

IN
MY 5K
ERA



A 10 WEEK
BEGINNER PLAN

THEDISTANCEJOURNAL.COM

BEFORE YOU START

This plan is built for true beginners. People who have never run before, or who are coming back after a long break.

When I started, I could barely run for 30 seconds without feeling like I was dying. That's completely normal. Trust the process, go slow, and don't skip the walk breaks. They aren't a sign of weakness — they're the whole point.



A FEW GROUND RULES BEFORE WEEK 1:

- Run at a conversational pace. If you can't talk, slow down.
- Rest days mean actual rest or a light walk — your body needs time to recover, especially at the start.
- Add at least one strength session per week. Your legs and joints are adapting to something brand new, and strength work is what keeps injuries away. Even 20 minutes of bodyweight exercises counts.
- Don't skip ahead. The plan builds gradually on purpose.



WEEK 1 - JUST SHOW UP

This week is about one thing: showing up. Two short sessions, lots of walking, a tiny bit of running. Your only job is to finish each session and come back next time.

Day 1

Run 30s / Walk 90s x6 (17 min total)

Day 2

Run 30s / Walk 90s x6 (12 min total)

Everything might feel hard. That's okay. Thirty seconds of running feels laughably short until you're actually doing it for the first time.

WEEK 2 - FINDING YOUR RHYTHM

You survived week 1! This week we're adding just a little more running time. Keep the pace easy. If you're huffing and puffing, slow down.

Day 1

Run 45s / Walk 90s x6

Day 2

Run 45s / Walk 90s x6

Your legs might feel a little sore between sessions. That's normal. A light walk or some gentle stretching on your off days can help.

WEEK 3 - BUILDING CONFIDENCE

We're bumping up to 1-minute run intervals this week. It doesn't sound like much, but it's double what you started with. You're already making progress.

Day 1

Run 1 min / Walk 90s x6

Day 2

Run 1 min / Walk 90s x6

This is usually the week things start to click a little. The 30-second intervals from week 1 probably feel easy now — that's your progress showing up.

WEEK 4 - STAYING CONSISTENT

Four weeks in! This week we're adding a third run day. It's a short one to ease you in, but three days is a big deal for a new runner.

Day 1

Run 90s / Walk 90s x6

Day 2

Run 90s / Walk 90s x5

Day 3

Run 1 min / Walk 2 min x4

Three days might feel like a lot at first. If you need an extra rest day, take it. The goal is to keep coming back, not to hit every session perfectly.

WEEK 5 - GETTING COMFORTABLE

The intervals are getting longer but the walk breaks are still there. Don't let anyone tell you walk breaks are cheating! They're literally built into the plan on purpose.

Day 1

Run 2 min/ Walk 2 min x5

Day 2

Run 2 min/ Walk 2 min x5

Day 3

Run 90s / Walk 90s x6

Two-minute intervals are where a lot of beginners start to notice their breathing settling down a little. If yours hasn't yet, you're probably still going too fast.

WEEK 6 - THE HALFWAY POINT

You're halfway there! This week the run intervals stretch to 3 minutes. Stay slow, stay steady, and trust that your body is adapting even when it doesn't feel like it.

Day 1

Run 3 min/ Walk 2 min x4

Day 2

Run 3 min/ Walk 2 min x4

Day 3

Run 2 min / Walk 2 min x5

Halfway feels good. Look back at week 1 — you were running 30 seconds at a time. Now you're running 3 minutes. That's progress.

WEEK 7 - LONGER EFFORTS

This week we push to 5-minute continuous runs. It might feel intimidating but you've been building to this for 6 weeks. Slow down if you need to, but try to keep moving.

Day 1

Run 5 min/ Walk 2 min x3

Day 2

Run 5 min/ Walk 2 min x3

Day 3

Run 3 min / Walk 90s x4

Five minutes continuous might feel like a wall. If you need to walk for 30 seconds in the middle, do it and start back up. Keep going.

WEEK 8 - BUILDING TO 10

Double digits this week. Your first 10-minute continuous run is on the horizon and you are more ready than you think.

Day 1

Run 8 min/ Walk 2 min/ Run 5 min

Day 2

Run 10 min/ Walk if needed

Day 3

Run 5 min / Walk 2 min x3

Ten minutes of continuous running is a huge milestone. If you get there and need to walk, walk — then pick back up. The goal is time on your feet.

WEEK 9 - ALMOST THERE

One week out from your 5K. This week is about building confidence and running longer stretches with less walking. You've got this.

Day 1

Run 15 min/ Walk if needed

Day 2

Run 20 min/ Walk if needed

Day 3

Run 10 min / Walk 2 min/ Run 5 min

Twenty minutes might feel really long. Go slower than you think you need to. Seriously — slow down. A slow 20 minutes beats a fast 10 minutes that ends in a walk every time.

WEEK 10 - 5K WEEK

This is it. By the end of this week you are going to run a 5K. It doesn't matter how long it takes. It matters that you cross the finish line.

Day 1

Run 20-25 min (easy, shaking out the legs)

Day 2

Rest or very light walk — save your energy

Day 3

Run your 5K. Go slow, smile, and remember week 1.

You're going to want to go out fast on race day. Don't. Start slow, find your pace, and finish strong. The fact that you're there at all is already a win.

🌸 You did it! 🌸

What's next? Whether you want to get faster, go longer, or just keep showing up, I've got you.

Head to thedistancejournal.com for more training tips, honest guides, and resources for every stage of your running journey.

And if this plan helped you, share it with a friend who's been thinking about starting. You might just be the reason they lace up for the first time.



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