

Hal Higdon's

5-K TRAINING GUIDE

Walkers Program

Who Says You Have to Run to Finish a 5-K?

MANY, IF NOT MOST, 5-K RUNNING RACES WELCOME WALKERS. Whether or not the event includes a competitive racewalking division (which requires judges), walkers usually can participate in most running races. Sometimes walkers start well before the runners, sometimes they start after the runners, sometimes they start at the same time. (Tip: Start in the back so you don't embarrass yourself by forcing faster runners to go around you.)

If your only interest is to stroll 5-K at a comfortable pace, you probably don't need any particular training program. Just make sure you have a comfortable pair of walking shoes and do enough walks of at least 15-30 minutes in the last month or two before the 5-K to make sure you won't have any trouble finishing the 3.1-mile distance.

But if you would like more guidance, here is a training program you can use. The following information relates to the eight-week 5-K training program for walkers that follows:

Monday: Rest or walk. You trained pretty hard over the weekend, so use this day of rest if you experience any fatigue, or if your leg muscles are sore. In my Novice training programs developed for runners, Monday is usually a rest day. Only the Intermediate and Advanced runners train on this day.

Tuesday: Many of my training programs utilize a 48-hour break between bouts of hard exercise, so it's time to train again. In this eight-week program, begin by walking for 15 minutes at a comfortable pace. Every other week, add another 5 minutes to the length of your walk. By going at it gradually, you should be able to improve your walking ability without discomfort or risk of injury.

Wednesday: Rest or walk. Hard/easy is a common pattern among runners. You train hard to exercise your muscles, then rest to give them time to recover. You might want to take today off, but if yesterday's walk went good, feel free to walk again, regardless of distance. If you're really feeling strong, repeat the Saturday or Sunday pattern for your Wednesday walks.

Thursday: This is a repeat of Tuesday's workout pattern. Begin with 15 minutes and add five more minutes to your walk every second week.

Friday: Another rest day. You need to make sure your muscles are well rested so you can train hard on the weekends. Depending on your own particular schedule, you may want to juggle workouts, substituting one day's workout for another. It doesn't matter that much on which day you do specific workouts as long as you are consistent with your training.

Saturday: The Saturday workouts are stated in miles rather than minutes. This is to give you an idea of how much distance you are able to cover over a specific period of time as well as to give you confidence in your ability to walk 5 kilometers. The 5-K is actually 3.1 miles long, so by the time you get to the 3-miler on the seventh Saturday, you will be only a short distance from achieving your goal.

Sunday: At least one day a week, it's a good idea to go for a long walk without worrying about exactly how much distance you cover. For instance, walk in the woods over unmeasured trails. Most people should be able to walk continuously for an hour at least once a week, even if it means walking very slow or pausing to rest. If walking an hour seems too difficult the first week, start with 30 minutes and by adding 5 minutes each week, build up to the point where you can walk continuously for 60 minutes.

The following eight-week training program will prove useful for you as you train for your first 5-K as a fitness walker. If at a later date, you decide you want to try jogging a 5-K, there are many programs on this web site that will help you to that goal. If you would like to walk longer distances, I also have a [Half Marathon Walking Program](#) here on my web site that you can adapt to your level of development.

Walking Schedule for the 5-K

Week	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
8	Rest or walk	15 min walk	Rest or walk	15 min walk	Rest	1.5 m walk	30-60 min walk
7	Rest or walk	15 min walk	Rest or walk	15 min walk	Rest	1.75 m walk	35-60 min walk
6	Rest or walk	20 min walk	Rest or walk	20 min walk	Rest	2 MI walk	40-60 min walk
5	Rest or walk	20 min walk	Rest or walk	20 min walk	Rest	2.25 m walk	45-60 min walk
4	Rest or walk	25 min walk	Rest or walk	25 min walk	Rest	2.5 m walk	50-60 min walk
3	Rest or walk	25 min walk	Rest or walk	25 min walk	Rest	2.75 m walk	55-60 min walk
2	Rest or walk	30 min walk	Rest or walk	30 min walk	Rest	3 m walk	60 min walk

1	Rest or walk	30 min walk	Rest or walk	30 min walk	Rest	Rest	5-K Walk
---	--------------	-------------	--------------	-------------	------	------	----------

HAL HIGDON'S HOW TO TRAIN: The Best Programs, Workouts, and Schedules for Runners of All Ages. This book includes two chapters specifically designed for walkers: Mark Fenton's "Fitness Walking Program" and Martin Rudow's "30-Week Peak Program for Racewalkers." Rudow's book *Advanced Race Walking* can be ordered from him for \$13.95 (including postage) at: Technique Productions, 4831 N.E. 44th Street, Seattle, WA 98105. [Click here to order a personally autographed copy of Hal Higdon's How To Train.](#)

Copyright © 1999, 2002 by Hal Higdon. All rights reserved.

[Hal Higdon's 5-K Training Guide](#)

[Higdon's Home Page](#)