



Couch to 5k Graduate Plan!

If you have just completed the 'Couch to 5k' and have fallen in love with how running makes you feel here's another 4 weeks worth of running for you to get your teeth stuck into! Use the plan to try some different running sessions, and keep you motivated and on track to continue to improve your running fitness!

| Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday | Sunday |
|--------|---------------|-----------|--|--------|---|--------|
| | 20 minute run | | Strong Finish 20 minute run | | 30 minute run | |
| | 25 minute run | | Fartlek Try 4 - 6 efforts | | 5k Take walk breaks as and when needed | |
| | 20 minute run | | Short Intervals 6 x 20 sec effort, 60 sec rest | | 30 minute run | |
| | 25 minute run | | Hill Reps 6 x 20 sec hill effort, 60 sec rest | | 5k Take walk breaks as and when needed | |

Sessions Explained

Strong Finish

The 'Strong Finish' session is all about having a go at practising pushing yourself out of your comfort zone and finding those inner 'gears'. When you come to run this session I want you to start the run at a nice and slow pace (perhaps slower than your natural rhythm) and hold that pace for the first 15 minutes of your run. Then for the final 5 minutes pick up the pace to a point where you would struggle to talk but it isn't so hard that you can't maintain it until the end of your run. Finish strong, and fast and out of breath. Then give yourself a HUGE high five for trying your first bit of speedwork! Well done!

Fartlek

I know what you're thinking 'what on earth is she talking about?' - so bare with me! A fartlek is a fab way of having a bit of fun with your running, there is no right or wrong way of doing it and you are the boss. For the first 5-10 minutes run at a nice slow and easy pace to warm up. Then, when you are ready, pick a landmark on the horizon (a tree, gate, house - just make sure it isn't moving!) and run as fast as you can to it. When you've reached it walk and take time to catch your breath and recover. Once you have got your breath back continue to run at an easy slow pace until you are ready to have another burst of effort. It could be a hill, or a short sprint or a longer effort. Have fun with it and don't forget to include 5 minutes of slow running at the end of your 20 mins for a cool down.

Short Intervals

Before you get stuck into the hard efforts, take 5 - 10 minutes to warm up with a nice slow and easy run. Then, when you are ready run as fast as you can for 20 seconds, when you have finished walk (and if you can jog) for 60 seconds to recover your breath, once the 60 seconds is up its time for another 20 seconds of hard work so go for it! Repeat 6 times and don't forget to have 5-10 minutes at the end to cool down with a nice slow easy run.

Hill Reps

Just like the other sessions be sure to warm yourself up with a 5-10 minute slow and easy run. Find a hill with a gradient you feel comfortable - it doesn't need to be crazily steep but something with a reasonable incline and that takes 20 seconds to run up at speed! Just like the short intervals, run as fast as you can up the hill for 20 seconds, when you have finished turn around and walk (or jog) back down to the start. take 60 seconds to recover your breath and then go again. Repeat 6 times and don't forget to cool down!

Top Tips!

Don't be afraid to run slowly!

As you progress with your running it is really important for you to find that nice and easy pace, especially for your runs on Tuesday and Saturday. There is no need to worry about how fast or slow you go it is all about building up that time on your legs. These 'easier' sessions help you maximise the harder ones and do wonders in enabling your body to adapt and get fitter and fitter.

Walking is not cheating!

The 'Couch to 5k' programme is a great way to build you up to running consistently for a period of time, however we all have days when we are feeling less spritely and it can be for a whole host of reasons - please don't beat yourself up if you need to take a walking break - you are out there and doing it and that is far better than sitting on the sofa at home! Be kind to yourself and remember how far you have come!