10KM BEGINNER TRAINING PROGRAM

Are you planning on running your first 10K? Then you're in the right place because this training plan can help you to get there in just three to four months.

Even if you're a complete beginner with no previous running experience, 3 to 4 months should be all you need to properly prepare for the 10K distance–if you're following the right training program (and stay injury free)

WHAT TO EXPECT IN A 10-K RACE?

Alongside 5K, the 10K, is one of the most popular race distances for beginner runners. It's an awesome event for runners of all abilities, especially newbies looking to step into their first mass-participation event.

There's something magical about the 10K distance. From one side, the 6.2-mile requires training and demands respect. But, on the other, it isn't too much of a challenge that you can't train for it.

A 10k race hits the sweet spot of being a challenge without calling for endless months of hard work and sacrifice, such as its required for half or full marathon events. It's also one level up the 5K and a great segue to the half or full marathon distance.

10K races are also more common, with events taking place most weekends all around the country. Getting a spot in a 10K race, even in the most popular events, is quite easy compared to the ballot and substantial fundraising required to secure a major marathon place.

HOW MANY MILES IN A 10K RACE?

The 'K' stands for kilometres, which is 0.6 miles or 1093.6 yards. So 10K distance is ten kilometres (10,000 meters), or 6.2 miles. As a frame of reference, to

complete a 10k distance, you'll have to: Run 25 laps around a standard outdoor track that's 400 meters long.

10K TRAINING PLAN FOR BEGINNERS — FROM COUCH TO 10K IN 13 WEEKS

The training plan below is quite challenging, and some trainees might not be ready to tackle a 10K, even after six months of training. This is especially true if you have chronic injuries or physical limitations. If any of these scenarios describe you, consult your doctor before you start any exercise program.

WALK FIRST

Start by working up to being able to walk comfortably for one hour. Can't pull that off? Then invest a few weeks (or months) in a walking routine. Walk three to four times per week, gradually building your sessions up to longer than 60 to 90 minutes each.

Once you can briskly walk for that total duration without succumbing to exhaustion, you're ready to take on the 10K training plan described below.

AVOID THE CLASSIC MISTAKE

The biggest mistake beginners make is rushing into training, trying to do too much too soon.

As a beginner, your first few runs should be a mix of running and walking, then over time, and as you get fitter, aim to build it up gradually and slowly to keep the risk of injury low. This mix helps reduce the risks of pain, injury, and burnout while improving your training enjoyment.

Even with perfect technique and £100+ shoes, running is still a high impact sport, and a beginner needs to give their body enough time to get used to and adapt to the new stimulus. Otherwise, they're looking for trouble.

WALK AND RUN RIGHT

Remember to perform the running intervals slow enough at the beginning of every run so that you'll feel tired but not completely exhausted at the end. Don't wait for too long to take walk breaks. By alternating jogging and walking from the get-go, you'll be able to speed up recovery without skipping on any of the endurance gains.

TAKE MORE WEEKS

This program is 13 weeks long, but feel free to repeat some weeks if you need to. It is for guidance, not rules.

If you feel like the plan is advancing too quickly for you, slow down and repeat a week or two. It's so much better to slow down than to let yourself get hurt or discouraged, which could force you to stop training altogether. Both your body and mind need ample time to adapt to the high demands of training, so don't rush it.

BEGINNERS' 10K TRAINING PROGRAM INSTRUCTIONS

The total workout time for each day is included so that you can plan accordingly and leave yourself enough time to get it done.

WARM UP AND COOL DOWN RIGHT

To stay safe and comfortable, start every session with 5 minutes of brisk walking as a warm-up.

The workout times listed below include 5 minutes of warming up and 5 minutes after you're done training, so you can cool down with another 5-minute easy walk.

Another thing you can do to stay injury free is to stick to a conversational pace. This means being able to maintain a conversation while you're exercising.

In other words, you should be pushing yourself at a low enough level that you could keep a conversation without too much huffing and puffing. If you're gasping for air every step of the way, you're doing too much. Slow down and let yourself recover.

More specifically, exercise within 65 to 75 percent of your maximum heart rate, which translates to a 6 to 7 on an exertion scale of 1 to 10.

CROSS TRAIN OR REST

During non-running days, you need to either cross train or rest.

Ideal cross-training exercises include biking, swimming, strength training, and yoga. All of these will help you build your endurance and stamina further. But don't underestimate the role of rest. As a rule of thumb, take one day off every week. For most people, that's usually Sunday, but it's different for different people.

THE 10K TRAINING PROGRESSION FOR BEGINNERS

The 10K training plan incorporates a mix of low intensity running — or jogging, walking, and resting.

During the three months of training, you'll gradually build your running time from 5 to 10 in the first week to 40 to 50 minutes in the last week.

Each week includes one day of complete rest, which is crucial for recovery — regardless of the distance — and 3 (optional) days for walking or cross-training,

which can help you on your feet without risking burnout.

COUCH TO 10K — MONTH ONE

The hardest phase of the training is also the first step, and it's all about getting out the door.

WEEK 1

- Session 1 - is a 26-minute workout. Run one minute, then walk two minutes and repeat seven times.
- Session 2 - is a 30-minute total workout. Run one minute, then walk two minutes and repeat eight times.
- Session 3 - is a 33-minute total workout. Run one minute, then walk two minutes and repeat nine times.

WEEK 2

- Session 1 - is a 35-minute total workout. Run two minutes, then walk two minutes and repeat five times.
- Session 2 - is a 31-minute total workout. Run 90 seconds, then walk one minute and repeat six times.
- Session 3 - is a 35-minute total workout. Run 90 seconds, then walk 30 seconds and repeat eight times.

WEEK 3

- Session 1 - is a 35-minute total workout. Run two minutes, then walk one minute and repeat six times.
- Session 2 - is a 40-minute total workout. Run two minutes, then walk one minute and repeat eight times.
- Session 3 - is a 40-minute total workout. Run two minutes, then walk 30 seconds and repeat ten times.

WEEK 4

- Session 1 - is a 40-minute total workout. Run two minutes, then walk 30 seconds and repeat ten times.
- Session 2 - is a 40-minute total workout. Run three minutes, then walk one minute and repeat six times.
- Session 3 - is a 40-minute total workout. Run three minutes, then walk 30 seconds and repeat eight times.

COUCH TO 10K — MONTH TWO

In just four weeks you've worked your way up to forty-minute workouts where you're spending two-thirds of the time running! Keep going!

WEEK 5

- Session 1 - is a 40-minute total workout. Run four minutes, then walk 90 seconds and repeat six times.
- Session 2 - is a 40-minute workout. Run four minutes, then walk 30 seconds and repeat eight times.

- Session 3 - is a 45-minute workout. Run five minutes, then walk one minute and repeat six times.

WEEK 6

- Session 1 - is a 45-minute workout. Run five minutes, then walk 30 seconds and repeat eight times.
- Session 2 - is a 45-minute workout. Run seven minutes, then walk two minutes and repeat four times.
- Session 3 - is a 45-minute workout. Run seven minutes, then walk one minute and repeat six times.

WEEK 7

- Session 1 - is a 45-minute Run eight minutes, then walk 90 seconds and repeat four times.
- Session 2 - is a 50-minute workout. Run ten minutes, then walk two minutes and repeat three times.
- Session 3 - is a 45-minute workout. Run ten minutes, then walk one minute and repeat three times.

WEEK 8

- Session 1 - is a 50-minute Run 12 minutes, then walk two minutes and repeat three times.
- Session 2 - is a 50-minute workout. Run 15 minutes, then walk 90 seconds and repeat three times.
- Session 3 - is a 50-minute workout. Run 20 minutes, then walk one minute and repeat two times.

COUCH TO 10K — MONTH THREE

This is where you start challenging yourself. Keep going strong and do what you must do to get things done. You're almost there, and you should be proud of yourself! You've got this!

WEEK 9

- Session 1 - is a 55-minute workout. Run 25 minutes, then walk for two minutes and repeat two times.
- Session 2 - is a 50-minute workout. Run 30 minutes, then walk two minutes and run 20 minutes.
- Session 3 - is a 55-minute workout. Run 35 minutes, then walk three minutes and run 15 minutes.

WEEK 10

- Session 1 - is a 50-minute workout. Run 30 minutes, then walk two minutes, then run 15 minutes.
- Session 2 - is a 55-minute workout. Run 35 minutes, then walk three minutes and then run 10 minutes.
- Session 3 - is a 45-minute workout. Run 40 minutes.

WEEK 11

- Session 1 - is a 45-minute workout. Run 40 minutes.
- Session 2 - is a 50-minute workout. Run 45 minutes.
- Session 3 - is a 60-minute workout. Run 30 minutes, then walk five minutes, then run 20 minutes.

WEEK 12

- Session 1 - is a 45-minute workout. Run 40 minutes.
- Session 2 - is a 50-minute workout. Run 45 minutes.
- Session 3 - is a 70-minute workout. Run 35 minutes, then walk three minutes, then run 20 minutes.

WEEK 13

- Session 1 - is a 60-minute workout. Run 50 minutes.
- Session 2 - is a 45-minute workout. Run 20
- minutes, then walk two minutes and repeat two times.
- Session 3 - is a 40-minute workout. Run 15 minutes, then walk two minutes and repeat two times.

LAST DAY

Race Day– YOU'VE GOT THIS!

RACE TIPS FOR BEGINNERS

Before you jump into the 10K race, keep the following tips and guidelines on mind.

Recover Well

The last week before the big day, do your 50-minute long run. But in the two to three days before the race, rest and let your body recover and recharge.

Sign Up Early

To keep training consistent, sign up for a race as early as possible. That way, you'll have a clear goal to work toward. Once you've picked an event, make sure you build your training volume gradually and slowly.

Get Ready the Night Before

To keep your mind focused on the race instead of everything else, lay your running gear and items the night before the race, then try to get as much sleep as possible, aiming for 8 to 9 of high-quality uninterrupted sleep.

Be Realistic

A 10K for a complete beginner is super hard.

Although the 10K distance is perfectly doable, set

yourself a reasonable finishing time that's personal to you and aim to have fun.

More importantly for your first race, try to get to the finish line in one piece and with a smile on your face, no matter how long it takes you to get there. Your first event should be fun.

Pace Yourself

Whether you're planning to run a 30-minute or 90-minute 10K, proper pacing is crucial to running your best race.

The key is to start slow…. If you go out faster than your goal pace, you'll risk burning out early.

Don't let your ego dictate your pace. This will only set you up for an early exit. And you don't want that.

Run the first 20 percent of the race slower than you usually would, with the goal of finishing strong.

A good idea is that you approach the 10K distance by dividing it into two 5Ks. Run the first 5K at an easy, very easy, pace. Then, once you're past the 5K mark, gradually increase your

speed and make each mile a bit faster so that once you reach the final stretch, you're at your max.

Eat For Performance

On Race Day, eat something that provides you with enough energy but without upsetting your stomach.

That's why you need to test out different eating strategies during your regular weekday runs. That's how you'd know what works and what doesn't. Race day is never the day for testing a new fuelling strategy.

Listen to Your Body

This is the most important advice –whether you end up racing or not. When you're a newcomer to the sport of running, it's going take your body a while to adapt to high-impact exercise, and this usually results in a few aches and pains.

If you're experiencing acute pain while racing, stop running immediately and seek medical help, but if you're mildly sore, rest for a day and see how you feel.