

Spark's 8-Week 5k Training Programs

You need to choose from one of the following training program options: walk/run, run/walk, beginner run, and advance run. Below is more information on each option. Please note all options are 8-weeks, all have 3 run days (Mo,We,Sat), 2 cross training days (Tu,Th) and 2 rest days (Fri, Sun). It is important that runners follow the schedule as much as possible! It is very important that easy runs, easy intervals, and rest days are exactly that. It is important for recovery and injury prevention that these plans are followed as written. These are designed to build day after day and week after week. If you are having difficulty completing the workouts each day/week, please consider switching to one with more walking. On the flip side, if you notice you are not being challenged enough, consider switching them to an option that incorporates more running or more speed workouts.

- Walk/Run- beginners who have limited experience with running, but can walk at least 20 min
- Run/Walk- beginners who have run a little, but need to build consistency and cardio stamina. This option could be good for a runner coming back from an injury as well.
- Beginner Run- beginners who can run 20+min and are looking to build consistency
- Advance Run- For anyone who can run 30+min and want to improve their pace, or needs more challenging weekly runs.

It is important to follow the schedule as much as possible! It is very important that easy runs, easy intervals, and rest days are exactly that. It is important for recovery and injury prevention that these plans are followed as written. These are designed to build day after day and week after week. Begin every work out with a warm up and cool down. A good warm up is a 10 min brisk walk incorporating your dynamic stretches, and cool down with a 5 min walk and stretch any tight muscles. Be sure to drink water before, during, and after your workout!

Some terms to know and understand:

Pace Pushes- on the Beginner and Advance Run options we use “pace pushes” as an introduction to speed workouts and pace differential. For “pace pushes” runners should run their timed workout and incorporate 4 Pace Push intervals for 30-60 seconds. For the Pace Push interval, runners simply need to pick up their pace to one they find challenging, but sustainable for the 30-60 seconds.

Cross Training- Cross training days are important to keep runners moving and their muscles loose without adding more strain. Cross training can be anything that keeps limbs moving and heart rates elevated! Bike riding, playing sports, dancing, walking the dog, etc.- a great time to get creative and find more joy in movement!

1 mile time trial- A 1-mile time trial should begin with an easy 10 min warm up, some light dynamic stretching and then 1-mile hard effort. By starting off the training programs with a 1-mile time trial it can give parents, teachers, and runners an idea of where they are. This can be a good metric to decide which training program option is appropriate. Also, a great way to get runners accustomed to distance and pace.

Effort Levels: Most training throughout the week should be done at an easy effort level (unless specified for Pace Pushes and speed workouts). Building a running base at an easy sustainable

effort is instrumental in keeping runners injury free and encouraged throughout the training process.

- Easy Effort- this should be conversational. Runners should pick a pace that they can sustain while holding a conversation. An easy way to phrase this for younger runners could be: Can you still sing your favorite song?
- Medium Effort- this should be a pace runners can sustain for the duration of the intended workout. Runners should still be able to talk, but probably not carry on a long conversation. An easy way to phrase this: Can you say your full name and favorite color?
- Hard Effort- this should be a pace that runners can reach, but can only sustain during the intended interval. Runners should still be verbally responsive, but not carry on a conversation. An easy way to phrase this: Can you answer yes or no out loud?

Dynamic Stretching- Stretches done during the warm-up prior to each run where runners are stretching key running muscles while still moving, warming up muscles, and slowly raising their heart rate. See the supplemental page for dynamic stretches.

BASIC PRE- AND POST-RUN STRETCHES

A good understanding of the muscle groups used in running will allow us to maintain a healthy amount of flexibility and mobility in our joints and muscles to help prevent injury as we increase our mileage. Learning to stretch before and after our runs will be key to preventing injury and allow us to build our strength, endurance, and speed. Some stretches (STATIC) can be done both before and after, and some stretches (DYNAMIC) are designed as pre-run stretches.



Quad Stretch

Reach behind you to grab the opposite foot. Pull the heel to the middle of the buttocks. If needed hold onto something for balance. You should feel this stretch on the front of the thigh. Hold 30 seconds to get an optimal stretch. To get more upper thigh or hip flexor pull the entire leg further back behind you.



Glute Stretch

This is meant to stretch the muscles of the buttocks. Sitting on the ground, pull one leg upward toward the chest and toward the opposite shoulder. Hold this stretch for 30 seconds for an optimal stretch.



Calf Stretch

Leaning forward against a wall, stagger the legs with one leg forward and one behind. Keep both toes pointing forward. The leg in the back is the one you are stretching. Attempt to keep the heel in contact with the ground as you lunge or shift your weight forward. There are actually two stretches that need to occur here to stretch two separate muscles. Pictured on the Left is the Gastrocnemius (Upper Calf) stretch where the back knee is kept straight. Pictured on the Right is the Soleus (Lower Calf) stretch where the back knee is bent. Hold each stretch for 30 seconds for an optimal stretch.



Hamstring Stretch

Standing with feet about shoulder width apart, bend forward at the hips, attempting to keep the knees as straight as possible. You will feel the stretch in the back of the thighs, most likely behind the knees. Hold for 30 seconds to get an optimal stretch. You can emphasize one leg more than the other by reaching both hands toward one foot.



Dynamic Lateral Leg Swings

This can be performed with hands on a wall or vehicle for balance or with hands on the hips if you feel well-balanced. While keeping the knees straight, swing one leg in front of you from side to side. This will stretch the inner and outer thigh and assist with overall hip mobility before a run. It is also a good way to get a little stretch on the IT band, which is infamous for causing knee pain in runners. You should swing the leg fairly quickly back and forth with enough range to feel a stretch in both directions. Performing anywhere from 10-20 repetitions in each direction should be sufficient.



Dynamic Forward & Backward Leg Swings

This can be performed with one hand on the wall, while you swing the leg forward and backward. You should feel the stretch on the hamstring (back of the thigh) as you swing forward and a stretch on the quads (front of the thigh) as you swing back. To increase the stretch on the quad, slightly bend the knee as you swing backward. Be sure to keep the knee straight as you swing forward to stretch the hamstring. You should swing the leg fairly quickly back and forth with enough range to feel a stretch in both directions. Performing anywhere from 10-20 repetitions in each direction should be sufficient.



Before beginning any training, you should be medically able. If you have questions, please consult your doctor. These training programs are intended as outlines and the Spark Foundation does not guarantee any performance or race completion as a result of following these plans

8 Week Walk/Run 5k Training Program

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Week 1	1 mile time trial	24 Min Run 1 min/Walk 3min Repeat 6 times	30 min cross training	24 Min Run 1 min/Walk 3min Repeat 6 times	30 min cross train	REST	28 Min Run 1 min/Walk 3min Repeat 7 times
Week 2	REST	28 Min Run 1 min/Walk 3min Repeat 7 times	30 min cross train	28 Min Run 1 min/Walk 3min Repeat 7 times	30 min cross train	REST	28 Min Run 1 min/Walk 3min Repeat 7 times
Week 3	REST	30 Min Run 2 min/Walk 3min Repeat 6 times	30 min cross train	30 Min Run 2 min/Walk 3min Repeat 6 times	30 min cross train	REST	35 Min Run 2 min/Walk 3min Repeat 7 times
Week 4	REST	30 Min Run 2 min/Walk 3min Repeat 6 times	30 min cross train	36 Min Run 2 min/Walk 2min Repeat 9 times	30 min cross train	REST	40 Min Run 2 min/Walk 2min Repeat 10 times
Week 5	REST	36 Min Run 2 min/Walk 2min Repeat 9 times	30 min cross train	36 Min Run 2 min/Walk 2min Repeat 9 times	30 min cross train	REST	40 Min Run 2 min/Walk 2min Repeat 10 times
Week 6	REST	36 Min Run 2 min/Walk 2min Repeat 9 times	30 min cross train		30 min cross train	REST	36 Min Run 2 min/Walk 2min Repeat 9 times
Week 7	REST	36 Min Run 2 min/Walk 2min Repeat 9 times	30 min cross train	36 Min Run 2 min/Walk 2min Repeat 9 times	30 min cross train	REST	40 Min Run 2 min/Walk 2min Repeat 10 times
Week 8	REST	32 Min Run 2 min/Walk 2min Repeat 8 times	30 min cross train	32 Min Run 2 min/Walk 2min Repeat 8 times	30 min cross train	10 min run	RACE DAY!

8 Week Run/Walk 5k Training Program

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Week 1	1 mile time trial	25 min Run 3 min/Walk 2 min Repeat 5 times	30 min cross training	25 min Run 3 min/Walk 2 min Repeat 5 times	30 min cross train	REST	30min Run 3 min/Walk 2 min Repeat 6 times
Week 2	REST	30min Run 3 min/Walk 2 min Repeat 6 times	30 min cross train	Run 3 min/Walk 2 min Repeat 6 times	30 min cross train	REST	35min Run 3 min/Walk 2 min Repeat 7 times
Week 3	REST	30min Run 3 min/Walk 2 min Repeat 6 times	30 min cross train	35min Run 3 min/Walk 2 min Repeat 7 times	30 min cross train	REST	36min Run 4 min/Walk 2 min Repeat 6 times
Week 4	REST	36min Run 4 min/Walk 2 min Repeat 6 times	30 min cross train	35 min Run 4 min/Walk 1 min Repeat 7 times	30 min cross train	REST	40min Run 4 min/Walk 1 min Repeat 8 times
Week 5	REST	40min Run 4 min/Walk 1 min Repeat 8 times	30 min cross train	40min Run 4 min/Walk 1 min Repeat 8 times	30 min cross train	REST	42min Run 5 min/Walk 1 min Repeat 8 times
Week 6	REST	40min Run 4 min/Walk 1 min Repeat 8 times	30 min cross train	42min Run 5 min/Walk 1 min Repeat 8 times	30 min cross train	REST	42min Run 5 min/Walk 1 min Repeat 8 times
Week 7	REST	40min Run 4 min/Walk 1 min Repeat 8 times	30 min cross train	40min Run 4 min/Walk 1 min Repeat 8 times	30 min cross train	REST	42min Run 5 min/Walk 1 min Repeat 8 times
Week 8	REST	30min Run 5 min/Walk 1 min Repeat 5 times	30 min cross train	30 min run with "pace pushes"	30min Run 5 min/Walk 1 min Repeat 5 times	10 min run	RACE DAY!

8 Week Beginner Run 5k Training Program

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Week 1	1 mile time trial	25 min run	30 min cross training	25 min run	30 min cross train	REST	30 min run
Week 2	REST	25 min run	30 min cross train	30 min run	30 min cross train	REST	35 min run
Week 3	REST	30 min run	30 min cross train	25 min run	30 min cross train	REST	35 min run
Week 4	REST	30 min run	30 min cross train	35 min run with "pace pushes"	30 min cross train	REST	40 min run
Week 5	REST	35 min run	30 min cross train	40 min run with "pace pushes"	30 min cross train	REST	45 min run
Week 6	REST	40 min run	30 min cross train	40 min run with "pace pushes"	30 min cross train	REST	45 min run
Week 7	REST	40 min run	30 min cross train	35 min run with "pace pushes"	30 min cross train	REST	45 min run
Week 8	REST	35 min run	30 min cross train	30 min run with "pace pushes"	30 min cross train	10 min run	RACE DAY!

8 Week Advance Run 5k Training Program

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Week 1	1 mile time trial	40 min run medium	30 min cross training	45 min run medium w/ "pace pushes"	30 min cross train	40 min run easy	50 min run easy
Week 2	REST	45 min run	30 min cross training	10 min easy + 1 min hard/3 min easy X5	30 min cross train	40 min run easy	45 min run
Week 3	REST	45 min run	30 min cross training	10 min easy + 1 min hard/3 min easy X5	30 min cross train	40 min run easy	60 min run
Week 4	REST	45 min run	30 min cross train	10 min easy + 2 min hard/3 min easy X5	30 min cross train	40 min run	60 min run
Week 5	REST	45 min run	30 min cross train	10 min easy + 2 min hard/3 min easy X5	30 min cross train	40 min run	50 min run
Week 6	REST	45 min run	30 min cross train	10 min easy + 2 min hard/3 min easy X5	30 min cross train	40 min run	45 min run
Week 7	REST	40 min run	30 min cross train	10 min easy + 2 min hard/3 min easy X5	30 min cross train	40 min run easy	45 min run
Week 8	REST	35 min run	30 min cross train	30 min run with "pace pushes"	30 min cross train	10 min run	RACE DAY!