



Wanting to go that Extra Mile?

Are you wanting to take the next step and challenge your body a little more? Good for you! Below are a few training tools for your first 5K run or half marathon.

Build a Base. New runners often mistake the 12 or 14-week marathon training plans to take them from the couch to the finish line. However, most don't realize that these 12, 14, and 16-week training plans are for runners who have already built a weekly running base of at least 15-20 miles. If you jump into these intense workouts before your body is prepared, you put your body at high risk for injury.

Pick a Plan. It doesn't matter if you do very little physical activity or you have been an avid runner for years, you need to make a plan. Most half marathon training plans are about 12-weeks for those with a good physical activity base. Carefully look through several training plans to make sure you can incorporate it into your daily life (family and work schedules).

Think Quality over Quantity. Not all workouts need to be long quality runs. Mix things up! Cross training can be very beneficial to take your body to the next level. Doing non-running aerobics (cycling, swimming, etc.) activities as well as light resistance training is a great way to optimize your running fitness. Remember, if you feel the need to walk or take a break during your long run, by all means do so without guilt! Listen to your body; it will make you more successful!

Train with Friends. Waking up early, running 20 miles weekly and sticking with an intense 3-4 month long training program can be stressful and may result in burn out. Training in a group or with a buddy can support you toward success by adding motivation and keeping you accountable.



Rest and Stretch. Stretch out those tight muscles every day, particularly after you finish your run. Your joints and muscles need time to rebuild and repair after hard and strenuous workouts. Rest days are just as important as working out. Skipping rest days will make you more prone to injury. Listen to your body and give it a break!

Refuel and Rehydrate. During intense workouts your body burns hundreds of calories and loses fluids and electrolytes. Carbohydrates and protein foods, and plenty of water are key to help refuel, rebuild and repair your body before and after workouts.

Now you have the tools. So, on your mark, get set... go! You are already a winner just for trying.

Want to learn more? Visit these resources for more information:

1. Training for a Marathon? Tips to Keep You Going: Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. <https://bit.ly/2QwoDHD>
2. Half Marathon Training Schedule for Beginner Runners: HalfMarathons.Net. <http://bit.ly/1KRQOld>

Written by: Reed Levings and Carol Schwarz.

For more information check out more Family Fun on the Run Newsletters: <http://go.unl.edu/familyrun>