














5 & 10k Running Training Guide





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Running is many things to many people. In fact since early man employed running as part of their long-distance “persistence hunting” strategy to hunt for food in the earliest hunting and gathering societies, it has been suggested that running is the driving evolutionary force underpinning the evolution of certain key human characteristics. Whilst these ancient survival methods are still practiced by some remote hunter-gatherer groups today, modern-day runners are much more likely to enjoy the relatively easy-access approach to straight forward, flexible, low-cost exercise that running offers. However, whilst running is viewed by many as a simple exercise that can be done with almost no need for specialist equipment, this guide will help present running as an enjoyable, but challenging, way of exercising but also one that, with some solid but basic preparation, will be even more enjoyable by helping ensure you prepare correctly and get through your run wanting to run again... and further too!

This guide is designed to help guide you build a solid foundation in preparation for the short and snappy 5K run as well as the UKs most popular race distance; the 10K. Use this guide in conjunction with the appropriate weekly training plan to help you maximise results by helping you better understand how to prepare for running and the relative demands of your training. Making training for your race a priority within your lifestyle and daily routine will reward you with better all-round results and ultimately make your race more enjoyable. This guide will give you information over-and-above your physical training programme to help optimise elements of your lifestyle that most impact on your training efforts:



Before You Get Started

If you are new to exercise or just haven't exercised for a long time, it is advisable that you speak to your GP before you embark on your programme, especially if you have any health concerns or suffer from any medical conditions already managed by your doctor.

You should consult your GP if you have diabetes, heart disease, asthma, lung, liver or kidney disease, or one of the forms of arthritis, if you are on any prescription medication, or if you have undergone surgery in the previous 2 years. Additionally, if you are a smoker and want to give up, you should consider making an appointment with your GP or medical centre's nurse to get specialist advice that may help you.

It is also recommended that you speak to your doctor if you suffer from any of the following:

- Pain or discomfort in your chest, neck, jaw or arms during physical activity
- A heart murmur or a rapid or pronounced heartbeat
- Dizziness or loss of consciousness
- Shortness of breath with mild exertion or at rest, or when lying down or going to bed
- Swollen ankles, especially at night
- Muscle pain when walking upstairs or up a hill that goes away when you rest

Additionally, if you know of any other health related reason why you should not do physical activity, it is important that you consult with your doctor first.

Similarly, if you are new to running as an exercise but have a history of knee, hip, ankle or back injury/pain it is strongly advised that you either consult with your doctor or with a specialist chartered physiotherapist who may also be able to provide an assessment and specialist care advice prior to commencing running.

If in doubt, check it out!



Set Your Sights

Whether in your personal or professional life, setting your sights and focusing your efforts on a personal goal will help keep you on track and stay focused on your aim. This is particularly relevant in any sporting event and even if you are wanting nothing more than to finish a race in a respectable time, having an aim or setting a goal will help you achieve it and perhaps every bit as importantly, it will help shape your approach to training for the event. Do remember though that this is your race, so avoid the temptation to pitch yourself against goals set by friends or colleagues as you will not have a full insight into their current fitness levels, health condition, injuries or other motivations and none of this should deflect you from achieving your aims...and enjoying the training and the race itself!

So then, if you haven't already, identify one or more key goals of what you want your training and the event itself to help you achieve. It may be that you may want shed a few pounds in weight, improve your health generally by incorporating more physical activity into your lifestyle, or use the event as a vehicle to a very specific health improvement e.g. giving up smoking. It will help you enormously towards achieving your goal(s) if you actually write them down as a positive statement, ensuring that they are measurable, achievable and realistically within your control. Rather than do this on a scrap of paper, a really helpful tool for tracing your progress and all your thoughts as you progress through your training programme is a training diary. A small investment in a hard-backed note

pad to jot down thoughts about how you are enjoying your training, what you like doing and don't like doing, what progress you are making and what you need to work harder on can really pay dividends in terms of results, plus it can be a real motivator too! If paper isn't your thing, you can find plenty of examples of electronic diaries online, but either method will help keep you focused on your efforts and allow you to look back at your benchmark efforts from day one.

Using your notebooks to measure your progress by recording statistics at the beginning of your training programme and at regular intervals thereafter can further focus your efforts. Some examples may include:

- A. Strength - select 3 tests that track your lower body, upper body and core strength**
- B. Speed - time yourself over set distances and complete a weekly time trial**
- C. Race time - use your speed tests to calculate your desired race time**
- D. Health matters - measure your resting heart rate weekly and monitor your sleep patterns**
- E. Weight loss - weigh yourself naked upon getting out of bed once each week, plus find scales that also measure your body fat % [check in-store in bigger chains of Boots the high street chemist]**



Equipment

What do I need?

If you are new to running, don't be put off by the vast range of, often very expensive, running kit available on the internet and the high street, as part of the appeal of running should be the absolute simplicity of it. The most important and probably most expensive piece of kit you should purchase is that of an appropriate pair of running shoes. After that you don't need too much more, but here are some key items that you may feel you need and so prioritise as purchases once you start running more frequently and in different conditions. If you're an experienced runner you may decide to buy some new gadgets to support improvements in your pace, but no matter your level, prioritise what you are looking to use an item for and stick to your guns when choosing...otherwise you'll be paying over the odds and for functionality that you'll probably never use.



1 Footwear

The simplicity of running is one of its greatest strengths. All you need is a pair of trainers, right? Wrong! Why so important? Well, we only run on one leg at a time and the forces generated through each leg as the foot impacts the ground [known as kinetics] are typically 2 to 3 times greater than the person's bodyweight. For a person who weighs 150lb [10 ½ stone], each foot would take 60 to 90 tonnes of force for every mile they run, so anything that can be done to distribute these forces appropriately and efficiently has got to be a good thing!

However, whilst it is perhaps the single most important kit purchase, it can also be an absolute minefield of bewildering choices leading to not only a waste of money, but injury if you don't get the best advice to get you in the most appropriate running shoes. So with all that said, it's probably best to address the key factors involved in buying the right footwear for you one at a time:

- We all demonstrate similar and yet unique gait patterns when we walk and run. The biomechanics of how our feet interact with our ankles and then our knees and hips dictate our running "style", then there is our body weight and foot shape to take into account, plus of course this is all further complicated by the surface, or surfaces, that we run on. All of this needs to be factored in to buying the most appropriate running shoes for YOU!



- Running in inappropriate footwear may trigger a multitude of problems from sore knees to painful backs that in turn may aggravate other niggles throughout your training that can halt your progress. Therefore, if you are a beginner, or even if you have been running for a while but without having really explored what your best footwear options were, then it is important to consider visiting a specialist running shop where trained staff can look at your current trainers, assess your running gait [pattern] by watching you running on a treadmill and then advise you on the most suitable trainers for you.
- Running shoes are commonly categorised into three groups: cushioned, support or stability
- What will best suit your needs will often depend on your gait pattern and, more specifically, how your feet impact the ground. When you take advice on running footwear, it is at this point that you may hear the terms pronator (walk or run with most of the weight on the inside edge of the feet) or supinator (walk or run with most of the weight on the outside edge of the feet) used to describe your foot position during running and this is an important factor in determining the most appropriate running shoe for you.
- When you have been advised on your foot position and gait, you will be directed towards a certain brand and a specific type of shoe within that brand and then go through the process of trying them on for fit and comfort. At this point, many specialist shops will encourage you to run in the shoes on their in-house treadmill and you should use this as an opportunity to compare different shoes that have been recommended...just don't be swayed by looks and colour as they are NOT important and change every season!
- Many of the best brands of running shoes also offer versions of their running shoes branded as "trail running" shoes. These can be a good option if you do any of your running "off-road" and on grassy or muddy surfaces around parks or on tow paths for example. They are typically darker colours and have a more aggressive tread to provide better grip and foot control for more challenging terrain. This will make your running experience far more enjoyable and lessen the chance of injury during training or racing.
- Whether you are a beginner or a more regular recreational runner, don't get complacent with your running shoes as they typically only "last" between 300 to 500 miles and this can quite quickly get racked up. Check the rigidity and wear of the soles and the integrity of the shoe upper to ensure they are still giving you adequate support.

Finally, running shoes can be very expensive and many will easily cost into 3 figures. Keeping costs down with near identical versions is easy by opting for the previous years colour ways during the sales or by researching online and asking retailers about price matching before you buy.



2 Running Socks

An additional piece of kit for the feet is the option of specialist running socks. For shorter runs they could be considered a luxury, however, if you start to tackle longer runs, or if your budget simply stretches far enough to include them, choose carefully and look for socks made from fabric that will keep your feet cool and dry as high-quality running socks should wick away sweat and help keep feet blister-free, whilst limiting bacteria and subsequent odours. Should you start suffering from blisters, review your socks first as this is the least expensive initial option, but also ensure that your running shoes are the correct fit for you. If you have a good local running shop you can always pop in to discuss the options and have them check your footwear for fit, condition and overall suitability.

TOP TIP: if you do buy running socks, or even just new socks to run in, buy them first and take them along to try on any potential new running shoes with... it will help get the fit just right.



3 Sports bras

Wearing a correctly fitted bra is important for all women, but wearing a properly supportive sports bra for running is a must to contain excessive movement and reduce discomfort whilst running. Sports bras will feel very different to a normal bra, so visit a good running shop to ensure you get the right fit and try several brands, styles and sizes so that you find a good fit and although they can be expensive, just like good footwear, many shops match online prices with competitors...so do your research first and make sure you ask about price matching before you buy.





4 Running clothing

Just like running footwear, the selection of run-specific clothing can be mind-boggling. However, unlike the footwear it is not as important and people will typically be swayed by what looks good on and what they feel comfortable in, although certain garments do undoubtedly have very specific functions. These functions are very often driven by seasonality so make sure you think through what time of year you are doing the bulk of your training in... and then factor in the unreliability of the weather too!



Cold early mornings or winter running may mean you want to invest in a good pair of running leggings and good running shorts can be worn on their own and over leggings too. Another important factor is that if you sweat heavily during exercise a “technical” base layer shirt may be important to try and keep you dry. In reality, however, these can be very expensive and are often buried under a few other layers and so are not effectively able to “wick” the sweat from the body as there is nowhere to wick it to! During warmer weather, however, polyester type “wicking” fabric can help prevent your sweat from building up which it will if you wear cotton clothing which will retain sweat making it heavy and likely to chafe throughout your run. Specialist running clothing should feature flatlocked seams which are less likely to chafe and vented panels, usually on the sides or back, which may allow air to circulate throughout your running, as long as they are exposed to the air. The reality is, however, that choosing kit to run in will most likely boil down to personal taste and budget, but a good rule of thumb is to skew the bulk of your budget on the external materials as it is those that are going to protect you from the elements. A light/thin fleece running top should generally provide plenty of insulation under a good light weight running jacket, but a cotton T-shirt may also do the job for the majority of runners initially. Saving money here may allow you to stretch your budget towards a good quality running jacket that is both wind and waterproof and these qualities are vital if you are training during the winter. Also a Gilet, or sleeveless jacket, can be a good option for running unencumbered on cool days. Personal preference will often be the deciding factor as to whether you wear a hat when running, but make sure if you do opt for headgear that it fits well and doesn't slip forward during running and hamper your peripheral vision...very important at road junctions when running around towns and cities. One relatively inexpensive piece of kit that you may be glad you opted for, however, is a pair of gloves as the extremities can feel more cold than usual when the blood is being diverted to areas of the body where the muscles are working hardest... and that is not the hands! Most running clothing ranges also include hi-visibility options and this could be an important consideration if you are running in the dark during early mornings or in the evenings if you are using your journey home from work as part of your training. This kit is generally more expensive, but researching the options before you buy can result in you running more safely as the reflective strips and panels on the clothing and the footwear should increase your visibility to other road users.



Remember, sport-specific branded clothing often attracts a premium, but make a list of what you think you need to start training effectively, safely and comfortably. Research the options, compare prices and then do the leg work and try the kit on. Choose and spend wisely on the most important pieces of clothing you need in order to maximise your budget and not waste money on things that look fancy but that you don't need at this stage. If you are training during the winter, bear in mind not to get too carried away and layer up too much as whilst you'll be chilly at first, you don't want to set off in too many layers as you can't run and carry them if you end up stripping off because you have overheated!



5 Watch

A sports-style watch with a timer/stopwatch is essential for monitoring your progress during your training and also simply for timing the duration of each run accurately. Your watch provides you with a focus during your training runs, motivation on slightly longer runs and reward as you monitor your progress throughout training especially if you use this basic data as part of a training diary. The great news is that if you haven't already got one, good sports watches from established brands are available for well under £20 and with all the functionality you're ever likely to need.



6 Water bottle

You don't need water for short runs, but you may want to have a bottle during hot weather or in the event you tackle any slightly longer training runs. You can carry water bottles in a simple waist belt, plus there are running-specific water bottles that are designed with a "hole" in the middle that effectively creates a large handle to enable you to run and hold the bottle with minimum fuss. It's a personal preference, but really only needed for longer runs.



PASS Mot Your Running Technique

For beginners and experienced runners alike, the need to be constantly aware about how to exercise with good technique (often referred to as “form”) is essential. Running is a natural movement pattern for us humans and though we all have strikingly different techniques and postures, it should be something that feels instinctive to each one of us. Nonetheless, you should strive to start out with good running posture habits to maximise running efficiency and minimise your risk of injury.

Running Form Principle 1: Posture



Correct Posture

Poor Posture

1. Maintain a balanced forward posture

- Stand tall and straight whilst looking directly ahead
- Avoiding stooping at the waist
- Keep your chest forward with your shoulder held slightly back, but relaxed

2. Compact arm swing

- Maintain a short, relaxed arm swing
- Don't let the elbows pass in front of your waist...that's for sprinters!
- Don't let your arms cause you to sway from side-to-side or twist at the trunk

3. Foot strike

- Feel as though your foot is landing softly underneath your body
- Practice landing with soft foot placement to avoid impacting too heavily on your heels
- Avoid over striding and try and keep your feet “relaxed” as you run



Making Great Strides...

Rather than just pulling on your trainers and heading out for your normal run around the park or streets, if you integrate some staple, but simple, run training techniques to your programme of training then you will be less likely to get bored and almost certainly reap the benefits come race day. Although at the outset the thought of joining a running club may seem a bit overboard, clubs are full of a broad variety of recreational and competitive runners and the club structure can provide you with support, information and good training routes, plus a network of like-minded people with whom you can train. You will also pick up tips and hints as to how to mix-up your training and improve your running overall with advice on training methods and running drills to practice.

Specificity

is a term used in training for sport that suggests replicating 'event' conditions within training and in that respect for you to do well on race day, one aspect to ensure you have in your regular training plan is to be running on the same type of terrain that you will be racing on. So, if your run is in an undulating park, make sure you aren't just training on flat terrain as when you hit those hills on race day your legs won't know what to make of them! Therefore, spending a proportion of your training on relevant terrain is absolutely crucial to your overall success.

Surges

are single fast bursts of running incorporated into the middle of a longer run that allow you to get out of a stale patch of running and create a 'gear change' within your running speed. After employing a surge, you recover back to running at your normal training pace. Surges are a good training strategy to employ occasionally, especially for a quick finish to a 10K race, for example, but should not be used too frequently on standard runs as this would then become a more Fartlek-style of training.

Fartlek

is the Swedish term for 'speed play', or an unstructured and varied style of running workout that can be employed by runners training for any distance to break up the occasional monotony of steady-state run training. Within each fartlek session you alter your speed between low, medium and quick pace and repeat this throughout your session. The unstructured nature of this technique means that it's easy to put into practice. You may, for instance, simply choose to "play" with your running pace between landmarks (e.g. lamp-posts, park benches or trees along your run) by running at an increased pace between selected landmarks after which you run steadily to recover your breath and running form. Start by doing this for a few minutes at a time during the middle of a training run, but always ensuring you have completed the warm up phase of your run beforehand.



Cross-Training

can help strengthen your body and offset the potential short-comings of training your body in just one way, i.e. running, that can place a lot of repeated stress on joints, muscles and ligaments. It is true for runners of any distance that incorporating a strength and conditioning element to your training programme will help build a more robust training base and help you become more resilient to injuries. Whilst there is no doubt that to be a good runner you do have to do a lot of running specific training, it is also true that the best runners are deceptively strong through the application of a strength-based programme of exercise to complement their running programme and strengthen their “running muscles”, their core stability and strength, without neglecting the upper body also to provide them with an all-round strong chassis.

Sprints

involve running at your maximal speed for a short distance, typically 30 to 100m with the aim of developing strength and power to complement the endurance element of running. Although not necessary for 5km racing, there is little doubt that 10K races, especially those run over undulating terrain, can be tough when run at a brisk pace and incorporating sprints into your weekly routine, alongside leg strengthening exercises, can result in greater resilience during the latter stages of a race and when you feel you want to kick on and put in a quick finish.





A Few Running Truths

1 Pace yourself and build up slowly

Your programme should be progressive over a number of weeks, depending on your experience and the length of the race. This should allow your body to undergo a sensible adaptation process, which will minimise the risk of injury and help get you to race day feeling fitter and stronger.

3 Take rest days

Training creates physical stress on the body and providing it with the opportunity to rest and recover is vital if you are to make gains towards increased strength and fitness. Whilst recovery is especially critical during long-distance running, the stresses created by exercise are all relative and the beginner runner needs to allow their body to recover from the relatively short runs they are undertaking also. If you fail to allow time for this, your recovery and repair may be compromised and injuries, fatigue and illness may result and compromise your training efforts.

2 Consistency

Consistent training throughout your programme is better than 'binge' exercising at the weekends or trying to make up for lost time later on in your programme. The only exception to this is if you are not feeling well, then listen to your body and rest.

4 Prioritise nutrition

Consistency in your training effort requires a consistency in fuelling the body too and this means adopting a nutritionally sound eating approach. Eating well one day will directly affect your recovery from the previous day's training efforts whilst simultaneously fuelling you for the next day. Eat inappropriately and you will compromise your physical performance. For 5 & 10K racing a simple approach to healthy eating should provide you with all the fuel you will need, but eating appropriately and striking the best balance between protein, good fats and carbohydrates during your training is every bit as important as whilst your race is over in a matter of minutes, your training is over a period of weeks. Therefore, to ensure you retain good health and the physical and mental energy to train consistently well you should ensure you follow a varied, nutrient dense approach to eating with plenty of fresh water too.



5 Pace yourself sensibly

Understanding your running pace is key to your success on race day. Many runners will train at a pace and then blow it on race day, suddenly feeling swept away by the race conditions and crowds around them only to find this leads to a much slower overall run time. Use your training to develop a clear idea of your mile/km and ensure your training is varied and specific to keep you fresh for the latter part of your race.

7 Listen to your body

The repetitive nature of running can cause a build-up of tightness in soft tissues that goes from being a small niggle into a serious injury quite quickly, so listen to your body and take appropriate action immediately. Simple conservative measures such as an extended rest and/or the application of local ice to soft tissues may help to reduce inflammation, but visiting a Chartered Physiotherapist or other specialist practitioner will enable you to have the issue professionally assessed and diagnosed so that a treatment/rehabilitation plan can be put into practice before the problem deteriorates and prevents you from training.

6 Make it familiar

Training is in effect a dress rehearsal for your race day. Therefore, practice everything to ensure it is familiar, run in the clothing and trainers you intend to race in so you know you will feel comfortable, plus have a trial run on another weekend of the meal you plan to have the night before, plus your race-day breakfast too. All these things will help you familiarise yourself with your race-day preparation and get to know what works and what doesn't in advance so you can change it. As a rule of thumb, never ever try anything new on race day.





Make A Few Changes

Optimal Training

A positive benefit of regular exercise can be improved health. However, the associated health benefits are not just attributed to the exercise itself, but to the holistic effects of a healthier lifestyle and exercise programme including regular exercise, ensuring you get sufficient good quality sleep, appropriate rest from exercise, plus avoiding too much alcohol and not smoking. The amount of time you dedicate to improving any aspects of your lifestyle that could do with being optimised, the better your health and wellbeing, exercise training and ultimately your race...and this approach should apply no matter the race distance! Some tips on how to approach your nutrition strategy are included separately as it is such an important aspect of successful sport and exercise in its own right, but set yourself a goal of focusing on at least one of the following for the duration of your race training programme and experience the difference it can make to your exercise and wellbeing generally:

Sleep is arguably the most significant part of recovery from physical exertion and is often underestimated to the point of being neglected altogether in today's high-paced world. A good night's sleep prepares you for the day ahead and ensures that you optimise your reaction time, organisation of information, decision making, learning, emotional stability and memory amongst just some of the many benefits. However, whilst you sleep your body also ceases many of the more mundane physiological functions to concentrate on those that are essential whilst also releasing the human growth hormone (HGH) to ensure that the repair of soft tissues is maximised. If you deprive yourself of sufficient quality sleep, the negative effects build up over time and over a period of weeks, this deficit can accumulate to many hours of lost sleep which can be detrimental to your training through reduced cardiovascular function, speed, agility and reaction time. Here's a few tips to help you improve that all important night time rest:

- Create a high quality sleep environment that is quiet, dark, comfortable and with a temperature that is to your preference, preferably with no big screens dominating the bedroom landscape
- Bring forward the time you climb into bed by 30 to 60 minutes and read to unwind or write up your training log or daily journal...sometimes writing to do lists for the next day can settle any restlessness



- Try and avoid overly bright screens; tablets often have very bright displays, but e-Readers can be adjusted to a much more comfortable light that will be less likely to stimulate melatonin. (Melatonin is a “timing messenger” hormone released by the pineal gland under conditions of darkness that signals night time information throughout the body. Exposure to light at night can slow or even cease the night time production of melatonin and suppression of night time melatonin has been implicated in sleep pattern disturbance and in the longer term, an increased risk of diabetes and obesity)
- A high protein snack before bed can promote serotonin production to help promote sleep e.g. a slice of turkey or a specific slow-release protein shake drink
- Remove your mobile (and any other electronic devices) from your bedroom, if you need an alarm clock, buy a stand-alone alarm

Appropriate rest from exercise is absolutely vital to your running programme and race-event success for all distance, though it becomes more acutely necessary as the distances increase. Fail to build in rest days and your body will simply not repair and continue to bear the burden of your training regime, with niggles and soft tissue injuries a common occurrence amongst those that don't rest appropriately. Once you start a training programme, it can become hard to slow down and coupled with juggling work and other life commitments, you may be tempted to cut back on sleep or simply pack too much into your day. Ensure you factor in time post-training to rest and relax, both your body and mind need a break and give you the mental strength for a good training week ahead.





Nutrition & Hydration

Food is not just fuel

No matter how far you run during training or racing, optimum nutrition is one of the most important aspects of fuelling a successful exercise training programme. However, in its own right it is a huge topic so the following represents merely some of the most accessible, top line ideas that can be implemented for wider health benefits and keeping those colds and bugs at bay. If you're looking for a personalised nutritional programme, or have any allergies or conditions that may affect your food choices, you may want to consider seeking further advice from a qualified nutritionist or ask your GP to refer you to a dietician.

Keeping the Status Quo

You would be forgiven for assuming that a typical runner's diet should consist of a lot of carbohydrates and very little fat with staples such as pasta, rice, potatoes, cereals, bread and cereals featuring in many meals. The runners shopping basket may include an array of products marked as "light" or "low fat" and be brimming full of fruit, all of which are advocated in mainstream health eating. The food mentality of 'calories in equals calorie out' has long justified eating as many calories burn on a long training run, but it's not quite as straightforward as that!

A Calorie is not just a Calorie...and not all calories are equal!

Thinking about the 'composition' of your calories, i.e. the amount of fats, carbohydrates and protein in your days calories is a fundamental way of optimising your health and wellbeing, which in turn will support weight loss goals, appetite control, energy levels, plus repair from injury, to name a few benefits, all of which will have a direct impact on your training and race performance. Understanding the macro nutrients (fat, carbs and protein) and their role in your diet will support your goals and if you are tackling the training and race day event as part of a health and weight-loss drive, then read on as there is no doubt that reducing body fat to enhance performance is key and adapting your macro-splits to support fat loss as you exercise may encourage a leaner, lighter body for your training... and beyond! Therefore, use the fundamental principles below to guide and hone your nutrition to suit your goals throughout your running training programme:



1 Think nutrient dense...not calorie dense

Opt for foods such as lean meats (chicken, turkey and venison), oily fish (mackerel, sardines, salmon and tuna) a wide variety of vegetables (especially green leafy and cruciferous) with your evening meal, fruit (particularly low-fructose examples like raspberries, blueberries, pears and kiwis), nuts (almonds and walnuts) and mixed seeds.

Why: Increased intake of high-quality micro-nutrients and antioxidants to support overall good health, plus promote recovery from physical exercise

2 Eliminate processed and refined sugar

Get rid of, or really try to cut back on, foods including biscuits, milk chocolate, cakes, fruit yoghurts, jams, condiments and breakfast cereals.

Why: Conservative estimates suggest that we are eating between 20-34 teaspoons (tsp) of refined, processed sugar every day and so exceeding the NHS recommended maximum of 16.5 tsp for men and 12 tsp for women. Processed and refined sugar has been strongly linked to weight gain and obesity, Type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, bowel cancer, lower cognitive function, ageing skin, a depressed immune system, plus liver and kidney disease.

3 Moderate starchy carbs

When aiming to run relatively short race distances and most likely have a manageable training volume, you would be well served to start by honestly reviewing the size (and number) of your daily portions of bread, potato, rice and pasta.

Why: Carbohydrates come in various guises and are considered an important part of a balanced healthy eating plan...but in the form of carbs from fibrous vegetables and slow release carbohydrates and NOT from the processed sugary foods that weigh down the supermarket shelves! The body can only store (in the muscles and liver) a set amount of carbohydrates so when these stores are full, the body simply converts the excess...to FAT! However, carbohydrates should continue to play its part in a runner's diet, but timing and carbohydrate type is key. Carbohydrate should be consumed around training sessions and in the form of more nutrient-dense carbs. Simply remove nutrient poor, refined sources such as white bread and pasta and replace with more nutrient dense near-equivalent foods such as brown rice, quinoa, sweet potatoes, jacket potatoes, and plenty of green leafy vegetables (especially the cruciferous family e.g. broccoli).



Top Tip: keeping an electronic food diary can really help put perspective on the calorific nature of starchy carbs and help you to moderate and slowly eliminate them from your diet, so resulting in you eating more nutrient dense foods and losing body fat!)

4 Pack a punch with Protein

Foods dominant in protein include eggs, nuts, chicken, turkey, fish (such as cod, plaice, haddock and bass) and oily fish such as tuna, mackerel, salmon, sardines and trout. Don't forget game meats such as venison, pheasant and partridge and fleshy protein dense fish such as prawns, sea bass, monkfish and snapper. Protein shakes also provide excellent protein for post-training snacks to help muscle repair.

Why: Proteins are broken down by the body and converted into amino acids, which have multiple crucial uses in cell function including boosting the immune system and helping to rebuild muscle after strenuous physical exercise.

5 Embrace good fats

By moderating the starchy carbohydrates from your diet, you will have space to embrace the health benefits of the "good fat" foods such as avocado, nuts (almonds, brazil and walnuts), oily fish such as salmon, mackerel and sardines, unprocessed meat such as turkey, chicken, venison and lean beef.

Why: By focusing your intake on good fats and ditching the bad fats in processed food (in conjunction with cutting down your starchy carbohydrate intake) you will be training your body to regain control of your insulin response and blood sugar levels and allow your body to use body fat as a fuel. Too little (good) fat in the diet will lead to a lack of essential nutrients which are critical for immune healthy, hormone regulation, bone and cell growth.

6 Beware seemingly "healthy" foods

Salad dressings, condiments such as ketchup, breakfast cereals, low fat yoghurts (opt for full fat, and reduce your portion size), soft fizzy drinks and fruit juices/smoothies. Eat only the whole fruit, not just the juice.

Why: Reduced calorie "low fat" foods are generally lower in calories because they have been processed to have their natural fats reduced and then replaced by sugar to compensate for the taste "experience". Even a glass of orange juice is very high in natural sugar (fructose) but which goes straight to the liver and is processed as fat.



Top Tip: take time to read and understand food labelling and always beware of the amount of sugar in a food. The quantity of carbohydrate in grams that is contained in the foodstuff as sugar is generally listed directly under carbohydrate on the label quite simply as “of which sugars...”. Take care to read labels of food you regularly eat e.g. breakfast cereals and that may help you to change your eating habits slowly over time.

7 Avoid alcohol

Drinks such as: Beer, wine and spirits

Why: The body views them as toxins that actively prevent the body from burning fat, reduce energy levels and encourage over-eating. Try to abstain during the week and moderate at the weekend...you can then celebrate your personal race best time with a glass of bubbly!

8 Refuel and hydrate after training

What: Hydrating and refuelling yourself appropriately between sessions and immediately post training is crucial.

Why: Water is essential for many of the body's physiological and cellular functions and these can be under enhanced stress during physical exercise. Always run well hydrated and drink more fresh water afterwards also. Aim to eat a protein and carbohydrate snack or meal within 20 to 30 minutes of running to optimise physical recovery. Remember eating and drinking post-exercise is the start of preparing for the next run.

9 Always eat breakfast

What: Porridge, poached eggs on wholemeal, rye or sourdough toast, omelette, peanut butter on toast, eggs and smoked salmon or good ham

Why: It remains the most important meal of the day, kick-starts up your metabolism after fasting through the night and ignites your body's calorie burning furnace. Breakfast preferences are individual and will also depend on when you are training in terms of composition, timing and digestion. If you are looking to incorporate weight loss as a part of your running programme, opt for the protein biased foods mentioned here and cut out breakfast cereals and high-sugar juices.



10 Nutrition on race day and post-race day

What: No matter that you may be running relatively short distances on race day, whether you are experienced or a beginner runner you definitely don't want to feel unwell as a result of eating the wrong foods on race day!

How: Experimentation is vital to narrowing down what foods you like to eat before and after running, plus what foods “agree” with you and don't upset your system! Most races will be early so this will involve knowing what is your ideal breakfast, how long you should eat before the race, managing your bowel movements and taking extra calories in the form of a snack in a container for after the race. For short races there is little or no requirement to use expensive and sugary gels and liquid energy drinks. After your race, the first thing you should do is hydrate yourself with some water and if you sweat heavily you may want to consider dissolving a carb-free electrolyte tab. After this, there is a well established “window” in which your body best refuels itself. For a short 5 or 10K race a protein shake would be an ideal snack but within 2 hours, you should have eaten a well-balanced meal which includes protein, fat and carbohydrate in the form of vegetables.





Exercise Training Principles

Training for an event or even just exercising for the physical and mental health benefits it conveys can be highly rewarding. One of the many unique qualities of the human body is its ability to respond and adapt to regular exercise and so training with a progressive load and effort will bring improvements over a period of time. For this improvement to occur, your body must be confronted with some form of physical “stress” for the body to respond to, whether that is weights in the gym, a run outdoors or a hilly bike ride. This ‘stress’ will leave the body feeling some discomfort in the form of muscle soreness if you are unaccustomed to the type of activity that you are performing. This exercise-induced damage to the muscle fibres is known as DOMS or Delayed Onset Muscle Soreness and symptoms appear 24 hours after exercise, but can last for as long as 72 hours as they subside. This muscle “damage” is perfectly normal and part of the natural adaption process that allows muscles to become larger and stronger.

As well as building your aerobic base, it is recommended that even training plans for short race events incorporate some strength and conditioning elements so that you can cope with the relative intensity and load later in the programme. This will also allow your muscles, tendons and ligaments to adapt to this load with reduced risk of injury and discomfort. With these principles in place, a good training plan will allow your body to adapt slowly, train consistently, progress continuously and rest regularly, to ensure you can complete good quality training throughout the duration of your programme.





Injury Prevention

No matter the distance you are actually running during your targeted race, it is the relative volume of miles that you will clock up during training that will take their toll on you, especially if you are a relative beginner runner. With that in mind, there are certain aspects of an effective training programme that you overlook at your peril if you want to train unencumbered by injury!

Strength and conditioning

A simple circuit of exercises should be incorporated at least once a week to condition our joints and ligaments and strengthen our muscles and the tendons that attach them to our bones. In combination, these structures hold our body together whilst the muscles move us in distinct and controlled “movement patterns”. When these large muscles become fatigued and tight (through training) then we may develop problems which can lead to injury if left unaddressed. As bipeds, we only run on one leg at-a-time and so our training should incorporate single-leg exercises to maximise the strength and resilience of the “running muscles” (the calf, hamstrings, quadriceps, and gluteal or bottom muscles) along with the core stability muscles that will help maximise your running efficiency and strength. If you are a member of a gym, speak to an in-house personal trainer who can help you with a programme, or consult with a sports-specialist Chartered Physiotherapist.



Stretching

It has been long believed that stretching provides a longer, smoother stride and reduces your risk of falling foul to injury. Before your run, perform a routine of active “dynamic movements” to warm up the muscles and take your joints through their full range of motion to prepare them for exercise. You can create your own dynamic warm up incorporating hip swings, gentle squats, lunges, calf raises all with smooth movements at first so as not to make any sudden aggressive movements that may aggravate soft tissues or joint spaces. The time to do your static stretching is after your run, when you can stretch (without straining) calves, ITB, hip flexors, quads, hamstrings and glutes (as a minimum). Hold each stretch at the end of that muscle’s range of movement for about 20 to 30 seconds without bouncing. The whole post-exercise stretching process should not last more than 10 to 15 minutes and you will notice quite a difference in how flexible you are after performing these consistently for 2 to 3 weeks.

Sports massage is widely used by runners of longer distances to help recovery from a runners training regime in addition to a regular stretching routine. Sports massage can release muscle tension by helping disperse tight and painful trigger points, keep soft tissue in good health and help to flush away waste products. The best way to find a reputable sports masseuse is upon recommendation from other runners.



Managing an injury

Should you be unfortunate enough to become injured then stop training immediately and consult a relevant professional for advice. Good starting points are asking for a personal recommendation from other runners on a sports-specific Chartered Physiotherapist or osteopath. If it is a soft tissue strain, alleviate any inflammation by icing the area for 20 minutes every 2 hours or so and resting. Make sure you don't put ice directly on your skin as it could result in an ice burn. Eat foods with anti-inflammatory properties such as garlic, turmeric, green tea, dark berries and dark chocolate all whilst ensuring you eat a healthy well-balanced diet, with protein to encourage muscle and tissue repair and plenty of nutrient dense foods such as fruit and vegetables to optimise your health and aid your general recovery (vitamins and minerals help support collagen formation, enhance immune cell function and promote wound healing).

Good Luck!

We hope that you have enjoyed reading this 5k & 10k running guide and it and the relevant training programme that you will see and feel a difference to your health, fitness and well being. Hopefully you will have achieved some personal goals and may be thinking about your next race already! Guide Dogs have lots of different events throughout the year, whether you're looking to improve your time or would like to try a new challenge, and so please use the following link to browse our website

www.guidedogs.org.uk/events

Thank you for your support of Guide Dogs.

Guide Dogs Events Team





Training Programmes

5K Training Plan - Beginner

If you are someone who is not a regular runner, or in fact barely runs at all, then this programme is a great way to get you started. Even without an event in mind it will help improve your fitness, but it will also serve to see you through your first 5K (3.1 mile) race if you have one planned. However, even within the “beginner runner” category there will be a broad level of abilities and fitness catered for with everyone starting from a different base level of fitness and factors such as age, experience, gender, motivation and expectation all playing a part. This 5K programme sets out a schedule of running 3 times each week on a Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday and needs to be challenging enough to prepare you appropriately, but not so demanding that you feel out of your depth and fall behind the schedule. The training days can be adjusted to suit your lifestyle commitments but you should adhere to the amount of rest time between sessions.

Week 1 - Getting Started

	Training	Training Notes
Mon	Rest Day	Even as a new or inexperienced runner, you should still give consideration to keeping a simple notebook to act as a training diary in which to include your training experiences, what things you struggle with, if any, and what you do well and enjoy doing... it can reward you with a broader training experience and be fun looking back once you've completed the race!
Tues	Run walk run	Run 1 min - Walk 2 mins. Do 6 times
Wed	Rest Day	
Thurs	Run walk run	Run 1 min - Walk 1 min. Do 10 times
Fri	Rest Day	If your legs are feeling tight do some extra static stretches for the running muscles and your lower back.
Sat	Rest Day	
Sun	Run walk run	Run 2 min - Walk 4 mins. Do 5 times

Week 2

	Training	Training Notes
Mon	Rest Day	
Tues	Run walk run	Run 3 mins - Walk 3 mins. Do 4 times
Wed	Rest Day	
Thurs	Run walk run	Run 3 mins - Walk 3 mins. Do 4 times
Fri	Rest Day	If your legs are feeling tight do some extra static stretches for the running muscles and your lower back.
Sat	Rest Day	
Sun	Run walk run	Run 5 mins - Walk 3 mins. Do 3 times

**Week 3**

	Training	Training Notes
Mon	Rest Day	
Tues	Run walk run	Run 6 mins - Walk 2 mins. Do 4 times
Wed	Rest Day	
Thurs	Run walk run	Run 7 mins - Walk 2 mins. Do 3 times
Fri	Rest Day	If your legs are feeling tight do some extra static stretches for the running muscles and your lower back.
Sat	Rest Day	
Sun	Run walk run	Run 8 mins - Walk 2 mins. Do 3 times

Week 4 - Half done & half to go!

	Training	Training Notes
Mon	Rest Day	
Tues	Run walk run	Run 9 mins - Walk 2 mins. Do 3 times
Wed	Rest Day	
Thurs	Run walk run	Run 10 mins - Walk 2 mins. Do twice and then run at an easy pace for 5 mins
Fri	Rest Day	If your legs are feeling tight do some extra static stretches for the running muscles and your lower back.
Sat	Rest Day	
Sun	Run walk run	Run 8 mins - Walk 1 min. Do 3 times

Week 5

	Training	Training Notes
Mon	Rest Day	
Tues	Run walk run	Run 9 mins - Walk 1 min. Do 3 times
Wed	Rest Day	
Thurs	Run walk run	Run 12 mins - Walk 2 mins. Do twice and then run at an easy pace for 6 mins
Fri	Rest Day	If your legs are feeling tight do some extra static stretches for the running muscles and your lower back.
Sat	Rest Day	
Sun	Run	Run continuously for 2 miles. Use online maps to measure your run distance accurately. If you have a time you would like to run the race in, bear that in mind today as this run is two-thirds of the race distance. Be aware of how you feel as you run and try to maintain a good, but relaxed, pace for the full 2 miles. Make sure that you drink water to rehydrate whilst you stretch your legs thoroughly post-run. Note down post-run thoughts in your training diary if you are keeping one.



Week 6 - Race week!

	Training	Training Notes
Mon	Rest Day	If your legs are feeling tight, do some extra static stretches for the running muscles and your lower back.
Tues	Run walk run	Run 15 mins - Walk 1 min. Do 2 times
Wed	Rest Day	Do some extra static stretches for the running muscles and your lower back.
Thurs	Run walk run	Run 9 mins - Walk 1 min. Do 3 times
Fri	Rest Day	Do some extra static stretches for the running muscles and your lower back.
Sat	Rest Day	Organise all the preparation for the race at the beginning of today so you can spend the bulk of it relaxing as much as possible. Eat well, drink plenty of water and get a sound night's sleep knowing you've prepared well.
Sun	Race Day	If you have followed the plan as much as possible, then you will be well prepared to run your first 5K race or set a personal best time if you have run one previously. Good luck!





10K Training Plan - Beginner

This 10K training plan has been written for 'beginner' level runners who have done a little running before but are making the step up to the 10K race for the first time. However, even within the 'beginner' category there will be a broad level of ability and fitness catered for with everyone starting from a different base level of fitness and factors such as age, experience, gender, motivation and expectation all playing a part. This 10K training plan features 3 exercise sessions over an 8 week period and must be challenging enough to prepare you appropriately, but not so demanding that you feel out of your depth and fall behind the schedule.

NOTE: in order to be able to pace yourself, decide what time you want to complete the race in and then use a pace chart to calculate what your average mile pace needs to be over the 6.2 miles of the race **e.g. to run a 10K race in 60 minutes means running every mile at an average of 9 minutes 39 seconds.**

Week 1 - Getting Started

	Training	Training Notes
Mon	Rest Day	Give consideration to keeping a simple notebook to act as a training diary in which to include your training experiences, what things you struggle with, if any, and what you do well and enjoy doing...it can reward you with a broader training experience and be fun looking back once you've completed the race!
Tues	Run walk run	Run 15 mins - Walk 1 to 2 mins - Run 15 mins
Wed	Rest Day	
Thurs	Run walk run	Run 16 mins - Walk 1 to 2 mins - Run 16 mins
Fri	Rest Day	
Sat	ACTIVE REST DAY	The inclusion of an optional "active" rest day allows you to do some additional cross-training style exercise the day before your weekly run that won't impact on your running energy or form. You could choose to go swimming, an excellent all-round conditioning activity, or lift some light weights as part of a resistance circuit at the gym or by using bodyweight exercises at home or in the park. Cycling once a week can be good to keep the legs ticking over in a non-impact way, as long as the ride is fairly gentle and flat.
Sun	Run 2 miles continuously	The first of your longer weekly runs. Use online maps or a GPS watch to plot and measure your run distance accurately. Decide beforehand what you want your actual "race pace" time to be come race day and keep that in mind as you run today. Try and run relaxed but steadily for the full distance. Make sure that you drink water to rehydrate whilst you stretch thoroughly post-run. Note down post-run thoughts on your first week in your training diary if you are keeping one.



Week 2

Training		Training Notes
Mon	Rest Day	
Tues	Run walk run	Run 18 mins - Walk 1 to 3 mins - Run 18 mins
Wed	Rest Day	
Thurs	Run walk run	Run 18 mins - Walk 1 to 3 mins - Run 18 mins
Fri	Rest Day	
Sat	ACTIVE REST DAY	Swim, cycle, walk or go to the gym.
Sun	Run 5km (3.1 miles) continuously	Remember your goal 'race pace' and try and maintain the steady pace of your first long run to start understanding how your steady-to-race pace compares to a midweek easy pace run and note this in your training diary. Use online maps or a GPS watch to plot and measure your run distance and time your run accurately using your wrist stop watch. Rehydrate whilst you stretch post-run.

Week 3 - Building up

Training		Training Notes
Mon	Rest Day	
Tues	30 min continuous run	Run continuously for 30 minutes at an easy pace (EP). EP running is at a pace that is comfortable enough for you to be able to hold a conversation whilst running. Don't run so fast that you're breathless, but ensure you time your run and complete the full 30 minutes. Stretch all the running muscles after the run and drink fresh water to hydrate.
Wed	Rest Day	
Thurs	32 min continuous run	Run continuously for 32 minutes at an easy pace. Stretch and rehydrate afterwards and update your diary if you are keeping one with how you felt on your run.
Fri	Rest Day	
Sat	ACTIVE REST DAY	Swim, cycle or walk as good non or low level impact activities
Sun	Run 5km (3.1 miles) continuously	Remember your goal 'race pace' and try and maintain the steady pace of your first long run to start understanding how your steady-to-race pace compares to a midweek easy pace run and note this in your training diary. Use online maps or a GPS watch to plot and measure your run distance and time your run accurately using your wrist stop watch. Rehydrate whilst you stretch post-run. Plan to eat a nutrient dense meal within 60 minutes or so of finishing the run.



Week 4

	Training	Training Notes
Mon	Rest Day	If your legs are feeling tight, static stretch the running muscles or even use a foam roller. Eat and sleep well in preparation for week 4. Remember to keep your training diary up-to-date also.
Tues	32 min continuous run	Run continuously for 32 minutes at an easy pace. Stretch and rehydrate afterwards.
Wed	Rest Day	
Thurs	35 min continuous run	Run continuously for 35 minutes at an easy pace. Stretch and rehydrate afterwards.
Fri	Rest Day	
Sat	ACTIVE REST DAY	Swim, cycle, walk or go to the gym.
Sun	Run 40 minutes continuously	Remember your goal 'race pace' as you run and time your run accurately. Rehydrate with water or a protein shake whilst you stretch post-run.

Week 5 - Half done & half to go!

	Training	Training Notes
Mon	Rest Day	You are half way through the training plan already! Rest up but if your legs are feeling tight, do some additional static stretching. Eat and sleep well for recovery and in preparation for week 5.
Tues	35 min continuous run	Run continuously for 35 minutes at an easy pace. Stretch and rehydrate afterwards.
Wed	Rest Day	
Thurs	40 min continuous run	Run continuously for 40 minutes at an easy pace. Stretch the running muscles thoroughly whilst rehydrating afterwards.
Fri	Rest Day	
Sat	ACTIVE REST DAY	Swim, cycle or have a leisurely walk
Sun	Run 4 miles continuously	This run is two-thirds of the 10K race distance so be aware of how you feel as you run and try to maintain a good pace throughout. Use online maps or a GPS watch to plot and measure your run distance accurately and ensure you time your run. Rehydrate whilst you stretch post-run. Update your training diary.


Week 6

	Training	Training Notes
Mon	Rest Day	If your legs are feeling tight do some extra static stretching for the running muscles. Eat and sleep well for recovery and in preparation for week 6.
Tues	35 min continuous run	Run continuously for 35 minutes at an easy pace. Stretch and rehydrate afterwards.
Wed	Rest Day	
Thurs	42 min continuous run	Run continuously for 42 minutes at an easy pace. Stretch the running muscles thoroughly whilst rehydrating afterwards.
Fri	Rest Day	
Sat	ACTIVE REST DAY	Gentle walk/easy swim/other exercise without taxing the legs.
Sun	Run 50 minutes continuously	Remember your goal 'race pace' as you run and time your run accurately to compare your progress with previous runs and your race-pace goal. Rehydrate with water or a protein shake whilst you stretch post-run.

Week 7

	Training	Training Notes
Mon	Rest Day	If your legs are feeling tight do some extra static stretching for the running muscles. Eat and sleep well for recovery and in preparation for week 7.
Tues	45 min continuous run	Run continuously for 45 minutes at an easy pace. Stretch and rehydrate afterwards.
Wed	Rest Day	
Thurs	42 min continuous run	Run continuously for 42 minutes at an easy pace. Stretch the running muscles thoroughly whilst rehydrating afterwards.
Fri	Rest Day	Static stretch the running muscles and lower back and foam roll the ITBs and any other soft tissues as needed to keep tightness and niggles at bay.
Sat	ACTIVE REST DAY	Gentle walk/easy swim/other exercise without taxing the legs before tomorrow's longer run.
Sun	Run 10km (6 miles) continuously	Think of today as your race day dress rehearsal! Use online maps or a GPS watch to plot and measure your run distance accurately and time your run to give you an idea of your progress against your race day aims. Try and maintain a good pace throughout the run. Rehydrate whilst you stretch the legs and lower back post-run and eat a high-protein and low GI carb meal within an hour or so. Try a protein shake immediately post-run too.



Week 8 - Race Week

	Training	Training Notes
Mon	Rest Day	Review and update your training diary ahead of your final week. Address any soft tissue niggles. Spend some time on foot care. Consider having a sports massage for this week if your legs are tighter than usual. Eat and sleep well during the week, stay hydrated and avoid alcohol completely.
Tues	45 min continuous run	Run continuously for 45 minutes at an easy pace. Stretch really whilst rehydrating post-run.
Wed	Rest Day	
Thurs	30 min continuous run	Run continuously for 30 minutes at an easy pace. Stretch thoroughly whilst rehydrating post-run.
Fri	ACTIVE REST DAY	Rest or go for a swim to work your cardio and core, but with no impact on the legs and back
Sat	Rest Day	Organise all the preparation and mental planning/strategy for the race at the start of the day so you can spend the bulk of it relaxing as much as possible. Eat well, stay hydrated and get a sound night's sleep knowing you've prepared well.
Sun	RACE DAY	If you have followed the plan as much as possible then you will be well prepared to run your first 10K race. Good luck!





10K Training Plan - Intermediate

This 10K training plan has been written for “intermediate” level runners who have previously trained for and run at least one 10K race, but are now wanting an increasingly structured approach to their training in order to record a faster 10K time. However, even within this category there will be a broad level of abilities and fitness catered for with everyone starting from a different base level of fitness and factors such as age, experience, gender, motivation and expectation all playing a part. This 10K training plan features 4 to 5 mixed weekly exercise sessions over an 8 week period to provide the user with an additional focus on strength and speed. The programme must be challenging enough to prepare you appropriately, but not so demanding that you feel out of your depth and fall behind the schedule.

NOTE: in order to be able to pace yourself effectively, decide what time you want to complete the race in and then use a pace chart to calculate what your average mile pace needs to be over the 10K/6.2 miles of the race **e.g. to complete a 10K race in 50 minutes means running every mile at an average of approximately 8 minutes 03 seconds.**

Week 1 - Getting Started

	Training	Training Notes
Mon	Rest Day	Ensure you have all the necessary bits of running kit you need at the start of your 8 week schedule and give consideration to planning ahead to book a sports massage for each of the final 2 weeks as your legs would benefit prior to the race. Also give consideration to keeping a training diary in which to include your training experiences, what aspects of the schedule you struggle with, if any, and what you do well and enjoy doing, plus how you have managed any minor injuries/strains along the way...it can reward you with a broader training experience and be fun looking back once you've completed the race!
Tues	Intervals/ Speed running	Interval training combines short, intense running efforts with roughly equal periods of recovery to develop speed endurance, motivation and determination plus good running economy and form. Today do 4 x 400m with a 400m walk or slow jog recovery between each. If you have no track or way of reliably measuring a distance use time instead and run 4 x 90 secs with a 90 second slow jog or walk recovery between each run. TIP: the secret of intervals is in the recovery...patience and discipline whilst you are jog/walk recovering will allow you to run the next interval strongly and finish the batch fatigued but not utterly spent.
Wed	Core & conditioning exercises/ Yoga	Core stability and abdominal strength are vital to making you a strong runner no matter the race distance. Make sure you use this weekly session time wisely and if you don't already use it, incorporate foam rolling to keep those leg-muscle trigger points at bay, plus practice static stretching all the running muscles and your lower back too. Consider Yoga classes as an option for enhanced flexibility.



Week 1 - Getting Started - continued

Thurs	30 min Tempo running	Tempo runs are a pace that is classed as "comfortably hard" and are designed to increase the time you can run at or close to your race-pace by improving your lactate threshold i.e. delaying the point at which the build-up of lactic acid prevents you from maintaining a fast running pace. Try a 5 min warm-up, then 5 min easy pace (EP) run followed immediately by 5 min fast tempo (repeated twice), finishing with a 5 min EP run.
Fri	Rest Day	Rest properly today, but do stretch (and foam roll) the ITBs, running muscles and lower back if you feel tight. Ensure you are eating nutrient dense foods and do what you can to make sure you sleep well to optimise recovery.
Sat	Cross training	Use weekly cross training sessions to exercise for around 30 minutes without taxing your running muscles. Great non-to-low-impact examples include swimming, strength training with weights or bodyweight exercises, Pilates and yoga.
Sun	Run 4 miles	The first of your longer weekly runs. Use online maps or a GPS watch to plot and measure your run distance accurately. Decide beforehand what you want your actual "race pace" time to be come race day and keep that in mind as you run today. Run relaxed but steadily for the full distance. Make sure that you drink water or have a protein shake to rehydrate and replenish whilst you stretch thoroughly post-run. Note down post-run thoughts on your first week in your training diary if you are keeping one.




Week 2

Training		Training Notes
Mon	Rest Day	Rest up but if your legs are feeling tight, use the foam roller (especially on your ITB) and/or static stretch the legs and lower back. Eat and sleep well for recovery and in preparation for week 2.
Tues	Intervals	4 x 400m with a 400m walk or slow jog recovery between each (alternatively run 4 x 90 secs with a 90 second slow jog or walk recovery between each run). Ensure you recover well but within the time limit set.
Wed	Strength training	Whatever distance you are running, it is important to be a strong runner in order to maintain a healthy running "chassis" and minimise the risk of injury. Use these important strength sessions to focus on the crucial single-leg strength exercises for glutes, quads, hamstrings and calves before finishing with with foam rolling and static stretching for the running muscles, lower back and feet. Remember to add in core stability and abdominal strength exercises too.
Thurs	35 min Tempo running	
Fri	Rest Day	Rest properly today, but do stretch (and foam roll) the running muscles and lower back if you feel tight.
Sat	Cross training	Swim, cycle, walk or go to the gym.
Sun	Run 5 miles	Remember your goal "race pace" and try and maintain the steady pace of your first long run to start understanding how your steady-to-race pace compares to your midweek easy pace and note this in your training diary. Use online maps or a GPS watch to plot and measure your run distance and time your run accurately using your wrist stop watch. Rehydrate whilst you stretch legs and lower back thoroughly post-run.



Week 3 - Building up

Training		Training Notes
Mon	Rest Day	Rest up but if your legs are feeling tight, use the foam roller (especially on your ITB) and/or static stretch the legs and lower back. Eat and sleep well for recovery and in preparation for week 3.
Tues	Intervals	6 x 400m with a 400m walk or slow jog recovery between each (alternatively run 6 x 90 secs with a 90 second slow jog or walk recovery between each run). Ensure you recover well but within the time limit set.
Wed	30 min EP run	Easy Pace (EP) running is at a pace that is comfortable enough for you to be able to hold a conversation if you needed to. Don't run so fast that you're breathless, but ensure you time your run and complete the full 30 minutes. Stretch thoroughly afterwards and rehydrate.
Thurs	35 min Tempo running	
Fri	Rest Day	Stretch and foam roll the legs, ITB and lower back if you feel tight. Spend some time on foot care too.
Sat	Cross training	Swim, cycle or walk to top-up the cardio without stressing the legs or running chassis.
Sun	Run 6 miles	Remember your goal "race pace" and try and maintain the steady pace of your first long run to start understanding how your steady-to-race pace compares to a midweek easy pace run and note this in your training diary. Use online maps or a GPS watch to measure your run distance and time your run accurately using your wrist stop watch. Rehydrate whilst you stretch post-run.



Week 4

	Training	Training Notes
Mon	Rest Day	If your legs are feeling tight, static stretch the running muscles and foam roll. Eat and sleep well in preparation for week 4. Remember to keep your training diary up-to-date also.
Tues	Intervals	7 x 400m with a 400m walk or slow jog recovery between each (alternatively run 7 x 90 secs with a 90 second slow jog or walk recovery between each run). Ensure you recover well but within the time limit set.
Wed	Strength training	Focus on the crucial single-leg strength exercises for glutes, quads, hamstrings and calves. Also do some core stability and abdominal strength exercises before finishing with a foam roll and static stretching for the legs and lower back.
Thurs	40 min Tempo running	5 min EP, 5 min steady run, 10 min tempo (near race-pace), 5 min steady, 10 min tempo, 5 min EP.
Fri	Rest Day	
Sat	Cross training	Swim, cycle, walk or go to the gym.
Sun	Run 6 miles	A repeat of last Sunday's distance to work on speed. This is the 10K distance so remember your goal "race pace" as you run and time your run accurately. Rehydrate with water or a protein shake whilst you stretch all the leg muscles and feet post-run, plus foam roll the ITB and lower back.





Week 5 - Half done & half to go!

	Training	Training Notes
Mon	Rest Day	Your half way through the training plan already! Rest up but if your legs are feeling tight, static stretch and foam roll your ITBs and lower back. Eat and sleep well for recovery and in preparation for week 5.
Tues	Intervals	8 x 400m with a 400m walk or slow jog recovery between each (alternatively run 8 x 90 secs with a 90 second slow jog or walk recovery between each run). Ensure you recover well but within the time limit set.
Wed	Strength training	Focus on the crucial single-leg strength exercises for glutes, quads, hamstrings and calves. Also do some core stability and abdominal strength exercises before finishing with a foam roll and static stretching for the legs and lower back.
Thurs	40 min Tempo running	5 min EP, 5 min steady run, 10 min tempo (near race-pace), 5 min steady, 10 min tempo, 5 min EP.
Fri	Rest Day	Stretch and foam roll the legs, ITB and lower back if you feel tight. Self-massage your foot arches to keep the feet supple.
Sat	Cross training	Swimming
Sun	Run 7 miles	This run is just over race-day distance and will build strength and stamina into your running. Concentrate on how you feel as you run and try to maintain a good pace throughout. Use online maps or a GPS watch to plot and measure your run distance accurately and ensure you time the run. Rehydrate with a protein shake whilst you stretch post-run. Foam roll your ITBs and lower back and update your training diary.



Week 6

	Training	Training Notes
Mon	Rest Day	If your legs are feeling tight, do some extra static stretching for the running muscles and foam roll where needed e.g. both ITBs. Eat and sleep well for recovery and in preparation for week 6.
Tues	Intervals	8 x 400m with a 400m walk or slow jog recovery between each (alternatively run 8 x 90 secs with a 90 second slow jog or walk recovery between each run). Ensure you recover well but within the time limit set.
Wed	30 min EP run	Concentrate on running relaxed and with good form. Enjoy this easy pace run.
Thurs	44 min Tempo running	5 min EP, 5 min steady run, 12 min tempo (near race-pace), 5 min steady, 12 min tempo, 5 min EP.
Fri	Rest Day	Stretch and foam roll the legs, ITB and lower back if you feel tight.
Sat	Cross training	Swim, cycle, walk or go to the gym.
Sun	Run 7 miles	This additional run of just over your race-day distance will further develop strength and stamina into your running. Concentrate on how you feel as you run and try to maintain a good pace throughout. Use online maps or a GPS watch to plot and measure your run distance accurately and ensure you time the run. Rehydrate with a protein shake whilst you stretch post-run. Foam roll your ITBs and lower back and update your training diary. Assess your feet to make sure they are supple and blister free.




Week 7

Training		Training Notes
Mon	Rest Day	If your legs are feeling tight, do some extra static stretching for the running muscles. Foam roll ITBs and lower back and massage the feet. Eat and sleep well for recovery and in preparation for week 7. Book ahead for a sports massage if you think you would benefit from one next week ahead of the race.
Tues	Intervals	6 x 400m with a 400m walk or slow jog recovery between each (alternatively run 6 x 90 secs with a 90 second slow jog or walk recovery between each run). Ensure you recover well but within the time limit set.
Wed	Strength training	Focus on the crucial single-leg strength exercises for glutes, quads, hamstrings and calves. Also do some core stability and abdominal strength exercises before finishing with a thorough session of foam rolling and static stretching for the legs, lower back, ITBs and foot arches.
Thurs	50 min Tempo running	5 min EP, 5 min steady run, 15 min tempo (near race-pace), 5 min steady, 15 min tempo, 5 min EP.
Fri	Rest Day	Static stretch the running muscles and lower back. Foam roll ITB and any other soft tissues as needed to keep tightness and niggles at bay.
Sat	Cross training	Gentle walk/easy swim/other exercise without taxing the legs before tomorrow's dress-rehearsal run.
Sun	Run 6 miles	Think of today as your race day dress rehearsal! Use online maps or a GPS watch to plot and measure your run distance accurately and time yourself to give you an idea of your progress against your race day aims. With your training nearly behind you, try and maintain a consistent, high pace throughout the run. Rehydrate whilst you stretch the legs and lower back post-run and eat a high-protein and low GI carb meal within an hour or so. Try a protein shake immediately post-run too.



Week 8 - Race Week

	Training	Training Notes
Mon	Rest Day	Review and update your training diary ahead of your final week. Address any soft tissue niggles. Spend some extra time on foot care. Have your sports massage if you booked one. Eat well during the week, stay hydrated and avoid alcohol completely.
Tues	30 min EP run	Concentrate on running relaxed and with good form. Enjoy this easy pace run.
Wed	40 min Tempo running	5 min EP, 5 min steady run, 10 min tempo (near race-pace), 5 min steady, 10 min tempo, 5 min EP.
Thurs	30 min EP run	Concentrate on running relaxed and with good form. With the hard work completed, enjoy your final training run.
Fri	Rest or Swim	Rest or go for a swim to work your cardio and core, but without the impact on the legs and back
Sat	Rest Day	Organise all the preparation and mental planning/strategy for the race at the start of today so you can spend the bulk of it relaxing as much as possible. Eat well, stay hydrated and get a sound night's sleep knowing you've prepared well and trained hard.
Sun	RACE DAY	If you have followed the plan as much as possible then you will be well prepared to run a 10K personal best time. Good luck!





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