

Beginners Guide to Running

If you want to get fit, running is one of the best and easiest ways to do it. But don't get carried away and try to do too much, too soon. This could lead to you becoming injured or quickly losing motivation. Instead aim to run three times a week, every other day. Don't try and run continuously for a set time but walk-run to build up your fitness. Wear a watch and time yourself rather than trying to run for a certain distance.

If you are morbidly obese, pregnant or have any health conditions, always speak to your doctor before embarking on a fitness programme.

Here's the training schedule we recommend for the first six weeks when you're starting out:

Week one: Three times a week, begin with a two minute walk, then run for two minutes. Repeat the cycle five times if you can, so in total you will have run for ten minutes with two minute walks in between. If you are struggling, do less reps or slow your pace. It should be a gentle two minute run each time – not a sprint. End with a final two minute walk to cool down.

Week two: Extend your run each time to three minutes, still with two minutes walk in between and starting and finishing with a two minute walk.

Week three: Now try running for five minutes continuously with a two minute walk in between as follows: walk for two minutes, run for five minutes, walk for two minutes, run for five minutes, walk for two minutes, run for five minutes, walk for two minutes. In total you will have run for 15 minutes. Listen to your body and don't try to run too fast, you should have enough breath to hold a conversation.

Week four: Build upon last week by adding in an extra five minute rep, taking your total running time to 20 minutes. If you are feeling fitter, cut the walking time from two to one minute.

Week five: On your three runs this week, try cutting down on your walking breaks from last week by running for ten minutes continuously, then having a two minute break, and then running for ten minutes again.

Week six: Now try running for 15 minutes continuously without a walking break for your three ones this week. Keep it going for longer if you are up to it.

Beyond six weeks: Keep increasing your running time gradually from 15 minutes so by eight weeks, you should be able to run for 30 minutes continuously.

When you've reached this stage, you could think about increasing your pace after you've warmed up or you could try and run four or five times a week.

On one of your weekly runs, you could also try breaking your run up into different paces to raise your heart rate more. For example, after a five minute jog, you could run faster for three minutes, then jog for 90 seconds, then run faster for three minutes, then jog for 90 seconds – repeating the cycle until you've done it four times - then have a five minute jog recovery. You could mix this up every week by doing different minute reps, for instance, five times one minute with a 90 second jog recovery, two times five minutes with a 90 second jog recovery etc. This will add a bit more variation to your training. You could also enter a race such as a 5K to 10K to give your training a focus. Download your training plan the click on the race directory to find one.