

TIPS FOR 5-K SUCCESS

Race one to reboot your routine, rev up your fitness, and have a little fun

SIGN UP SOON To find a race near you, call your local running store, or check out the racefinder at runnersworld.com/racefinder. You'll likely pay a small fee to enter (usually \$10 to \$20), but consider that extra incentive to keep you accountable to your training.

GET ORGANIZED Find a solid training plan (like the one on page 2 of this guide), and follow it. Scout out some safe, traffic-free routes to run. Parks, bike paths, and tracks are better than high-traffic streets, and soft surfaces like grass and dirt are better than paved ones. To map out some routes near you, go to runnersworld.com/routefinder.

BUY THE RIGHT SHOES Worn-out or ill-fitting shoes can lead to injury. If you're not sure whether your running shoes are in shape for 5-K training, go to a specialty running store to get help finding the pair that offers the support and fit your feet need.

DON'T DO TOO MUCH TOO SOON When you sign up for a race, it's tempting to go out and run as much as you can, as fast as you can. But doing so can lead to injury. Follow the plan and listen to your body. If you're sore or tired the day after a workout, rest or cut back.

REWARD YOURSELF ALONG THE WAY When you hit milestones—like completing the training in the weeks leading up to your 5-K race, or running longer than you ever have before—give yourself a treat to stay motivated, such as a new pair of running socks or a 30-minute massage.

FIND A TRAINING PARTNER Having a running date, with one person or a group, is a strong motivator when you're training. Ask about groups at your local running store, or check with the Road Runners Club of America (rrca.org). An online community can also be effective. Relatedly, it's also important to enlist the help and support of your family. A 5-K race goal is great, but it's even better and more motivating when it's shared.

STICK TO THE PLAN Even if you have a good plan to follow, you still need to be diligent about following it. Resist the urge to pile miles on to the plan, even if you're feeling great. Doing too much before your body is ready puts you at risk for getting hurt, and often you don't know that you're overdoing it until it's too late. After you make it to the starting line, then you can add on mileage and intensity.

SCHEDULE YOUR WORKOUTS You won't ever find time for your runs unless you make some time for them in your schedule. Plug your workouts into your phone, computer, daily appointment planner, on the front of your refrigerator, or treat them as unbreakable appointments that you can't miss. Tell family and friends about your 5-K goal so that they can help keep you accountable during training.

DON'T GO OUT TOO FAST The greatest challenge of getting through training and the race is finding the right pace that you can sustain and go the distance. Start out too fast and you'll likely struggle to finish, and dread the next run. Start each run at a pace that feels very comfortable with the idea that you want to finish the distance feeling strong.