathing. If you can comfortably hold a conversation, then your pace is just right.

2 BE CONSISTENT

This may be the most important training strategy of them all. Without consistency, it's impossible to progress, and you're at risk for injury. But consistency doesn't mean locking into a training schedule and doing exactly what it says to do no matter what. Being flexible is important, too. For example, if you're planning to train

tomorrow at 7 a.m. and you wake up and it's 90 degrees, find a window of opportunity later in the day, or plan to make it up later in the week.

3 MAKE TIME TO WARM UP AND COOL DOWN

Warming up will make each run feel easier and help avoid pulled muscles. A proper warmup begins with walking or running very slowly to ease your body into a comfortable running rhythm. Consider walking briskly for five minutes (about a quarter-mile), then gradually ramp up to your running pace. When you finish your run, resist the urge to stop suddenly. Instead, walk for another five minutes to cool down so that you can bring your heart rate down more gradually.

4 DON'T HESITATE TO WALK

Walk is not a four-letter word. Pausing to walk during a run is not a form of cheating, but an effective way to manage your energy and get the run done. It breaks a big piece of work into smaller pieces, making it more doable—and at times more effective.

5 STAY SAFE ON THE ROAD

The biggest threat you'll face as a runner on the road is the car. Try to find flat traffic-free routes with wide shoulders; run on the left side of the road, facing traffic; obey traffic signs and signals.

6 TAKE IT EASY ALONG THE WAY

It's easy to overdo it on the days you feel good, or when you're running with a faster friend. But running farther or faster than you're ready for can lead to injury and burnout. Stick to the plan, and resist the urge to add on miles or intensity, even when you feel strong enough to do so.

7 LET PAIN BE YOUR GUIDE

Injuries can happen, especially during periods when you're ramping up mileage. A little muscle soreness is normal, but if you feel a sharp, sudden pain that persists or worsens while you're on the road and after you finish, or causes you to alter your gait, it's best to stop running and rest. See a sports-medicine doctor who has experience working with runners.

8 RUN RELAXED

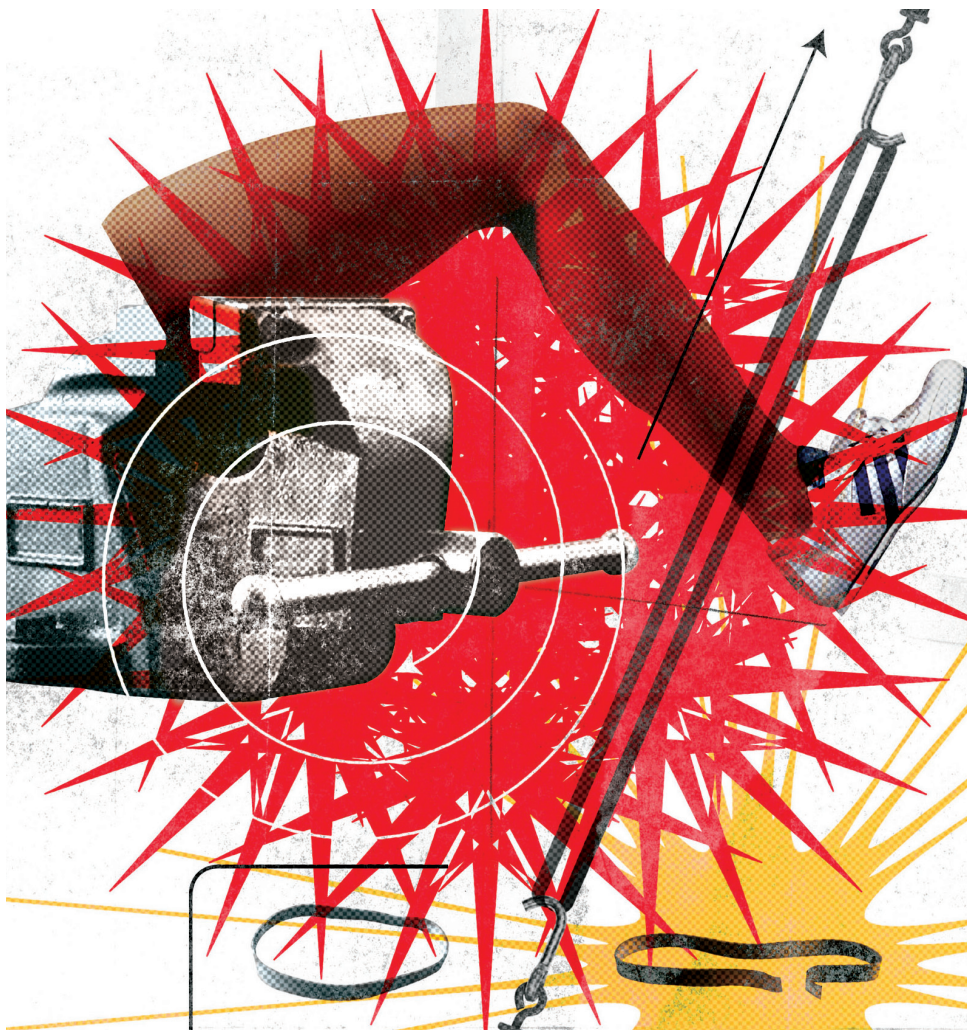
As long as you're running comfortably and injury-free, there's no reason to worry about your form. But minor modifications can help you become more efficient. Run "tall" and upright, not with a forward lean. Look toward the horizon, not at your feet. Keep your shoulders relaxed and away from your ears, and avoid tightening the muscles in your arms. On uphill, shorten your stride, and drive with your arms.

9 RUN ON SOFT SURFACES

Varying the terrain that you run on can help minimize the risk of injury. Mix in a run on a track, trail, or a treadmill here and there, and you could avoid a setback. If you head off road, just be wary of technical trails with rocks and roots that can be tricky to navigate. The track and treadmill are predictable with no roots or curbs to trip over. Both surfaces are also more cushiony than asphalt.

10 WRITE IT DOWN

Keeping a training log can be an invaluable tool for staying injury-free. By having a record of what you've run and how you have felt before, during, and after all of your workouts, you can spot trends that lead to burnout or injury. Plus, seeing all the miles pile up can be very motivating and can help you keep sight of all that you have accomplished!





Boost Your Motivation

Sometimes you need a little help getting out the door. Here are some common obstacles and how to overcome them

PROBLEM I'm lonely

SOLVED Join a running club, either in person or online in the local forums at runnersworld.com. You're bound to meet people with similar goals and experience who live near you, and link up with someone to share the miles with.

PROBLEM I'm in a rut

SOLVED If you normally run on roads, switch to a bike path or trail. Go for a run through the woods or near water. Find a new route at runnersworld.com/routefinder. A change of scenery can be very inspiring.

PROBLEM I'm really in a rut!

SOLVED Run at night with a flashlight or a headlamp once a week. This can be a blast, especially with a training partner. Unlike with daytime running, you really have to concentrate on where you're going, which often makes the time pass faster.

PROBLEM I'm having doubts

SOLVED Take a minute or two to visualize success before each of your runs, or at any other time for that matter. Try to be as specific and concrete as possible in your visualization sessions. See

yourself on the run. See yourself smiling on the run—because you feel good, strong, capable, and confident.

PROBLEM I'm losing focus

SOLVED If you've lost weight through running, display an old, unflattering photo of yourself in a prominent place, such as on your refrigerator. That'll get you out the door and moving every time.

PROBLEM I sometimes have trouble getting out the door

SOLVED Tell yourself you'll only run for 10 minutes. Then go out and see what happens. Run down your street. Take that route you've been meaning for weeks to try. Run to a friend's house to say hi. Chances are you'll end up being out for longer than 10 minutes, and you'll return feeling happy that you did it.

PROBLEM My motivation flags when I'm on a run

SOLVED Run with music. It's fun and motivating, and can help you push through moments when you'd rather give in. And some experts say it can help boost your performance. Go to runnersworld.com/playlists to download your favorite tunes. Or run with an audio book, and get two things done at once!

PROBLEM My runs feel like they take forever

SOLVED Break it down. If you're bored, just say you're going to cover one more mile, then walk for a bit. Or half a mile. Heck, just make it to that building up ahead, then see how you feel! Point being: One step at a time. Then two. Then three.

PROBLEM My mind wanders to negative thoughts

SOLVED Repeat a mantra. This can create a tight mental focus, which helps you push through your troubles. Some suggestions:

- My legs are strong; so am I.
- It's 5-K for me.
- It's down to me, no one else.
- Good, tough, strong.
- No guts, no glory.
- Hills ahead. No big deal.

PROBLEM I'm wondering, "What's the point?"

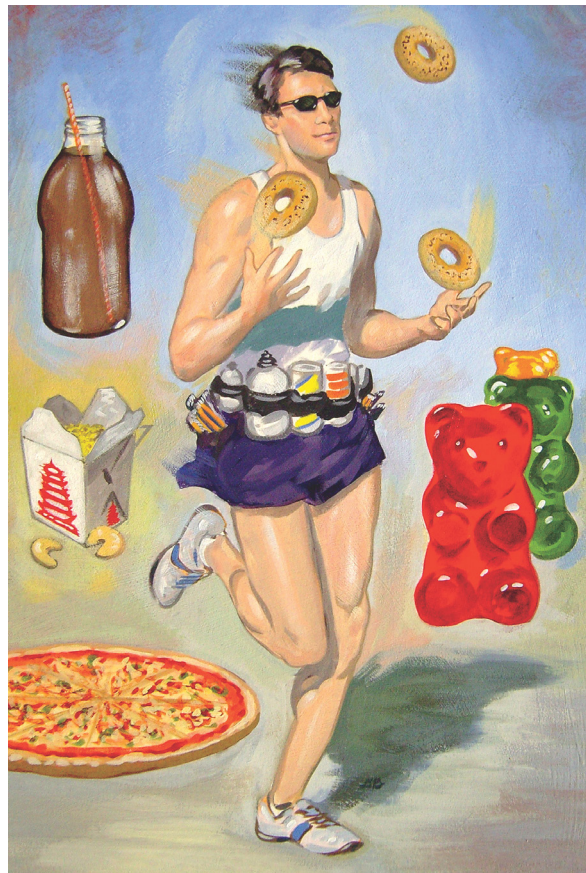
SOLVED It's important to remember the reward. Remind yourself of the weight you have lost—or will lose. See that steak and glass of wine waiting for you back home. Think about those last few steps before you cross the 5-K finish line.

Fueling Rules

Wondering what to eat and drink, and how much? Here are four basic rules to follow while training for your first 5-K

RULE #1 HAVE A DRINK

→ Getting enough fluids is key, as being a little dehydrated can affect your performance. Try to get 16 ounces of water about an hour before your run, and rehydrate afterward. And be sure to stay hydrated throughout the day. Drink half your body weight in ounces. So if you weigh 150 pounds, drink 75 ounces of water per day. If you weigh 100 pounds, have 50 ounces.



RULE #2 EMPHASIZE CARBOHYDRATES

→ Carbs are a runner's most important energy source. Aim for a 50-25-25 eating plan, where 50 percent of your calories come from carbohydrates, 25 percent from protein, and 25 percent from fat. With half of your calories coming from carbohydrates, this will provide you with plenty of readily available fuel for your runs. Proteins and fats will help you feel full longer and give you important nutrients you need.

RULE #3 EAT REAL FOOD

→ When you're in training, it's best to eat a variety of healthful foods throughout the day, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy products such as milk and cheese, and lean meats. Don't over-rely on so-called "performance foods," such as energy bars, gels, sports drinks, and the like. These are all fine—they have their uses, especially before, during, and after running—but you won't need them while ramping up for a 5-K.

RULE #4 KEEP IT SIMPLE

→ You need to be energized on the run, but you don't want to be sidelined with stomach issues. Don't try any new foods before a run or your race. In the hours before you run, have carbs like bananas, low-fiber cereal, bagels, yogurt, or oatmeal. Stay away from too much protein, fat, or fiber, which can cause stomach distress on the road.

THE MAGNIFICENT SIX

Keep these powerhouses on hand to boost your health and power your running

1 EGGS

One egg fulfills about 10 percent of your daily protein needs. Egg protein is a complete protein, which means it contains all the crucial amino acids your hard-working muscles need to promote recovery.



2 SALMON

Besides being an excellent source of protein, salmon is one of the best sources of omega-3 fats. These fats help balance the body's inflammation response, which has been linked to many chronic diseases.



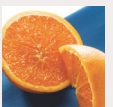
3 SWEET POTATOES

Sweet potatoes are a good source of vitamins A and C, potassium, iron, as well as the trace minerals manganese and copper, which are crucial for healthy muscle function.



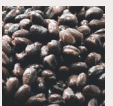
4 ORANGES

Eat enough oranges and you may feel less achy after hard workouts. Oranges supply more than 100 percent of the Daily Value for the antioxidant vitamin C, which has been linked to alleviating muscle soreness.



5 CANNED BLACK BEANS

Black beans and other legumes are low glycemic index (GI) foods, meaning the carb is released slowly into the body. Low GI foods can help control blood-sugar levels and may enhance performance because of their steady release of energy.



6 MIXED SALAD GREENS

They're loaded with phytonutrients that may fend off age-related diseases, like Alzheimer's, heart disease, and diabetes. These nutrients also act as antioxidants, warding off muscle damage brought on by tough workouts.



CARB FAVES AMONG RUNNERS

PASTA → 44%
CEREAL → 17%

BEER → 16%
BAGELS → 11%

RICE → 9%
ENERGY BARS → 3%

BASED ON 4,034 RESPONDENTS OF A RUNNERSWORLD.COM POLL



Your Injury-Prevention Plan

To stay energized and healthy on the way to your first 5-K, try these key strategies

BUILD UP GRADUALLY

→ Stick to the plan, and build your miles gradually over the course of the five weeks. This ensures that your bones, muscles, and ligaments have time to adjust to the increased workload—without injury.

LISTEN TO YOUR BODY

→ Pay attention to warning signs such as recurring pain or fatigue that doesn't go away even with sleep. It's also important to pay attention to what's working for you. If you feel energized after eating a particular prerun snack, for instance, remember it and try it again.

WATCH YOUR STEP

- Look for firm, even running surfaces—like roads, tracks, and hard-packed dirt trails.
- Don't assume a driver sees you. In fact, assume that a driver can't see you.
- Run against traffic so you can see any sudden moves an advancing motorist may make.
- At a stop sign or light, wait for the driver to wave you through—then acknowledge with your own wave.
- Always be prepared to jump onto the sidewalk or shoulder of the road.

GET SOME SLEEP

→ Sleep is critical for muscle repair and regeneration. Keep your bedroom dark, cool, and quiet. Also, consider blackout window shades, and avoid using a TV, laptop, or smart phone 30 minutes before bedtime.

RESPOND TO PAIN

→ It's normal to feel some muscle soreness after a run, but if the pain persists for more than a day, or persists or worsens while you are running, stop and see a doctor. Cross-train in the meantime with cycling, swimming, or riding a stationary bike or elliptical at the gym.

WHAT A RELIEF

Achy, sore, tender muscles? Five ways to ease the hurt

1 ICE BATH

Sitting in a cold tub for 10 to 20 minutes after a hard run helps flush out waste products and reduce swelling and tissue breakdown. You can also apply an ice pack to individual sore spots.

2 HEAT THERAPY

When muscle temperature is increased, blood flow increases, bringing nutrient-rich blood to the damaged muscle. Wait 24 hours after a run to apply heat.

3 ACTIVE RECOVERY

Twenty to 30 minutes of low-impact exercise increases blood flow, thus cross-training the day after an intense workout can help you recover faster.

4 MASSAGE

Researchers in Australia found that sports massage may help reduce muscle soreness by as much as 30 percent.

5 GENTLE STRETCHING

Stretching loosens muscles while lengthening them, which allows them to relax and get back full range of motion.



HOW TO PREVENT THE WAR WOUNDS OF RUNNING

⚠ ATHLETE'S FOOT This is a fungal infection that causes redness, itching, and painful scaling between the toes and on the soles of the feet. Apply an over-the-counter fungicide such as Desenex or Tinactin two or three times a day for two to four weeks. If it still doesn't resolve, see a doctor.

⚠ BLACK TOENAILS Bleeding under the nail caused by the toes banging up against the front of the shoe. Black toenails eventually fall off on their own without treatment. Make sure your shoes offer plenty of toe room—a half-inch between the longest toe and the top of the shoe.

⚠ BLISTERS Blisters are caused by friction that occurs when shoes or socks rub against the skin. Anything that intensifies rubbing can start a blister. Protect a blister with a heavy bandage or by covering it with moleskin. Most blisters will dry up and heal on their own.

⚠ CHAFING Skin-to-skin and skin-to-clothing rubbing can cause a red, raw rash that can bleed and sting in the shower. Moisture and salt make it worse. Wear moisture-wicking, seamless, tagless gear. Apply Vaseline, sports lube, Band-Aids, or NipGuards prerun.



The Big Day

What to do in the days and hours before your 5-K to ensure a successful race

HOW MUCH SHOULD I RUN THE WEEK BEFORE THE RACE?

→ Do two or three easy runs of 20 to 30 minutes. Take one or two days off before race day.

SHOULD I EAT A BIG BOWL OF PASTA THE NIGHT BEFORE?

→ No, loading up on carbs or anything else isn't necessary and can lead to "unloading" during the race. Eat regular portions of a healthy dinner.

SHOULD I WEAR THE RACE T-SHIRT TO THE RACE?

→ Unfortunately, most race shirts are made of cotton and become heavy as they absorb sweat, so save it for bragging rights after you cross the finish line.

ANY OTHER CLOTHING OR GEAR TIPS?

→ Just go with comfortable, well-fitting, technical running clothes that you've been training in.

SHOULD I WARM UP BEFORE THE RACE?

→ A proper warmup will improve your performance. Do a five- to 10-minute very slow jog about 20 minutes before the start.

WHERE SHOULD I LINE UP?

→ Near the back of the crowd, where the atmosphere is relaxed. Start on a side so you can move over to take walk breaks if needed.

OKAY TO TALK TO OTHER RUNNERS?

→ Absolutely. At the starting line, tell others that this is your first race. Most will respond with stories of their first race and encourage you on yours.

SHOULD I RUN FAST AT THE START?

→ No. Even if the folks around you take off quickly—which they probably will—restrain yourself so you have energy to finish.

WHAT ABOUT FARTHER INTO THE RACE?

→ Do the first two miles at the speed of your long runs; if you use a run/walk method, use that in the race. Resist the temptation to run hard as soon as the starting gun goes off. Starting slow will help you finish strong, which increases the chance that you'll race again.

WHAT IF IT RAINS?

→ The race will still go on. Wear a cap with a lid to keep the rain out of your face, and a garbage bag with holes cut for your head and arms that you can discard before the gun goes off.

ADVICE FOR THE END OF THE RACE?

→ Once the finish line is in sight, finish with spirit. Then pat yourself on the back. If there's a postrace party, go ahead and partake. And stick around for the awards ceremony. Maybe you'll win something!

With contributions by Adam Bean, Jen Van Allen, Amby Burfoot, Sarah Lorge Butler, Jeff Galloway, Karen Asp, Selene Yeager, Kristin Wolfe Beiler, Jenny Everett