

NHS Couch to 5k Programme

(From <http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/c25k/Pages/couch-to-5k-plan.aspx>)

Week one

- Begin with a brisk five-minute walk, then alternate 60 seconds of running and 90 seconds of walking, for a total of 20 minutes.

Week two

- Begin with a brisk five-minute walk, then alternate 90 seconds of running with two minutes of walking, for a total of 20 minutes.

Week three

- Begin with a brisk five-minute walk, then two repetitions of 90 seconds of running, 90 seconds of walking, three minutes of running and three minutes of walking.

Week four

- Begin with a brisk five-minute walk, then three minutes of running, 90 seconds of walking, five minutes of running, two-and-a-half minutes of walking, three minutes of running, 90 seconds of walking and five minutes of running.

Week five

There are three different workouts for this week, which are:

- Workout one: a brisk five-minute walk, then five minutes of running, three minutes of walking, five minutes of running, three minutes of walking and five minutes of running.
- Workout two: a brisk five-minute walk, then eight minutes of running, five minutes of walking and eight minutes of running.
- Workout three: a brisk five-minute walk, then 20 minutes of running, with no walking.

Week six

There are three different workouts for this week, which are:

- Workout one: a brisk five-minute walk, then five minutes of running, three minutes of walking, eight minutes of running, three minutes of walking and five minutes of running.
- Workout two: a brisk five-minute walk, then 10 minutes of running, three minutes of walking and 10 minutes of running.
- Workout three: a brisk five-minute walk, then 25 minutes of running with no walking.

Week seven

- Begin with a brisk five-minute walk, then 25 minutes running.

Week eight

- Begin with a brisk five-minute walk, then 28 minutes of running.

Week nine

- Begin with a brisk five-minute walk, then 30 minutes of running.

Tips on progression

- The programme is designed for beginners to gradually build up their running ability, so that they can run 5K without stopping.
- You should try to do three runs per week. For most weeks this will be the same routine for all three runs. In weeks 5 and 6 there are different routines for each day.
- The pace of the nine-week running plan has been tried and tested by thousands of new runners, so you can trust the programme.
- You can, however, repeat any one of the weeks until you feel physically ready to move on to the next podcast.
- Structure is important for motivation, so try to allocate specific days of the week for your runs, and stick to them.
- Rest days are critical. A rest day in between each run will reduce your chance of injury and also make you a stronger, better runner. Resting allows your joints to recover from what is a high-impact exercise and your running muscles to repair and strengthen.
- Alternatively, you could do [Strength and Flex](#) on your rest days. This is a five-week plan designed to improve your strength and flexibility, which will help your running.
- Some new runners starting the programme experience calf pain or sore shins (sometimes known as [shin splints](#)). Such aches can be caused by running on hard surfaces or by running in shoes that do not have enough foot and ankle support. Always do the five-minute warm-up walks as instructed in the podcasts before each run, and check that your running shoes are offering good support. For more information on preventing and treating injuries, read this page on [sports injuries](#).
- You will have good runs and bad runs. Accept it and don't spend too much time analysing the how and why. Even a bad run is good for you.