

Running a 5K — Workbook

This workbook accompanies the Running a 5K course and gives you the practical tools to plan, track, and reflect on your 8-week walk-to-run journey. Complete each section alongside its corresponding course module to reinforce the concepts in real training. Bring this workbook to the start line — your filled-in entries are evidence of the work you have already done.

Foundations — How Running Works

Lock in your starting baselines, equipment choices, and gait targets before your first run session.

Exercise: Gait Self-Assessment

Film yourself running 50 metres from the side and 50 metres from behind using a smartphone propped at knee height. Watch the footage in slow motion and assess each checkpoint. Write what you observe — not what you want to see.

- What is your approximate cadence? (Count every right-foot strike for 30 seconds and double it.) ___ steps/min

- Does your foot land in front of your hips (overstriding) or beneath them? Describe what you see.

- Is your trunk upright, forward-leaning from the ankle, or bending at the waist? Which checkpoint did you fail most clearly?

- What is the one gait fault you will focus on fixing in Weeks 1–2?

Worksheet: Gear Selection Log

Visit a specialty running store for a gait assessment or use the criteria below to record your gear decisions. Fill in every row before your first training session.

Shoe brand and model chosen

Shoe type (neutral / stability / motion-control)

Where purchased and date

Total cost (shoes + socks)

Tracking tool chosen (app name or watch model)

App/watch features you will use weekly (GPS pace, heart rate, cadence)

Shoe replacement reminder date (600 km from start — estimate based on planned mileage)

Checklist: Week 0 Readiness Checklist

- Running shoes purchased and worn for two 20-min walks to break in
- Moisture-wicking socks acquired
- Tracking app installed and GPS tested on a short walk
- Calendar blocked for 3 run sessions per week for 8 weeks
- Gait self-assessment video recorded and reviewed
- Rest days confirmed (no consecutive run days scheduled)
- Emergency contact and any known health conditions noted in phone emergency card

The 8-Week Walk-to-Run Program

Record every training session and reflect weekly to identify patterns in effort, energy, and progression.

Exercise: Talk-Test Calibration Run

On your very first run interval, recite a sentence aloud mid-run. Use this exercise to lock in what easy effort feels like in your body before the numbers matter.

- What sentence did you recite? Could you complete it without gasping — yes or no?

- What was your GPS pace during that interval? ____:____ per km

- Did this pace feel easier, about right, or harder than expected? What does that tell you about your starting pace for Week 1?

- At what point in the session did the run intervals start to feel genuinely challenging? Note the round number.

Worksheet: 8-Week Training Log

Complete one row after every session. Record honest data — there are no wrong answers, only useful data. Week number (1–8)

Session number this week (A / B / C)

Date

Distance covered (km)

Total session duration (min)

Run intervals completed vs planned (e.g. 7 of 8)

Average pace (min/km)

RPE during run segments (1–10)

How legs felt (great / normal / heavy / painful)

Notes (weather, route, how you felt mentally)

Checklist: Weekly Progress Check

- Completed all 3 sessions this week (or noted why not)
- Rested at least one full day between every run session
- Subjective wellness score recorded each morning (sleep + energy + mood + soreness + stress)
- No pain above 3/10 during any session (if yes, applied traffic-light protocol)
- Reviewed previous week's log before planning this week's sessions
- Increased run interval duration by no more than prescribed amount
- Post-run static stretching completed after each session

Exercise: Week 5 Reflection — The 20-Minute Run

Complete this reflection within 30 minutes of finishing your first continuous 20-minute run.

- Describe what happened in your head in the first 5 minutes when you knew you could not take a walk break.

- At what minute mark did the run feel hardest? What got you through it?

- What was your finishing pace versus your starting pace? Did you negative-split or positive-split?

- How does completing this run change your belief about race day?

Injury Prevention and Recovery

Build daily maintenance habits and apply the pain-monitoring system proactively throughout the program.

Worksheet: Pain and Symptom Tracker

Score any pain or discomfort after each run. Zero means no symptoms. Use the traffic-light key to decide whether to run next session.

Date

Body location (e.g. left shin, right heel, left knee outer)

Pain score before run (0–10)

Pain score during run (0–10)

Pain score 24 hours after run (0–10)

Traffic light decision for next session (Green / Yellow / Red)

Action taken (ran as planned / reduced distance / rested / saw physio)

Checklist: Daily Maintenance Habit Tracker

- Pre-run dynamic warm-up completed (leg swings, walking lunges, A-skips, high knees)
- Post-run static stretching completed (hip flexors, calves, hamstrings, glutes)
- Off-day strength exercises done (single-leg glute bridge, calf raises, clamshells)
- Sleep of 7.5+ hours logged last night
- Morning wellness score calculated and recorded
- Hydration goal met today (minimum 2 L water on run days)
- Ice or elevation applied to any symptomatic area within 2 hours of run if pain score was 3+

Exercise: Injury Root-Cause Analysis

Complete this only if you experience a pain score of 4 or higher at any point. Work through the questions honestly before deciding to return to running.

- Where exactly is the pain, and when did you first notice it? Describe onset — gradual over days or sudden during a session?

- Which of the five beginner injuries described in the course does this most closely resemble? What is the standard first-response for that injury?

- Looking at your training log, did weekly run volume increase by more than the prescribed amount in the 7–10 days before symptoms appeared?

- What specific change will you make to your training when you return to avoid this recurring?

Race Day — Strategy, Nutrition, and Finishing Strong

Finalise your race-day plan across nutrition, warm-up, pacing, and post-race recovery so nothing is improvised on the day.

Worksheet: Race-Day Plan

Complete this worksheet at least 3 days before race day. A written plan eliminates decision-making under race-morning stress.

Race name and date

Start time

Location and parking/transit plan

Bib pickup: race morning or day before (specify)

Target finish time

Target pace per km (target finish time divided by 5)

Km 1 target pace (10 sec/km slower than race pace to avoid going out too hard)

Race-morning wake time

Breakfast choice and time it will be eaten

Hydration plan (mL water at wake, at 1 hr before, at corral)

Warm-up start time (30 min before gun)

Kit checklist: shoes, bib, chip, watch charged, socks, weather layer

Exercise: Mental Rehearsal Script

Write a short mental rehearsal script for the night before the race. Research by sports psychologist Jim Taylor shows that a brief written visualisation the evening before competition significantly improves pacing control and reduces pre-race anxiety.

- Describe crossing the start line: what do you see, hear, and feel in your body in the first 30 seconds?
- Describe how you will handle the moment in km 3–4 when the run becomes hard. What will you tell yourself?
- Write one sentence you will say out loud to yourself when you see the finish line.
- What will finishing this race mean to you? Write the most honest answer you can.

Checklist: Post-Race Recovery Week Checklist

- Walked at least 5 minutes immediately after crossing the finish line
- Post-race snack consumed within 45 minutes (carbs + protein — banana + chocolate milk, or equivalent)
- Chip time recorded and GPS file saved
- Rest days: no running Monday and Tuesday after race
- First easy recovery run completed (20 min only, no pressure on pace)
- Registered for a second 5K within 8–12 weeks to maintain momentum
- Reviewed training log to identify one thing to do differently next time
- Celebrated the finish — shared the result with someone who supported the journey

Your Action Plan

1. Book a gait assessment at a specialty running store this week and purchase properly fitted shoes before your first training session
2. Install your chosen tracking app, run a test GPS session, and confirm it records pace and distance accurately
3. Block 3 run sessions per week in your calendar for 8 consecutive weeks — treat them as non-negotiable appointments
4. Film yourself running from the side and behind on your first session; note your starting cadence and the gait fault you will work on
5. Complete the daily maintenance routine (5-min dynamic warm-up + 5-min post-run stretching) after every single session without exception
6. Log each training session in the 8-Week Training Log within 30 minutes of finishing while data is fresh
7. Apply the traffic-light pain protocol from day one — stop at Yellow if pain rises during a session
8. Complete the Race-Day Plan worksheet no later than 3 days before race day
9. Seed yourself in the middle or back of the starting corral and run the first kilometre at your conservative target pace regardless of crowd energy
10. Enter a second 5K within 8–12 weeks of finishing your first to lock in the running habit before motivation naturally fluctuates

