

Running Training Plan



Spice — 5k or 3 mile running training plan

Goal

To continue to build an endurance base and move on from merely completing 5k to competing at 5k and improving running speed over that distance.

Duration

8 Weeks

This 'Spice' running training plan for 5k follows on from any of our beginners' schedules. The beginners' schedules prepare runners for distance only. The Spice plans shift focus from distance to time, specifically, preparing the runner to run the distance faster.

As we get fitter through running training our speed increases and hence sustaining a given pace will become easier. However, after some weeks of training this improvement begins to slow down and will eventually plateau. To move on to the next level we need to continue to build a firm endurance base and also introduce faster running to our training; this is what the Spice training plans address.

This schedule has some variations, in the form of an optional running session, and also some body conditioning sessions and exercises. Running these optional sessions will depend on many factors including: your age, determination, time availability, and rate of development. The rule is simple, if you feel like doing them, then do so, if they do not work for you, or you feel over-stretched, then leave them out. The schedule is designed to develop the runner's speed with or without them, whilst also keeping the training levels within sensible and manageable limits.

As you begin to train at increased intensity, body conditioning becomes more important. Many runners only start to address their running style or their strength after they become injured, and muscle weakness or imbalance has been diagnosed. But prevention is far better than cure. Body conditioning will not only make you more injury resistant, it will also make you a better and more durable runner. The Running Training Plan website has details of some specific [body conditioning exercises for runners](#); introducing some of these to your training week will benefit your running.

You will also notice that some of the warm-ups have a slight but significant difference. Specifically, the warm-ups before the speed sessions are not only longer, but they are active; on the website you can find details of these [10 minute active warm-ups](#), they will prepare you for training and — when the time is right — racing.

As with all our training plans, the training days might not fit exactly with your lifestyle, so you might prefer to adapt as necessary. Do keep to the same basic structure and importantly do not train on consecutive days at this stage, especially do not put two hard days together.

This Spice plan offers just an introduction to what we call 'speed' training, it is still important at this stage to be building a firm foundation of endurance.

Weeks one and two see the arrival of a new word on our schedules: 'run'. The actual speed is not important at this stage, what is important though, is that there's a distinction between running and jogging. It's a faster pace than the one you are probably used to, and this is why we only do it in short bursts. This is the beginning of repetition and interval training, and it's where the real development in running fitness happens.

In this schedule the bursts of faster running (or 'repetitions') range from 2 minutes to 8 minutes. You'll run the shorter repetitions at a faster pace than the longer ones. During these faster phases concentrate on your running form: focus on lifting the knees higher and picking your heels up closer to your bottom as your leg comes through for the next stride.

Weeks one and two

Day	Warm up	Session	Duration	Notes
Monday		Rest		
Tuesday	5 min light jog	jog 25 min	0.30	post-session stretch
Wednesday		Rest		
Thursday	5 min light jog	jog 30 min	0.30	post-session stretch
Friday		Rest or brisk 20 min walk/jog		
Saturday		Rest		
Sunday	5 min light jog	jog 20 mins walk 1 min (repeat x2)	0.47	post-session stretch
Monday		Rest		
Tuesday	5 min light jog	run 8 mins, jog 3mins (repeat x2)	0.27	post-session stretch
Wednesday		rest		
Thursday	5 min light jog	jog 30 mins	0.35	post-session stretch
Friday		Rest or brisk 20 min walk/jog		
Saturday				
Sunday	5 min light jog	jog 40 mins	0.45	post-session stretch
Total exercise time for 14 days			3.34	

From weeks three and four, the repetitions or interval training now feature once a week. There is

no need to do more than this at this stage of your running development.

Weeks three and four

Day	Warm up	Session	Duration	Notes
Monday		Rest		
Tuesday	10 min active	run 6 mins, jog 3 mins (repeat x 3)	0.37	post-session stretch
Wednesday		Rest		
Thursday	5 min light jog	jog 30 mins	0.35	post-session stretch
Friday		Rest or brisk 20 min walk/jog		
Saturday		Rest		
Sunday	5 min light jog	jog 45 mins	0.50	post-session stretch
Monday		Rest		
Tuesday	10 min active	run 2 mins, jog 2 mins (repeat x 8)	0.42	post-session stretch
Wednesday		Rest		
Thursday	5 min light jog	jog 40 mins	0.45	post-session stretch
Friday		Rest or brisk 25 min walk/jog		
Saturday		Rest		
Sunday	5 min light jog	jog 45 mins	0.50	post-session stretch
Total exercise time for 14 days			4.19	

Weeks five and six include some key sessions for very effective endurance running training. In our later schedules, these will be timed and measured accurately to ensure training is carried out at optimum paces. For now though, it's enough to get familiar with running faster.

During week eight, we have an interval session with recoveries of just one minute; this is a taste of things to come.

It is important to run all the repetitions at a consistent pace throughout each session, this might not come easy to begin with, but it does get easier as your pace judgement develops.

Weeks five and six

Day	Warm up	Session	Duration	Notes
Monday		Rest		
Tuesday	10 min active	run 5 mins, jog 2 mins (repeat x 4)	0.38	post-session stretch
Wednesday		Rest		
Thursday	5 min light jog	jog 30 mins	0.35	post-session stretch
Friday		Rest or brisk 25 min walk/jog		
Saturday		Rest		
Sunday	5 min light jog	jog 45 mins	0.50	post-session stretch
Monday		Rest		
Tuesday	10 min active	run 4 mins, jog 2 mins (repeat x 6)	0.46	post-session stretch
Wednesday		Rest		
Thursday	5 min light jog	jog 35 mins	0.40	post-session stretch
Friday		Rest or brisk 25 min walk/jog		
Saturday				
Sunday	5 min light jog	jog 50 mins	0.55	post-session stretch
Total exercise time for 14 days			4.24	

As usual, the post-session stretch is short-duration, restorative stretching (10-15 secs each muscle).

Any more intensive stretching is best done separately from your running sessions.

Weeks seven and eight

Day	Warm up	Session	Duration	Notes
Monday		Rest		
Tuesday	10 min active	run 3 mins, jog 90 secs (repeat x 8)	0.46	post-session stretch
Wednesday		Rest		
Thursday	5 min light jog	jog 40 mins	0.45	post-session stretch
Friday		Rest or brisk 25 min walk/jog		
Saturday		Rest		
Sunday	5 min light jog	jog 50 mins	0.55	post-session stretch
Monday		Rest		
Tuesday	10 min active	run 4 mins, jog 1 min (repeat x 6)	0.41	post-session stretch
Wednesday		Rest		
Thursday	5 min light jog	jog 35 mins	0.40	post-session stretch
Friday		Rest or brisk 25 min walk/jog		
Saturday		Rest		
Sunday	5 min light jog	jog 50 mins or 5k race	0.55	post-session stretch
Total exercise time for 14 days			4.42	

Special Notes

This training plan is for runners who have completed our beginners 5k schedule, or can run continuously for 5k or 3 miles; it is not for everyone new to running. Some people should speak to their doctor before undertaking any form of physical exercise, in particular, those who are (or have):

- More than 20% over their ideal weight
- More than 40 years old
- A smoker or ex-smoker
- Pregnant
- Personal or family history of heart trouble
- High blood pressure, diabetes or other medical condition

If in doubt about the suitability of this schedule to your current health then consult a medical expert, such as your GP or family doctor.