

RUNNER'S WORLD

TRAINING PLAN

10K · Beginners

This six-week schedule is designed to provide beginners the endurance they need to go the 10K distance (6.2 miles). The plan features four days of easy running, two days of rest, and some very short doses of faster running and gentle pickups.

WEEK	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
1	Day 1 Rest	Day 2 0–4 Miles Easy	Day 3 4 Miles Easy with Aerobic Intervals	Day 4 Rest	Day 5 4 Miles Easy with Gentle Pickups	Day 6 Rest	Day 7 5 Miles Easy
2	Day 8 Rest	Day 9 2 Miles Easy	Day 10 4 Miles Easy with Gentle Pickups	Day 11 0–3 Miles Easy	Day 12 3.5 Miles Easy	Day 13 Rest	Day 14 6 Easy Miles
3	Day 15 Rest	Day 16 4 Miles Easy	Day 17 4 Miles Easy with Aerobic Intervals	Day 18 0–3 Miles Easy	Day 19 4 Miles Easy with Gentle Pickups	Day 20 Rest	Day 21 5 Miles Easy
4	Day 22 Rest	Day 23 4 Easy Miles	Day 24 4 Miles Easy with Aerobic Intervals	Day 25 0–3 Miles Easy	Day 26 4.5 Miles Easy with Gentle Pickups	Day 27 Rest	Day 28 7-8 Easy Miles
5	Day 29 Rest	Day 30 4 Miles Easy	Day 31 4 Miles Easy with Aerobic Intervals	Day 32 0–3 Miles Easy	Day 33 4.5 Miles Easy with Gentle Pickups	Day 34 Rest	Day 35 4 Miles Easy
6	Day 36 Rest	Day 37 2 Miles Easy	Day 38 4 Miles Easy with Aerobic Intervals	Day 39 2 Miles Easy	Day 40 Rest	Day 41 2 Miles Easy	Day 42 10K Race

WEEK 1

Day 1, Monday · Rest

Welcome to the Runner's World's 10K Plan for Beginners.

As you train, tap into our online community at runnersworld.com, where you'll find tips on training, nutrition, and injury prevention, and you can connect with other runners and the editors of Runner's World.

This plan will give you the endurance you need to finish your 10K fit and injury-free. Most of the running will be done at a steady, moderate pace. But there will be some intervals and gentle pickups to give you a taste of what it feels like to run faster and prep you for the next level.

The program starts with a day of rest so you'll be fresh and ready for the miles ahead. Then you'll do four easy runs, two of which include small doses of speedwork. You'll have one additional rest day.

Here's a guide to this plan's workouts:

REST DAYS: Ideally, on rest days you should do no exercise at all. But it's okay to cross-train with a no-impact activity like stretching, yoga, or swimming.

EASY DAYS: Maintain a comfortable, conversational pace.

AEROBIC INTERVALS: For your aerobic intervals, push the pace a bit, but don't run all out. After each bout of fast running, jog slowly until you feel rested enough to speed up again.

GENTLE PICKUPS (GP): For gentle pickups, gradually increase your pace over 100 meters until you're running at 90 percent of all-out effort, and hold it there for 10 to 20 meters, then gradually decelerate. Walk in between the pickups to recover.

Day 2, Tuesday · 0–4 Miles Easy

Ideally, you should do no exercise at all. But it's okay to go for a short easy run, or cross-train with a no-impact activity like stretching, yoga, or swimming.

Day 3, Wednesday · 4 Miles Easy with Aerobic Intervals

2 miles easy

4 x 1-minute aerobic intervals

2 miles easy

Start by running two miles at a comfortable pace that feels easy enough to carry on a conversation.

For your aerobic intervals, push the pace a bit, but don't run all out. After each bout of fast running, jog slowly until you feel rested enough to speed up again. Finish with two easy miles.

Day 4, Thursday · Rest

Rest today to recover from this week's workouts.

It may be tempting to add miles on rest days but it's best to give your body a chance to recover instead. Rest days help prevent injuries, and give your a chance to body adapt to the stresses of training and get stronger.

Day 5, Friday · 4 Miles Easy with Gentle Pickups

4 miles easy

3 gentle pickups

Maintain your easy, conversational pace for four miles. Then do three gentle pickups. Gradually increase your pace over 100 meters until you're running at 90 percent of all-out effort, and hold it there for 10 to 20 meters, then gradually decelerate. Walk in between the pickups to recover.

Day 6, Saturday · Rest

It's best not to exercise at all today. Recover from this week's workouts, and stay fresh for tomorrow's run.

Day 7, Sunday · 5 Miles Easy

Maintain a comfortable, conversational pace.

WEEK 2

Day 8, Monday · Rest

This is week two of training. Race day is four weeks away. This week you'll have four easy runs, two rest days, and one run that includes gentle pickups.

Day 9, Tuesday · 2 Miles Easy

Training logs can be great tools to track your progress and help prevent injuries. Write down details about the mileage you ran, how you felt while you were on the run, what the weather was like, and how you felt afterward. Be sure to include your race goals and the reasons you're training for a marathon. When you feel the urge to call it quits, pull out that log. Seeing all your plans—and all that you've already accomplished—can help get you out the door.

Day 10, Wednesday · 4 Miles Easy with Gentle Pickups

4 miles easy

3 gentle pickups

Maintain your easy conversational pace for three miles. For pickups, gradually increase your pace over 100 meters until you're running at 90 percent of all-out effort, and hold it there for 10 to 20 meters, then gradually decelerate. Walk in between the pickups to recover.

Day 11, Thursday · 0–3 Miles Easy

Don't let boredom derail your training. Map out a new route or find a scenic trail so you feel refreshed. You can find a new route, or map your own, by going to our [routefinder at runnersworld.com/routes](http://runnersworld.com/routes).

Day 12, Friday · 3.5 Miles Easy

Have new aches and pains? It may be time to replace your shoes. Worn-out and ill-fitting shoes are often the cause of injury. Be sure to go to a specialty running shop to get a pair that offers the fit and support that your feet need.

Day 13, Saturday · Rest

As your training gets underway, invest in shirts, shorts, underwear, jog bras, and socks that are made of technical, lightweight fabrics that wick away moisture. These fabrics, which go by names like Dri-Fit and CoolMax, help prevent blisters and chafing.

Day 14, Sunday · 6 Easy Miles

Hook up with a buddy or a running club for these longer runs—you'll be surprised how easily the miles roll by when you're in good company. Don't know other runners? Log into our online community at runnersworld.com, where you'll find regional groups and forums. Or contact a running shop in your area. Many shops organize group runs.

WEEK 3

Day 15, Monday · Rest

Welcome to week three of training. This week, you'll have three easy runs and two days of rest. You'll do some short speedwork, adding aerobic intervals to Wednesday's run, and you'll do some gentle pickups on Friday.

Day 16, Tuesday · 4 Miles Easy

Be sure to stay hydrated throughout the day, not just while you're out on the run. A good rule of thumb is to drink half your body weight in ounces of fluids. So if you weigh 150 pounds, aim for 75 ounces of water or sports drink per day. If you weigh 100 pounds, aim for 50 ounces.

Day 17, Wednesday · 4 Miles Easy with Aerobic Intervals

2 miles easy
4 x 90-second aerobic intervals
2 miles easy

Maintain your conversational pace for two miles, and then do four 90-second intervals. On the intervals, push the pace a bit, but don't run all out. After each bout of fast running, jog slowly until you feel rested enough to speed up again. Finish with two easy miles.

Day 18, Thursday · 0–3 Miles Easy

It's important to keep your easy days easy throughout training so that you have the energy and fitness to give your all to the quality workouts, like tempo runs and long runs. In order to do that, it's a good idea to learn the best target pace for all your runs on the schedule. If you have run a race within the past six months, plug that time into our training calculator at runnersworld.com/tools. Look at the "training paces" to find your pace for each of the runs on the schedule.

If you don't have a recent race time, do a one-mile time trial. Here's how: Go to a track or any one-mile stretch of road. After a 10-minute warmup, time yourself while running four laps (or one mile) as fast as you can. Note your time, then cool down with 10 minutes of walking and jogging. Plug your time into the training calculator.

Day 19, Friday · 4 Miles Easy with Gentle Pickups

4 miles easy
3 gentle pickups

Keep your conversational pace for four miles. Then ease into three gentle pickups. Gradually increase your pace over 100 meters until you're running at 90 percent of all-out effort, and hold it there for 10 to 20 meters, then gradually decelerate. Walk in between the pickups to recover.

Day 20, Saturday · Rest

If you notice that you start feeling really tight in your shoulders and upper back during a run, try flexibility and yoga poses that focus on your shoulders, arms, and neck. These areas get tense from working a desk job or driving a long commute. Loosening up those areas will make your running feel more fluid. You can find lots of good yoga poses just for runners at runnersworld.com/yoga.

Day 21, Sunday · 5 Miles Easy

Shin splints are common among beginners and seasoned runners alike, and that soreness and pain along the shinbone tends to come on after ramping up mileage or intensity too much without enough rest. Running on uneven road surfaces or wearing worn-out shoes can also bring them on. If you feel shin splints coming on, take it easy and check your log. You may need to back off a bit.

WEEK 4

Day 22, Monday · Rest

This is week four of training. At the end of this week, race day will be two weeks away. You'll have three easy runs and two rest days. You'll add intervals and pickups to two of your other runs.

Day 23, Tuesday · 4 Easy Miles

If you miss a workout, try not to worry about it. Just stay on the training schedule. Missing a few miles won't make or break your race. But trying to cram missed miles into a week can set you up for injury and derail your racing plans.

Day 24, Wednesday · 4 Miles Easy with Aerobic Intervals

2 miles easy
6 x 90-second aerobic intervals
2 miles easy

Start by running two miles at your easy pace. For your aerobic intervals, push the pace a bit, but don't run all out. After each bout of fast running, jog slowly until you feel rested enough to speed up again. Finish with two easy miles.

Day 25, Thursday · 0–3 Miles Easy

Don't take painkillers before a race or run. Take these painkillers infrequently, only after a run to reduce inflammation, and then only for a few days. If chronic pain persists, see a doctor.

Day 26, Friday · 4.5 Miles Easy with Gentle Pickups

4.5 miles easy
6 gentle pickups

Keep a comfortable pace for 4.5 miles. Then ease into 6 gentle pickups. Gradually increase your pace over 100 meters until you're running at 90 percent of all-out effort, and hold it there for 10 to 20 meters, then gradually decelerate. Walk in between the pickups to recover.

Day 27, Saturday · Rest

Icing an injury or a sore area can reduce inflammation and speed recovery. To maximize the benefits, ice for 10 to 20 minutes at a time, five times a day. This keeps tissue temperature low to minimize inflammation.

Day 28, Sunday · 7-8 Easy Miles

Keep your head and chest up. Don't slouch. While attempting to "grit out" a hill, many runners put their head down, which wastes energy by throwing off their form. Fix your eyes directly ahead of you, not down at your feet. Keep your hands loose, not in fists. Push your legs off and up, rather than into, the hill. You should feel as if you're springing up the hill.

WEEK 5

Day 29, Monday · Rest

This is week five of training. You'll have three easy runs and two rest days. You'll add intervals and pickups to two of your other runs.

Day 30, Tuesday · 4 Miles Easy

Struck by a sidestich? Notice which foot is striking the ground when you inhale and exhale. Then switch the pattern. So if you were leading with your right foot, inhale when the left foot steps. If that doesn't help, stop running and reach both arms above your head. Bend at the waist, leaning to the side opposite the stitch.

Day 31, Wednesday · 4 Miles Easy with Aerobic Intervals

2 miles easy

6 x 90-second aerobic intervals

2 miles easy

Start by running two miles at your easy pace. For your aerobic intervals, push the pace a bit, but don't run all out. After each bout of fast running, jog slowly until you feel rested enough to speed up again. Finish with two easy miles.

Day 32, Thursday · 0–3 Miles Easy

Don't underestimate the toll that the demands of everyday life take on your running. Deadlines, chores, bills, family life, and lack of sleep can make it tough to recover properly from your runs. If you don't take time for R&R, your body won't adapt to the stress of your training—you won't get stronger or faster. Neglect recovery for too long, and you will start to lose strength and speed.

Day 33, Friday · 4.5 Miles Easy with Gentle Pickups

4.5 miles easy

6 gentle pickups

Keep a comfortable pace for 4.5 miles. Then ease into 6 gentle pickups. Gradually increase your pace over 100 meters until you're running at 90 percent of all-out effort, and hold it there for 10 to 20 meters, then gradually decelerate. Walk in between the pickups to recover.

Day 34, Saturday · Rest

On days that you aren't running, invest time in proper recovery. Sports massages improve circulation and flush out waste products, reducing inflammation and soreness. Self-massage using foam rollers is a good at-home alternative.

Day 35, Sunday · 4 Miles Easy

If you're struck by a cramp midrun, stop running and apply pressure to the muscle. Press firmly for 15 seconds—don't massage. Then gently stretch the muscle. Repeat the pressure/stretch cycle until the cramp subsides. Walk at first, then slowly increase your pace.

Day 36, Monday · Rest

Welcome to race week. You made it! Do the runs that are scheduled this week, and resist the urge to cram in extra mileage or speed: It can only hurt your performance on race day. Rest as much as possible, and get your gear and fuel plans for the weekend set. Your goal should be to reduce your stress as much as possible heading to the starting line.

As you head into this weekend's race, you'll have one last interval session, then you'll cut back the mileage so you're fresh for the race.

Here's a guide to this plan's workouts:

REST DAYS: Ideally, on rest days you should do no exercise at all. But it's okay to cross-train with a no-impact activity like stretching, yoga, or swimming.

EASY DAYS: Maintain a comfortable, conversational pace.

AEROBIC INTERVALS: For your aerobic intervals, push the pace a bit, but don't run all out. After each bout of fast running, jog slowly until you feel rested enough to speed up again.

Day 37, Tuesday · 2 Miles Easy

You're close enough to race day to start checking the weather forecast and thinking about what to wear. Whatever the conditions are, you've probably run in them before. If you need help choosing proper attire, check out the "What to Wear" tool at runnersworld.com/what-to-wear.

Day 38, Wednesday · 4 Miles Easy with Aerobic Intervals

2 miles easy

4 x 2-minute aerobic intervals

2 miles easy

Start by running two miles at a comfortable pace. For your aerobic intervals, push the pace a bit, but don't run all out. After each bout of fast running, jog slowly until you feel rested enough to speed up again. Finish with two easy miles.

Day 39, Thursday · 2 Miles Easy

It's okay to listen to music on the run. Studies have shown that on top of helping athletes work harder, music also reduces perceived exertion and gives your mood a boost. Put on your running tunes before you go out, and you'll be more likely to lace up and get out the door. Runner's World has collected playlists from the nation's top runners, along with songs that scientists have proven will help you pick up the tempo. You can find the perfect sound track for your next run on the [playlists page on runnersworld.com/music](http://runnersworld.com/music).

Day 40, Friday · Rest

The night before the race, be sure to eat dinner early, so you have plenty of time to digest your food and sleep well. A high proportion of the meal should be carbohydrates; the meal should be low in fat and protein. Avoid beans, broccoli, and other gas-causing foods. Keep alcohol to a minimum or skip it all together. And you don't need to eat an entire box of pasta. Flooding your system with more carbs than it can process may lead to digestive problems that will have you running to the porta-potty every mile. Consume moderate quantities—not huge portions—of carbs for a few days prior. Most important, don't experiment with new foods. Don't consume anything that you haven't used during training.

Day 41, Saturday · 2 Miles Easy

This run is more for your mind than your body. You may be nervous that you've rested too much, but relax—you've done enough. Just shake out your muscles for tomorrow's race. Run at a nice, easy pace, comfortable enough to carry on a conversation. Eat light meals throughout the day, and finish your dinner and get to bed early. It's perfectly normal to feel panicky and question your training. The key to battling prerace anxiety is to be confident about your training. Use a sentence to take you back from the ledge, like "I'm ready, I'm prepared," and repeat it. Take stock of the miles you've covered leading up to this day to put meaning behind the mantra.

Day 42, Sunday · 10K Race

It's race day! Have some fluids and a light breakfast about two hours before the race starts, and arrive early enough to pick up your number and relax before the race. Walk and jog easy for about 10 minutes before the race begins. Start at a pace that feels slow and gradually work into a comfortable pace.

After the race, once you've recovered, consider training with Runner's World again. Check out the other plans we've designed for 5Ks, 10Ks, half marathons, and marathons.