

Getting Started – A 12-Week Training Program for NEW and BEGINNING Runners

This training program is designed to help boost your fitness and get you safely to the finish line. Don't add extra time or mileage to this program. If you feel like you could have done more at the end of a particular workout or at the end of the week, that's a good sign. Trust me when I tell you that you will improve faster if you stay fresh...you'll race better too. The worst thing you can do is wind up over-trained or injured by starting out doing too much, too fast, too soon. **Be conservative in your approach.**...if you need to slow down or take a day off, that's fine. Listen to your body. If this running thing sticks, you'll have plenty of opportunity to increase your training volume in the future.

- ✓ Walk-Breaks If you are new to running, I recommend that you take periodic walk breaks during your training runs, especially if you find it challenging to run non-stop for at least 5 minutes. Walk-breaks serve two purposes: they reduce your risk of injury and reduce the intensity of your workout so you recover faster. The length and frequency of your walk-break depends on your level of fitness. If you've never run before and are starting this program from a low fitness level try alternating run/walk in equal time increments during your workouts (for example: run 2 min, walk 2 min). If you have a solid fitness base already, you might take as little as a 1min walk-break every 10 minutes. The take away here is **exercise is cumulative**, so regardless of whether you're walking or running, the point is you're moving and that's a plus.
- ✓ What's Fast & Finish Times How fast you should be running? First, let's get rid of any preconceived expectations and understand that *speed is relative*, so go your own pace. As a new runner (this also applies to people who are returning to the sport after an extended time off) focusing on the experience rather than the result will definitely lead to a more enjoyable time outdoors. Because **speed is relative**, you'll need to familiarize yourself with what's comfortable for you. Until you've successfully trained with some consistency, keep your running pace conversational. In other words, target a pace that you can maintain for the entire workout. An easy way to figure out what this pace is for you is to carry on a conversation with your running partner. If you can't speak in full sentences, slow down. If you're running alone, try singing a few bars of U2's *Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For*. Feel free to insert your own tune...you get the idea.
- ✓ The myth about running gear All you need is a watch, comfortable clothes, and a good pair of *running shoes. Despite what you see on the trails and at your local races, you should feel absolutely no pressure to 'dress the part' as a new runner. Wear what you have and what you find is most comfortable for you. Far too often, we runners fall victim to the fashion whims of the day. Exhibit A...the 1970's headband look (really?). Exhibits B...eye blinding neon colors from head to toe, circa 1985. Exhibit C...the present day knee high compression socks that scream, "your grandma's hosiery drawer!" I confess, I've actually worn these. The message here is, **if you like it, wear it...but own it!** Whatever you do, don't skimp on your running shoes. Before you begin training, visit a reputable shop or two that specialize in running shoes and go through the fitting process to make sure you're running in a proper shoe for your gait and foot structure.
- ✓ The Secret about Running Don't be surprised if you notice a change in your energy level or begin 'feeling' muscles in places you never knew you had. Most people need about two full weeks to get into the flow of training, so be open to the experience, and above all be patient with yourself as you embark on this journey. Anything that involves changing our habits takes time and repetition. When it comes to running, I want you to think of repetition in terms of consistency...that's the secret to running. **Being consistent is better than being perfect!** If you find you only have 20 minutes on a day when the program calls for 30 minutes, run for twenty, and feel good about it. Do not try to make up for a missed day by doubling down your next time out—that would be a mistake. Your body can and will adapt to just about anything...even working out on a regular basis! Your attitude and mental state is the key. Commit, stay positive and you'll definitely see results!
- ✓ Quick Tips on Nutrition & Hydration It's as simple as this...**Eat to run**. Most of us think of exercise in reverse. Too often we fall into the trap of exercising so we can eat. When we think about food as fuel, we begin making better decisions about what we eat. So reach for an apple instead of that cookie to fuel your tank! And stay hydrated. Easiest way to do this...pay attention to the color of your urine (lighter is better).

This 12-Week Training Program was developed for NEW & RETURNING Runners participating in King County’s inaugural Big Backyard 5K at Marymoor Park, however, the program can be used by anyone interested in participating in a 5K. Simply choose a race at least twelve weeks out and fill in your dates on the program, and you’re ready to go. This is a conservative training program that assumes little to no fitness base, so it’s perfect for those who are new to running and runners returning to the sport after a long layoff.

12-Wk Plan		Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat*	Sun*
#	Wk of	Walk	Run1	Rest	Run2	Walk	Rest	Run3
12	__/_	Walk	10-15	☺	10-15	Walk	☺	1.0
11	__/_	Walk	15	☺	15	Walk	☺	1.0
10	__/_	Walk	15-20	☺	15-20	Walk	☺	1.5
9	__/_	Walk	20	☺	20	Walk	☺	1.5
8	__/_	Walk	20-25	☺	20-25	Walk	☺	2.0
7	__/_	Walk	25	☺	25	Walk	☺	2.5
6	__/_	Walk	25-30	☺	25-30	Walk	☺	2.5
5	__/_	Walk	25-30	☺	25-30	Walk	☺	3.0
4	__/_	Walk	30	☺	30	Walk	☺	3.5
3	__/_	Walk	30	☺	30	Walk	☺	4.0
2	__/_	Walk	30	☺	30	Walk	☺	3.0
1	__/_	Walk	25	☺	20	Walk	☺	5K RACE
*Alternate Schedule		Run1	Walk	Run2	☺	Walk	Run3	☺

Program Key:

☺ = Rest Days. Use these days to recharge. Get some extra sleep.

Run Days = Run1 & Run2 are timed runs measured in minutes; Run3 is a run for distance measured in miles

Walk Days = make a conscious effort and look for creative ways to walk more. Take the stairs instead of the elevator, go for a walk during lunch, or enjoy an evening stroll after dinner.

* Alternate Schedule: If you prefer Sunday as your rest day during the weekend use the Alternate Schedule