



This 8-week beginners program is designed for individuals with little or no background in running. The workout starts out with only walking and gradually advances to walk/run workouts and finally to all running. If you feel you are a bit more advanced and would like to start with some running right away, choose your appropriate point in the program to start. Just remember not to start out too quickly.

If you have not exercised before, are over 40 years of age or have any injury or medical condition, you must get clearance from your doctor before beginning this program.

The Workouts

This program contains rest days, walking and easy runs. This is a very basic training program and is intended only to increase your fitness level to the point at which you can run 2 miles without stopping. Do not worry about speed. After you complete this program, you can move on to more advanced programs that will further improve your speed and endurance.

You will monitor and adjust the intensity of these workouts using the Rate of Perceived Exertion (RPE) scale. This is a scale that rates your workouts by how you feel. The ratings range from 1 (very light), such as sitting and watching TV, to 10(maximal effort), which is like running as fast as you possibly can.

Easy Runs

Easy runs should be run at a pace that feels comfortable to fairly comfortable, or a rating of 3 to 4 on the RPE scale. You should be breathing hard, but should be able to carry on a conversation. If you are breathing so hard that you cannot talk, you are running too hard. If you can sing, you are running too easily.

Warm up before each workout. Your warm up should consist of about 10 minutes of easy walking. After your workout, gently stretch all of your major muscle groups. Do not stretch until your muscles are warmed up.

Rest

Rest is a very important part of any training program. Without proper rest, your muscles and connective tissues will not have an opportunity to recover and strengthen properly. On the days calling for complete rest, do no strenuous activity. On the days calling for rest or cross training, you can rest totally or do some cross training. Cross training can be any activity other than running. You could go for a walk, swim, bicycle or do nothing. It is up to you.

Week 1

Monday - Rest. You will have two rest days per week. If you feel you need more rest days, take them. In these early stages you do not want to do more than your body is ready for.

Tuesday - Walk for 30 minutes at a comfortable pace. Since this is your first workout, take it nice and easy. Walk at a pace that gets your heart rate up and makes your breath heavier than normal, but you should not be out of breath.

Wednesday - Walk for 30 minutes at a comfortable pace. Same workout as yesterday.

Thursday - Walk/Jog for 30 minutes. Walk for 5 minutes and then jog for 30 seconds. Follow that sequence for the entire workout. This is your first taste of running. Do not run for more than 30 seconds at a time. Run at a pace that is fairly comfortable.

Friday - Rest. Let your body recover from its first encounter with running.

Saturday - Walk/Jog for 30 minutes. Walk for 5 minutes and jog for 30 seconds. This is the same workout as Thursday. Keep your pace comfortable.

Sunday - Walk/Jog for 30 minutes. You make a slight increase in the jogging interval here. Walk for 5 minutes and jog for 1 minute. You will start making consistent increases in the time of your running intervals.

Week 2

Monday - Rest. Every Monday is a rest day in this program.

Tuesday - Walk/Jog for 30 minutes. Walk for 5 minutes and jog for 1 minute. Keep the pace fairly comfortable.

Wednesday - Walk/Jog for 30 minutes. This will be an easy day. Walk for 5 minutes and jog for 30 seconds.

Thursday - Walk/Jog for 30 minutes. Walk for 5 minutes and jog for 1 minute.

Friday - Rest or cross train. Either totally rest or engage in another activity such as biking or swimming.

Saturday - Walk/Jog for 30 minutes. Another increase here. Walk for 5 minutes and jog for 2 minutes.

Sunday - Walk/Jog for 30 minutes. Walk for 5 minutes and jog for 2 minutes.

Week 3

Monday - Rest

Tuesday - Walk/Jog for 30 minutes. Walk for 5 minutes and jog for 3 minutes. Keep the pace nice and easy. If you feel you cannot run for 3 minutes then take some short (10 – 15 seconds) walking breaks in your 3-minute jogging interval.

Wednesday - Walk/Jog for 30 minutes. Walk for 5 minutes and jog for 2 minutes.

Thursday - Walk/Jog for 30 minutes. Walk for 5 minutes and jog for 3 minutes.

Friday - Rest. If you feel like cross training, go ahead. If you do cross train, keep the intensity level very easy. You want to let your body recover on these rest days.

Saturday - Walk/Jog for 30 minutes. Walk for 5 minutes and jog for 4 minutes. Another increase today.

Sunday - Walk/Jog for 30 minutes. Walk for 5 minutes and jog for 4 minutes.

Week 4

Monday - Rest

Tuesday - Walk for 30 minutes. You eliminate the running portion for this workout because you have made a lot of increases in the last two weeks. This will give your body a little more rest this week. You will be making increases a bit faster after this workout.

Wednesday - Walk/Jog for 30 minutes. Walk for 5 minutes and jog for 5 minutes. You are now jogging as much as you are walking. Remember to keep the pace fairly comfortable.

Thursday - Walk/Jog for 30 minutes. Walk for 5 minutes and jog for 4 minutes. You back off a bit today to recover from yesterday's harder workout.

Friday - Rest or cross train.

Saturday - Today you will start to decrease the distance of your walking intervals. Walk/Jog for 30 minutes. Walk for 4 minutes and jog for 5 minutes.

Sunday - Walk/Jog for 30 minutes. Walk for 4 minutes and jog for 5 minutes.

Week 5

Monday - Rest

Tuesday - Walk/Jog for 30 minutes. You will make another decrease in your walking interval today. Walk for 3 minutes and jog for 5 minutes.

Wednesday - Walk/Jog for 30 minutes. Walk for 4 minutes and jog for 5 minutes.

Thursday - Walk/Jog for 30 minutes. Walk for 3 minutes and jog for 5 minutes.

Friday - Rest or cross train.

Saturday - Walk/Jog for 30 minutes. Decrease your walking interval to 2 minutes. Walk for 2 minutes and jog for 5 minutes.

Sunday - Walk/Jog for 30 minutes. Walk for 2 minutes and jog for 5 minutes.

Week 6

Monday - Rest

Tuesday - Walk/Jog for 30 minutes. Decrease your walking interval to 1 minute. Walk for 1 minute and jog for 5 minutes. If at any time you feel you are struggling, back off to the prior week or to a point at which you feel more comfortable. Remember, however, that you must push yourself a bit to make improvements.

Wednesday - Walk/Jog for 30 minutes. Walk for 2 minutes and jog for 5 minutes.

Thursday - Walk/Jog for 30 minutes. Walk for 1 minute and jog for 5 minutes.

Friday - Rest or cross train.

Saturday - Walk/Jog for 30 minutes. Today, you will decrease your walking interval to 30 seconds. Walk for 30 seconds and jog for 5 minutes.

Sunday - Walk/Jog for 30 minutes. Walk for 30 seconds and jog for 5 minutes.

Week 7

Monday - Rest

Tuesday - Today you are going to try something different. Go to a school track or a trail in your area that you have measured. Warm up with vigorous walking for 10 minutes and then jog 2 x 1 mile repeats. Jog one mile and then walk for 5 minutes. The jog another mile. Cool down with 10 minutes of walking.

Wednesday - Walk/Jog for 30 minutes. Walk for 30 seconds and jog for 5 minutes.

Thursday - You will extend the distance of your workout today. After a 10-minute warm up, jog for 1.25 miles. Cool down with 10 minutes of walking. You can run almost anywhere. Through your neighborhood; in a park; on a school track; or on a treadmill.

Friday - Rest or cross train.

Saturday - Warm up for 10 minutes. Jog 2 x 1 mile repeats. Cool down with 10 minutes of walking.

Sunday - You will extend your workout again today. Warm up by walking for 10 minutes. Jog for 1.5 miles. Cool down with 10 minutes of walking.

Week 8

Monday - Rest

Tuesday - Warm up by walking for 10 minutes. Jog 2 x 1 mile repeats. Cool down with 10 minutes of walking.

Wednesday - Walk/Jog for 30 minutes. Walk for 30 seconds and jog for 5 minutes.

Thursday - Warm up by walking for 10 minutes. Jog for 1.75 miles. Cool down with 10 minutes of walking.

Friday - Rest or cross train.

Saturday - You will do your longest run today. Warm up with 10 minutes of walking. Jog for 2 miles. Cool down with 10 minutes of walking.

Sunday - Extend you run again today if you are feeling up to it. Warm up for 10 minutes. Jog for 2.25 miles. Cool down with 10 minutes of walking. If you are feeling fatigued from yesterdays run, just run 1 mile today.

You have done it! You should now be able to jog comfortably for 2 miles. What you do now is up to you. You can just maintain your new level of fitness by continuing your daily workouts or you can move up to the next level and train to complete a 5K race.