

Something for Beginners

By Michael Jacques

New to running? Or maybe you've done a bit and have a hankering for more. The following tips and training schedule should help you get underway.

Endurance

Endurance is everything. The benchmark for developing endurance is running a minimum three times a week and gradually building up to handle 60min of non-stop running.

If you run three times a week, split up as two runs of 40min and one run of 60min, then you'll be fit enough to enjoy a 10k race. If you can keep building on that to handle two runs of 60min and one run of 1.5-2hrs, then you'll be ready for a half marathon. What's more, you'll have established the base fitness that would allow you to think about training for a full marathon.

An absolute beginner can build up to 40 and 60min runs quite quickly by incorporating walk breaks. Depending on your natural fitness, you could start with 30-40min of alternating 5min jogging with 5min walking. Or even 1min jogging with 5min walking. Do that for a week, then the following week extend the jogging time & reduce the walking time. Hold that for another week, then extend the jogging time again. After eight or 12 weeks you'll hopefully be running almost non-stop for 30min, after which you can add 5min every week until you get to 60min, at which point you'd handle a 10k race easily.

The key to building endurance is pace judgement. You need to run at efforts that you can continue a conversation. Any faster/harder and you won't last long enough to build endurance. As you get fitter pacing becomes even more crucial because when training for half marathon and marathons you need to build up to a weekly runs of two to three hours.

Strength

Strength can add a component to your endurance that will help you become faster and less injury prone at the same time. Changes in terrain tax your leg muscles and aerobic system more, which over time builds a more complete fitness that will help you handle the stresses of running better.

By changes in terrain we mean adding hills to your runs. They don't have to be mountain either. Any suburban run with several hills of 60secs or longer will improve your strength. But heading off-road onto bush tracks and even parks and gold courses can also build strength while giving the body a break from the pounding of road running.

If you are running three times a week, do one run on hillier terrain and one on bush trails or running between local parks.

Recovery

As much as we talk about endurance and strength, the most important aspect of training is well-planned rest. All training does is show your body the stresses involved and your body then adapts to those stresses by becoming more efficient, stronger and fitter. But your body actually only adapts to the training if you give it some rest. If you don't rest, it eventually gets tired and often injured or ill.

So, every time you do a hilly run or long run you should follow it with an easy day or even a day off. And every two or three weeks you should have an easier week where you reduce the length of your runs by about 50 percent. For the same reason it's important to plan recovery after races, with the accepted norm being an easy day or rest day for every 2k you raced.

Eat, Drink & Stay Happy

Nutrition plays a big role in running. It provides the energy for your runs but also aids recovery after your runs to help rebuild muscles and top up energy for the next run.

Once you progress to running 60min, you need to think about nutrition. In an hour of running you lose approx. 500 to 700ml of fluid to sweat and about 50g of carbohydrate for energy. This needs to be replaced either as you go or after your workout. If you have two glasses of water and a banana an hour before your run and within 30min after your run, you'll have met those needs. But that is over and above your normal daily meals.

Kit Yourself Out

Shoes are everything in regard to helping you avoid common running niggles. Avoid cut-price stores and go to a specialist running shoe retailer to get advice on finding a shoe to suit personal needs such as the amount of running you do, to your body weight, foot shape and any other quirks such as tendency to blisters or toe nail issues.

New runners often have trouble with chafe. This tends to reduce as your body adapts, but quality clothing will minimise issues. If chafe is a problem, cycling-type shorts (without the pad) can be more comfortable than traditional running shorts.

If chafing persists, try Vaseline on the affected areas. Some people even put plasters over their nipples.

Socks are another factor. They need to provide comfort and protection even when wet. A lot of people go for the thickest running sock they can find, but actually a thinner high-quality sock with moisture wicking properties can be more comfortable.

Be Safe & Seen

Running can provide problems ranging from traffic to dogs to tripping on the curb. So it pays to be prepared.

Number one is run in bright clothing so that drivers can't help but see you. Watch for cars backing out of drive ways and don't run across pedestrian crossings before drivers have seen you. Always ID and tell others where you're going and what time you'll be back. A mobile phone can be handy.

The best safety tip you'll ever hear is to run with others. If nothing else it makes your run more fun.

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EXAMPLE SCHEDULE FOR A BEGINNER TRAINING FOR 10K

The following schedule assumes you are capable of walk/jogging or running 20min, three times per week.

Beginners can manage the 20min starting point by alternating 1-5min jogging with 2-5min walking. After the first 4 weeks try to gradually increase running & reduce walking by 1min per week.

Anyone who is already running 30-40min non-stop could start at Week 5 through to Week 12, then add another four weeks where they increase the Tues & Thurs runs by 5min per week until they get to 60min.

4 U	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Wk 1	Day Off or easy swim/gym	20min easy, flat	Day Off or easy swim/gym	20min easy, flat	Day Off	20min easy, flat	Day Off or easy swim/gym
Wk 2	Day Off or easy swim/gym	25min easy, flat	Day Off or easy swim/gym	25min easy, flat	Day Off	25min easy, flat	Day Off or easy swim/gym
Wk 3	Day Off or easy swim/gym	30min easy, flat	Day Off or easy swim/gym	30min easy, flat	Day Off	30min easy, flat	Day Off or easy swim/gym
Wk 4	Day Off	20min easy, flat	Day Off or easy swim/gym	20min easy, flat	Day Off	30min easy, flat	Day Off
Wk 5	Day Off or easy swim/gym	30min easy, flat	Day Off or easy swim/gym	30min easy, flat	Day Off	35min easy, flat	Day Off or easy swim/gym
Wk 6	Day Off or easy swim/gym	35min easy, flat	Day Off or easy swim/gym	35min easy, flat	Day Off	40min easy, flat	Day Off or easy swim/gym
Wk 7	Day Off or easy swim/gym	40min easy, hilly	Day Off or easy swim/gym	40min easy, flat	Day Off	45min easy, flat	Day Off or easy swim/gym
Wk 8	Day Off	20min easy, flat	Day Off or easy swim/gym	20min easy, flat	Day Off	45min easy, flat	Day Off
Wk 9	Day Off or easy swim/gym	40min easy, hilly	Day Off or easy swim/gym	40min easy, flat	Day Off	50min easy, flat	Day Off or easy swim/gym
Wk 10	Day Off or easy swim/gym	40min easy, hilly	Day Off or easy swim/gym	40min easy, flat	Day Off	55min easy, flat	Day Off or easy swim/gym
Wk 11	Day Off or easy swim/gym	40min easy, hilly	Day Off or easy swim/gym	40min easy, flat	Day Off	60min easy, flat	Day Off
Wk 12	Day Off	20min very easy, flat	Day Off	20min very easy, flat	Day Off	10min easy, flat	YOUR 10K GOAL