



# 5-K Training: Advanced

by Hal Higdon

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## How to Train for Maximum Performance

Week	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
1	3 m run	5 x 400	Rest or easy run	30 min tempo	Rest	4 m fast	60 min run
2	3 m run	8 x 200	Rest or easy run	30 min tempo	Rest	4 m fast	65 min run
3	3 m run	6 x 400	Rest or easy run	35 min tempo	Rest	5 mi fast	70 min run
4	3 m run	9 x 200	Rest or easy run	35 min tempo	Rest or easy run	Rest	5-K test
5	3 m run	7 x 400	Rest or easy run	40 min tempo	Rest	5 m fast	75 min run
6	3 m run	10 x 200	Rest or easy run	40 min tempo	Rest	6 m fast	85 min run
7	3 m run	8 x 400	Rest or easy run	45 min tempo	Rest	6 m fast	90 min run
8	2 m run	6 x 200	30 min tempo	Rest or easy run	Rest	Rest	<b>5-K Race</b>

[Click Here for a printer-friendly version of the Advanced schedule.](#)

IF YOU'RE A SEASONED VETERAN OF THE RUNNING WARS, an individual who has been running for several years and who has run numerous 5-K races and races at other distances, there comes a time when you want to seek maximum performance. Regardless of your age or ability,

you would like to run as fast as you possibly can. You want a training program that will challenge you. Here it is!

Let me state what you probably know already. To achieve maximum performance, you need to improve your endurance and your speed. You can do this by (1) running more miles, (2) running faster, or (3) some combination of both. The following training schedule is a much more sophisticated training schedule than that offered to **Novice Runners** or to **Intermediate Runners**. In order to achieve full benefit from this program, before starting you probably need to be running 4-5 days a week, 20-30 miles a week or more, and at least have an understanding of the concepts of speedwork. If not, drop back to one of the other programs.

Here is the type of training you need to do, if you want to improve your 5-K time:

**Run:** When the schedule says "run," that suggests that you run at an easy pace. How fast is easy? You need to define your own comfort level. Don't worry about how fast you run; just cover the distance suggested--or approximately the distance. Ideally, you should be able to run at a pace that allows you to converse with a training partner without getting too much out of breath.

**Fast:** For the Saturday runs, I suggest that you run "fast." How fast is "fast?" Again, that depends on your comfort level. Go somewhat faster than you would on a "run" day. If you are doing this workout right, you probably do not want to converse with your training partner, assuming you have one. It's okay now to get out of breath.

**Long Runs:** Once a week, go for a long run at an easy pace. (Notice use of the word "easy!") Run 60 to 90 minutes at a comfortable pace, not worrying about speed or distance. Think minutes rather than miles, which allows you to explore different courses that you have not measured, or run in the woods where distance is unimportant. You should be able to carry on a conversation while you run; if not, you're going to fast. Don't be afraid to stop to walk, or stop to drink. This should be an enjoyable weekend run, not one during which you punish yourself.

**Interval Training:** To improve your speed, train at a pace somewhat faster than your race pace for the 5-K, about the pace you would run in a 1500 meter or mile race. Run 400 meters hard, then recover by jogging and/or walking 400 meters. A second variation is to run 200 meter repeats at 800 race pace with 200 jogging between. Before starting this workout, warm-up by jogging a mile or two, stretching, and doing a few sprints of 100 meters. Cool down afterwards with a short jog.

**Tempo Runs:** This is a continuous run with an easy beginning, a build-up in the middle to near 10-K race pace (or slightly slower than your pace in a 5-K), then ease back and slow down toward the end. A typical Tempo Run would begin with 5-10 minutes easy running, build to 10-15 minutes at 10-K pace, then 5-10 minutes cooling down. You can't figure out

your pace on a watch doing this workout; you need to listen to your body. Tempo Runs are very useful for developing anaerobic threshold, essential for fast 5-K racing.

**Stretch & Strengthen:** An important addendum to any training program is stretching. Don't overlook it--particularly on days when you plan to run fast. Strength training is important too: push-ups, pull-ups, use of free weights or working out with various machines at a Health Club. Runners generally benefit if they combine light weights with a high number of repetitions, rather than pumping very heavy iron. Mondays and Wednesdays would be good days to combine stretching and strengthening with your easy run, however, you can schedule these workouts on any day that is convenient for your business and personal schedule. For some good routines, see: [Stretch](#) & [Strengthen](#).

**Rest:** You can't train hard unless you are well-rested. The schedule includes one designated day of rest (Friday) when you do nothing and a second day (Wednesday) when you have an option to also take a day off. The easy 3-mile runs scheduled for Mondays are also to help you rest for the next day's hard workout, so don't run them hard! The final week before the 5-K also is a rest week. Taper your training so you can be ready for a peak performance on the weekend.

**Racing:** Some racing is useful to help you peak. Consider doing some other races at 5-K to 10-K distances to test your fitness. The following schedule includes a test 5-K race halfway through the program. You could race more frequently (once every two weeks), but too much racing is not a good idea.

The schedule above is only a guide. If you want to do your long runs on Saturday rather than Sunday, simply flip-flop the days. If you have an important appointment on a day when you have a hard workout planned, do a similar flip-flop with a rest day. It's less important what you do in any one workout than what you do over the full eight weeks leading up to your 5-K. Also, consider signing up for the [Virtual Program](#) for more detailed information on what to run each day and tips for your training.

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