



5K RUNS

GUIDE



HEALTH & FITNESS

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HOW LONG IS A 5K RUN?



For those who are new to running, training to complete a 5K race is an ideal starting point. Hundreds of 5K events take place across the UK all year round, ranging from standard road races to mud runs that will leave you with some serious washing to do afterwards! These events are very popular with new and experienced runners alike, and are a great way to raise money for a good cause.



HOW MANY MILES IS A 5K RUN?

Many apps and smart watches measure your distance in miles by default, it can be difficult to know exactly how far you've ran in kilometres (often referred to as KM or K). For this reason, many people find it easier to keep up to date with their progress by recording the distance of their runs in miles.



A 5K run is a total of 5000 metres, which converts to 3.1 miles – that's about the same as running the centre court at Wimbledon 210.3 times!

If you want a quick way to calculate all of your distances you can use a tool like Unit Converters.

HOW LONG IS A 5K RUN?

IS RUNNING A 5K HARD?

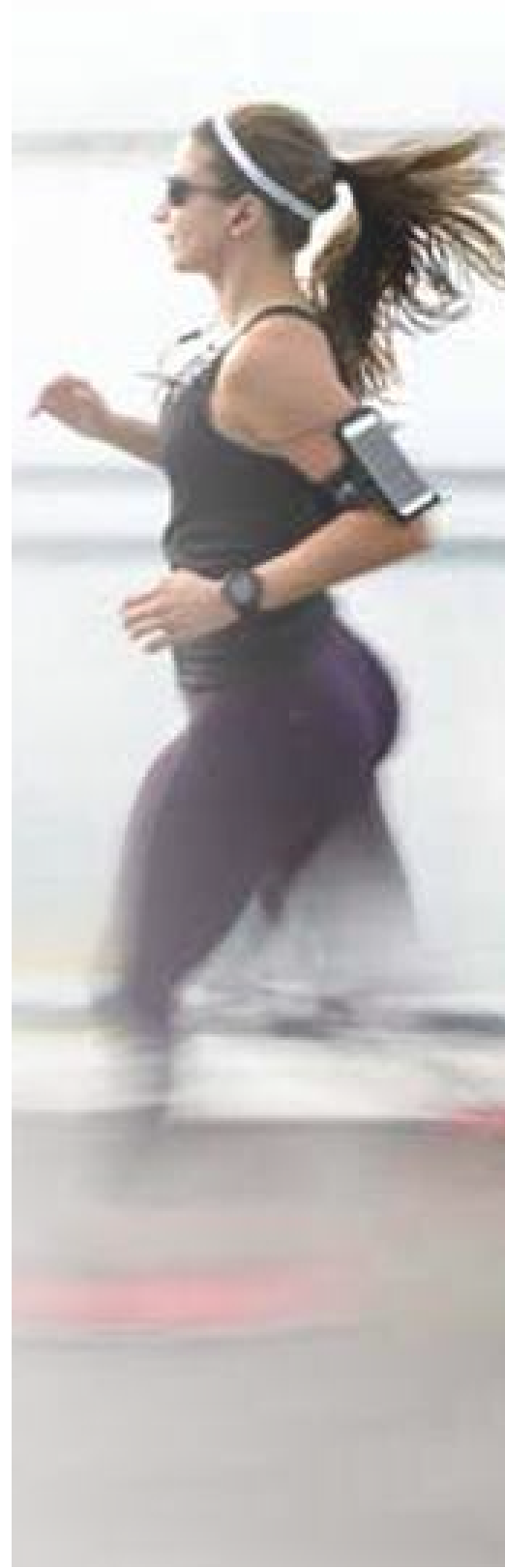
If you are just starting out with running, 5K might seem like a long distance, but there are plenty of tried and tested training plans such as Couch to 5K that will take you from your seat to the finish line in a matter of weeks! Once you are comfortable with the distance you can start to work on improving your speed and the time it takes you to run a 5K.

Walking is a fantastic way to ease into training for a 5K. Smart watches and fitness tracking tools are becoming an increasingly popular way to monitor fitness progress, with step counting being a key feature. Most fitness trackers advise walking 10,000 steps a day but even starting out at around 5,000 steps will be great progress towards your goal whether it's weight loss, or to run a 5K.

Someone of average height can expect to take around 6250 steps over a 5K distance (based on an estimated stride length of 2.1 to 2.5 feet). Once you've crossed the finish line of your first 5K you can start working towards increasing your steps and taking on longer distances such as 10K events.

MORE TIPS FOR RUNNING A 5K

Finding the right running shoes can make a big difference to your training. Many sports shops will be able to measure your gait and give you advice on which shoes will suit your running style. Remember to take rest days in your training schedule to avoid injury and to give your body time to recover. If you are struggling with training, try getting involved with running groups or asking a friend to join you for encouragement and support.



WHAT IS THE AVERAGE 5K TIME?



Have you recently signed up for a 5K event? Or maybe you have already completed one and you're looking to improve your time. Either way if you are training for a 5K, you are probably wondering "How long should it take to run a 5K?"



HOW CAN I MEASURE MY RUNNING TIME?

The time it takes to run any distance will depend on your pace, for example if you run at a speed of 10km (6.2 miles) per hour you will finish a 5K in 30 minutes. There are lots of tools that can help you measure your pace, such as fitness trackers and apps that will keep a log of your speed and distance. If you are training on a treadmill you can manually set your running pace and adjust this as your fitness improves.

The average time it takes someone to run a 5K will also depend on a variety of factors such as age, fitness level and gender. An age graded calculator provides a performance score based on running data for your age and gender, allowing for a fairer comparison across the board.

WHAT IS THE AVERAGE 5K TIME?

AVERAGE 5K TIME FOR BEGINNERS

For beginners, you can expect to cross the finish line of a 5K somewhere between 35-45 minutes. As you will be fairly new to training, you may be more comfortable doing a combination of running and walking to begin with. Training plans such as Couch to 5K will ease you in to running and help you improve your pace over time.

AVERAGE 5K TIME FOR INTERMEDIATE RUNNERS

For intermediate runners (generally those who run 10 – 20 miles per week) an average 5K time would be around 25-35 minutes, which is an average speed of around 7-9mph over the course. Those hoping for a new personal best 5K time may benefit from incorporating interval training into their training schedules to help build up pace and endurance.

AVERAGE 5K TIME FOR ATHLETES/ELITES

Athletes and elite level runners follow rigorous training routines to attain increasingly competitive running times. The world record time for a 5K stands at 12:37.35 minutes for men, held by Kenenisa Bekele, and 14:11.15 minutes for women, held by Tirunesh Dibaba – pretty impressive! The average 5K time for an advanced/ elite runner is 20-25 minutes.



IMPROVING YOUR 5K TIME



HOW CAN I IMPROVE MY AVERAGE 5K TIME?

If you're looking for ways to improve your pace and as a result, get your 5K running time down, there are a few things you can do to get moving that bit faster.

Practice makes perfect: Having a structured training plan in place is one of the best ways to improve your speed and measure your progress. For example, a 6-week training plan for a 5K might have you walk/run for the first couple of weeks, then gradually increase the amount of time you spend running instead of walking. By adding more speed gradually you'll adjust more easily and see your 5K time reducing each week.

Train your muscles: Whilst running is a great calorie burning exercise, there's a reason that most elite long- distance runners are lean as opposed to muscular. Running alone won't help you build much muscle but adding some weight and resistance training into your routine will. Building muscle can help you run faster as it will put more power behind your strides, increasing your overall speed.

Add some sprints: Mixing up your speed with bursts of high-speed sprinting is a great way to get your body used to running at a higher pace too. Start with short 30 second bursts of sprinting at a close to your maximum effort, then return to your comfortable running pace. Repeat this throughout your run and not only will you add some speed you'll also torch more calories.



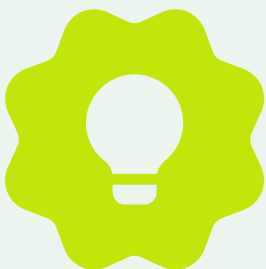
CALORIES BURNT RUNNING A 5K

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A 5K run is a great place to start with if you are new to running, especially as it's such an easily attainable distance for all fitness levels. Training for and completing your first 5K is also a great way to start a weight loss journey and challenge your fitness levels.

Watching the number of calories you consume and burn is going to play a big part in your fitness goals. Before you go and grab that chocolate bar as a reward for your 3.1 mile run, you'll probably want to find out just how many calories you can offset by running a 5K – especially if your goal is to lose weight!



On average a 5K run will burn between 300 and 400 calories (around 100 calories per mile), but if you are looking to work out the rate that you personally burn calories when running a 5K, you will need to take a few factors into consideration.

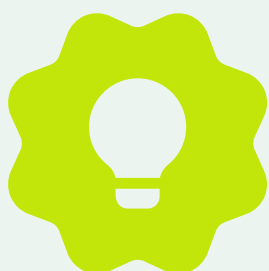
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CALCULATING YOUR CALORIE BURN

The number of calories a person burns by running a 5K will depend mainly on two factors; your current body weight and your running speed. As a general rule, the faster you run the more calories you will burn over a set distance (in this case 3.1 miles), similarly someone with a larger body mass will generally burn more calories whilst running than someone with a smaller build.

You can use a calorie burn calculator to get an accurate number for the amount of calories you burn whilst running, based on your body weight, running time and distance. If you are looking to increase your calorie burn over the 5K distance, running on a varied terrain or steeper incline will give you a more intense workout, additionally working on your speed and running faster will up your calorie burn.



Another great way to calculate the number of calories you burn is by using a fitness tracker. Apple Watch and Fitbit Charge are two great options, however, Garmin watches are more tailored towards running and have some great features.

CALORIES BURNT RUNNING A 5K



BURN MORE CALORIES DURING YOUR RUN

The good news about running is that it is a very efficient way to burn calories. Running at a comfortable pace can burn around 8 calories per minute, but how can you increase the efficiency of your calorie burn while running?

USE INTERVALS TO BREAK THROUGH THE PLATEAU

If you've been running to help lose weight, you may have found that as you've become more comfortable with running at a continuous pace, the amount of weight that you're shifting seems to have slowed down. The reason for this is that your body becomes more efficient and starts to burn fewer calories while you are running.

All hope is not lost however! By introducing interval training into your training, adding bursts of speed followed by rest periods at a slower or more comfortable pace, these burst of high intensity running make your muscles work harder and cause a higher calorie burn.



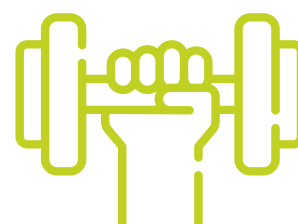
HEAD FOR THE HILLS

Another way to get your muscles working harder is to start adding steeper inclines into your runs. For every degree increase in the incline you are running on, you will burn roughly 10% more calories than you would running on a flat terrain.



ADD STRENGTH TRAINING INTO YOUR ROUTINE

So we've already talked about adding more speed into your routine, but adding some strength training in will help you to build up those leg muscles in order to run faster too. Try to add a couple of strength and resistance sessions in between your runs each week.



WHAT TO EAT BEFORE A 5K

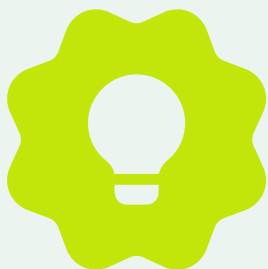
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If you have a 5k running event coming up you'll know the importance of training and exercise to get you ready for race day - but have you thought about what you should be eating to power you through the run? The food you eat before you begin your race plays a big part in getting you energised and ready to run your best 5k yet!

HOW MUCH DO I NEED TO EAT BEFORE A 5K?

As a shorter running distance, there's no need to do any heavy carb loading for a 5k. A heavy pre-race meal can make you feel sluggish and bloated and is likely to impact your performance.



In reality, it's unlikely that you will be running for more than 40- 60 minutes for a 5k, even as a beginner, meaning that you will only be burning around 300-400 calories. For an ideal pre-race meal, try to eat an hour or two before your run and stick to 200- 300 calories.

WHAT TO EAT BEFORE A 5K

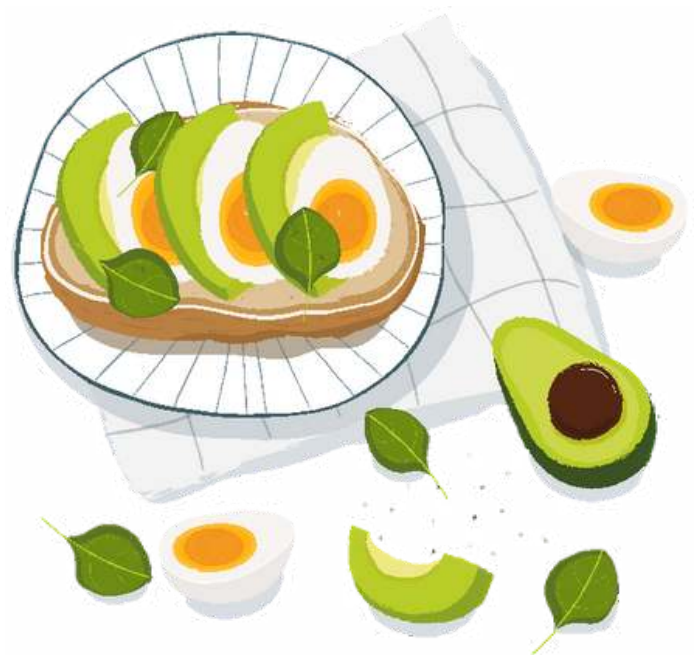


WHAT IS THE BEST FOOD TO EAT BEFORE A 5K?

To give you a steady source of energy through your run, unprocessed carbohydrates should make up the biggest portion of your pre-race meal.

Try experimenting with different meal ideas on your training runs to find out what works best for you. If you are running early in the day, some good breakfast options include porridge topped with fruit, or a bagel with scrambled eggs.

For lunchtime you might prefer a small portion of pasta with a light tomato sauce. Foods high in fat or protein take longer for your body to digest, so it's best to limit these types of food to no more than 10g before your run.



DON'T FORGET THE WATER!

As well as eating well, it's important to stay hydrated both during your race and throughout your training. Keep your H₂O topped up by drinking 250 – 500ml of water (a small bottle) a couple of hours before then again 30 minutes before you start running. Aim to top up every 15 minutes during your run with 100 – 200ml more. Sports drinks that help replace electrolytes and lost fluids during exercise are popular with runners too, but for a shorter race like a 5k you'll probably find that water alone will do the trick! If you're running a 5K in warmer conditions it's a good idea to take a bottle of water with you too to avoid dehydration and keep you cool.

TOP 5K RUNNING TIPS



When the weather starts to pick up outside it can be a great motivator to get your shoes laced up and start running! A 5K is a great distance to start with, especially if you are new to running or haven't ran for a long time. In addition, if you are planning on running a 5K to keep fit and lose weight, regularly running is a great exercise for burning calories.

Despite a 5K being one of the shorter running event distances, it's perfectly reasonable to be apprehensive about race day. To help you out we've put together our top 10 tips for training and running a 5k.

USE A TRAINING PLAN

The best way to prepare for any race is by, well, preparing! Follow a structured training plan that will build up your fitness and stamina gradually over a few weeks. The Couch to 5K plan is a great option for beginners.

SIGN UP TO AN EVENT

Signing up to a 5K event, whether it's a local park run or a bigger charity event, will motivate you to keep up with your running and you'll get a great sense of accomplishment once you cross the finish line.

TOP 5K RUNNING TIPS

REST DAYS

Make sure you take adequate rest days between your training sessions. This will give your body time to recover and build strength, and also avoid injury.

INTERVAL TRAINING

If you are trying to improve your 5K speed, try introducing intervals into your training programme, alternating between running hard and walking/ jogging. This will help to build up your stamina for running at a faster pace for longer.

WARM UP

Just as important as your rest days, on running days and before your race make sure you do some warm up exercises. A few stretches will help to minimise your risk of injury and can make the difference in crossing the finish line or getting doubled over with cramp.

PACE YOURSELF

Don't use up all your steam at the start of the race! Whatever your average running time, try to pace yourself over the first few minutes of the course, saving a bit of energy to finish strong (this makes for more impressive finish line photos too by the way!).

TOP 5K RUNNING TIPS

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RUN WITH FRIENDS

Running with friends, or even joining a local running club, can add an element of fun to your training and help keep you motivated on reaching your 5K goals. What better way to celebrate crossing the finish line than regrouping post-race for a much needed victory meal?

LEAVE THE NEW SHOES AT HOME

Nothing can ruin your race quite like a painful pair of shoes. No matter how comfortable they felt when you tried them on in the shop. If you haven't broken your shoes in before race day stick with your tried and tested training shoes.

RESEARCH YOUR COURSE

Before you show up at your event, try and find out where the course will take you. If there are any hills or tricky terrains you'll have a better idea of how to pace yourself over the 3.1 miles.

HAVE FUN!

The most important thing is to enjoy yourself! Enjoy the excitement and atmosphere of your chosen 5K event and give yourself a huge pat on the back once you've finished the run – regardless of time.