

# Find Your Path to 5K Success

A virtual 5K training guide for runners and walkers of all levels.



# How to stretch

Stretching is an important part of the 5K training journey. After a walk or run, try the stretches below to help you cool down and improve flexibility.

## THIGH STRETCH

Grab the top of your left foot from behind and gently pull your heel toward your left buttock, keeping the knees touching. Repeat with the other leg.

## HAMSTRING STRETCH

Stand with your right leg just in front of the left leg and put your hands on your hips. Keeping your right leg straight and toes pointed up, bend your left leg. Then, bend toward your right leg, keeping your back straight. Repeat with the other leg.

## CALF STRETCH

Step your right leg forward. Bend your front leg and keep your back leg straight, with both feet pointed forward. Push your left heel into the ground, keeping your left leg straight. Repeat with the other leg.

## LOWER BACK STRETCH

Lie on your back with your knees bent and your feet flat on the floor. Pull your right knee to your chest until you feel a stretch in your lower back. Hold for up to 15 seconds and repeat with the left leg. Then, pull both knees to your chest and hold for up to 15 seconds.



### A HEALTH COACH CAN HELP

Get one-on-one support preparing for your 5K. Many coaches are personal trainers and can help you with stretching, exercise or working toward any other well-being goals you have. Coaching sessions are free, convenient and confidential.

Call **1.866.513.2503**.

#### SOURCE:

National Health Service: "How to stretch after a run"



# What to eat

Eating the right foods can help give you energy, fuel your recovery and keep you on the path to 5K success. To eat right, follow these simple guidelines:

## EVERY DAY

You should eat a variety of healthy foods, including whole grains, lean proteins, healthy fats, fruits and vegetables.

## BEFORE EXERCISE

One to four hours before exercise, eat a snack or small meal with carbohydrates, protein and fat. Try Greek yogurt with fruit, a banana with peanut butter, oatmeal with berries or a turkey sandwich.

## AFTER EXERCISE

After a workout, eat a snack followed by a meal two to four hours later (both should have carbohydrates and protein). If it's later in the day, it's okay to just eat a meal. A few snack ideas include tuna on a whole-grain wrap, string cheese with an apple or a fruit smoothie with Greek yogurt.



## GET PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT

A health coach can help you create a personalized healthy eating plan. Many are registered dietitians and can help you find time for nutrition or make adjustments to prepare for a 5K, no matter your tastes, lifestyle or level of training experience. Ready to get started? **Call 1.866.513.2503.**

SOURCE:  
Mayo Clinic: "The best foods to fuel a workout"



# Getting the right gear

The right active gear can help you prevent injury and feel more comfortable. Follow these tips to help you feel your best every step of the 5K training experience.

## FIND SHOES THAT FIT

The most important thing to find is shoes that fit right. If you're new to extended walking or running, look for a neutral shoe that isn't too stiff and has enough cushioning.

## KEEP MATERIALS IN MIND

Choose moisture wicking fabrics that help keep you dry and comfortable when walking or running.

## INVEST IN GOOD SOCKS

Merino or synthetic wool socks can help wick away moisture and prevent blisters.

## DRESS SEASONALLY

If it's warm, you may only need to wear a shirt, shorts and socks. If the weather is cooler, consider wearing pants, tights, gloves, a hat, a vest or a soft-shell jacket.

## ATTRACT ATTENTION

Choose bright colors and clothing that has reflective accents to make sure you're seen by drivers, bikers and other walkers or runners.



# Tips for success

These tips will help guide you on the path to walking or running a 5K. Following them can help you stay safe, feel your best and achieve your 5K goal.

## WARM UP AND COOL DOWN

Walk or jog slowly for several minutes before and after training.

## HYDRATE OFTEN

Four hours prior to exercise, drink 350 – 500ml of water or a low-sugar sports beverage.

## TAKE REST DAYS

Taking rest days can help reduce your chance of injury and help you become a stronger, better runner or long-distance walker.

## STAY POSITIVE

Relax, have fun and visualize your success!

## BECOME STRONGER

Strength training can help you avoid running injuries and improve your run times. Focus on your core, glutes, thighs and calves.

## BUILD SPEED

Find a smooth straightaway and run faster for a 15-20 second burst. Try to incorporate several bursts into your run and build up to two or three burst sessions per week.

## PLAY IT SAFE

Make sure that you have your doctor's OK before you begin training for a 5K, especially if you are new to exercise, are older or have any medical problems.

### SOURCE:

Harvard Health Publishing: "Moving from couch to 5K"  
Oregon Health and Science university: "Running Tips and Resources"  
National Health Service: "Couch to 5k: week by week"



# Training calendar

Follow the calendar below closely to prepare to walk or run your 5K.

## SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2023

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
SEPTEMBER 3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	LABOR DAY		20 minute walk*	Walk/run 1 mile*	20 minute walk*	Walk/run 1.25 miles* PATRIOT DAY
10 Rest*	11 25 minute walk*	12 Walk/run 1.5 miles*	13 25 minute walk*	14 Walk/run 1.5 miles*	15 Rest or 25 minute walk	16 Walk/run 1.75 miles*
17 Rest*	18 30 minute walk*	19 Walk/run 1.75 miles*	20 30 minute walk*	21 Walk/run 1.75 miles*	22 Rest or 30 minute walk	23 Walk/run 2.25 miles* AUTUMN BEGINS
24 Rest*	25 30 minute walk*	26 Walk/run 2.5 miles*	27 30 minute walk*	28 Walk/run 3 miles*	29 Rest or 30 minute walk	30 Walk/run 3 miles*
OCTOBER 1 Rest*	2 30 minute walk*	3 Walk/run 3 miles*	4 30 minute walk*	5 Walk/run 3 miles*	6 Rest or 30 minute walk	7 Walk/run 3 miles*
8 <b>ThriveOn 5K!</b> Click here to register						

**\*OR DAILY ACTIVITY FROM YOUR PERSONAL TRAINING PROGRAM**

### ARE YOU AN ADVANCED WALKER OR RUNNER?

To prepare, you can simply increase how much you're running by ten percent each week. For example, if you usually run six miles a week (two miles three days a week) and your goal is to run 12 miles a week, increase weekly miles by about 0.6 miles for the first week. This gradual change will help prevent injuries.

### TRACK YOUR PROGRESS

ThriveOn offers tracking tools to help you stay on top of your training progress. Have a fitness device or app? You can sync it with the [wellness web portal](#) to automatically track your activity and make sure you're on track to achieving a 5K.

