



# 5-K Training: Intermediate

by Hal Higdon

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## How to Improve Your 5-K Times

Week	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
1	Rest	3 m run	5 x 400	3 m run	Rest	3 m run	5 m run
2	Rest	3 m run	30 min tempo	3 m run	Rest	3 m fast	5 m run
3	Rest	3 m run	6 x 400	3 m run	Rest	4 m run	6 m run
4	Rest	3 m run	35 min tempo	3 m run	Rest	Rest	<b>5-K Test</b>
5	Rest	3 m run	7 x 400	3 m run	Rest	4 m fast	6 m run
6	Rest	3 m run	40 min tempo	3 m run	Rest	5 m run	7 m run
7	Rest	3 m run	8 x 400	3 m run	Rest	5 m fast	7 m run
8	Rest	2 m run	30 min tempo	2 m run	Rest	Rest	<b>5-K Race</b>

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

IF YOU HAVE RUN A NUMBER OF RACES AT THE 5-K DISTANCE, you probably are not going to be content to merely *finish* your 5-K race. You'd like to finish it with grace, in style and maybe improve your time (known as setting a Personal Record, or PR). The above training schedule will take you to PR Territory. This Intermediate Program is one step up from the [Novice Program](#), but not quite as difficult as the [Advanced Program](#).

To set a PR, 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. In order to achieve full benefit from this program, you probably need to have been running 3-4 days a week for the last year or two and averaging 15-20 miles weekly. It helps if you have an understanding of the concepts of speedwork.

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 several of 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. Run 5 to 7 miles at a comfortable pace, not worrying about speed or distance. You should be able to carry on a conversation while you run; if not, you're going too fast. Don't be afraid to stop to walk, or stop to drink. This should be an enjoyable workout, not one during which you punish yourself.

**Interval Training:** To improve speed, you sometimes need to 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. 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 buildup in the middle to near 10-K race pace, then ease back and cruise to the finish. A typical tempo run would begin with 5-10 minutes easy running, continue with 10-15 faster running, and finish with 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.

**Rest:** You can't train hard unless you are well-rested. The schedule includes two designated days for rest: Mondays and Fridays. The easy 3-mile runs scheduled for Tuesdays and Thursdays are also to help you rest for hard workouts on other days. 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.

**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. Tuesdays and Thursdays 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](#).

**Racing:** Some racing is useful in helping you to 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 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. Feel free to make minor modifications to suit your work and family schedule. 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 [InterActive Program](#) for more detailed information on what to run each day and tips for your training.

<a href="#">Novice</a>	<a href="#">Intermediate</a>	<a href="#">Advanced</a>	<a href="#">Walk</a>
<h2><b><i>Hal Higdon's Virtual Training</i></b></h2> <p><a href="#">Sign up</a> to get daily emails with tips and training advice</p>			

**RUN FAST: How To Train for a 5-K or 10-K Race:** For more detailed information on training for 5-K races (including other training methods), order a copy of Hal Higdon's *Run Fast*. It includes detailed information on form, flexibility, speedwork and strength training. This book will make you a faster runner. [Click here to order a personally autographed copy of Hal Higdon's](#)

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