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## How to start a running program

The health benefits you get from exercise are well documented. Running is an aerobic, or cardiovascular, workout. That means it is a sustained, rhythmic activity that employs the large muscle groups. Research shows that running can help you live longer because your heart will become more efficient, beating less and using less energy to function. Running can help you lose weight when combined with a healthy, balanced diet.

Running is one of the least expensive, most convenient ways to be active. All you really need is a good pair of running shoes, sweat-wicking socks, and comfortable, wicking, non-chafing clothes that are appropriate for the weather conditions.

Too many people have been turned off of running simply by starting off too fast. Their body rebels and they wind up miserable. You should ease into a running program gradually. Many beginners stop and start again 10 or 15 times before they get the habit established. Beginners who don't put pressure on themselves seem to have an easier time staying with it. Do what your body tells you. Everybody is different in his or her ability to adapt to exercise. When you are beginning, it is better to do too little than too much.

Following are some different ways to slowly become a runner.

### Plan 1: Features 30 minutes of exercise for the first 30 days.

1. Walk out the door and go 15 minutes in one direction, turn around and return 15 minutes to where you started: 30 minutes total.
2. For the **first** 10 minutes, you must **walk** – no running!
3. For the **last** 5 minutes, you must **walk** – no running!
4. During the middle 15 minutes jog for 30 seconds, walk however long it takes to recover, jog 30 seconds again. Jog, walk. Jog, walk.
5. Once comfortable jogging and walking, adopt a 30/30 pattern: jog 30 seconds, walk 30 seconds, etc.

If you continue this 30/30 routine for 30 days, you will finish the month able to cover between one and two miles walking and jogging.

### Plan 2: A 9-week plan to run a 5K (3.1 miles).

When running, find a comfortable pace; a good rule of thumb is the talk test. If you can carry on a conversation without huffing and puffing, you are in the right zone. If you can sing, you are not running hard enough.

For the first 4 weeks, repeat workout 3 days each week

Week 1	Brisk 5 minute warmup walk	Alternate 60 seconds of jogging and 90 seconds of walking for a total of 20 minutes	Slow 5 minute cool down walk
Week 2	Brisk 5 minute warmup walk	Alternate 90 seconds of jogging and 2 minutes of walking for total of 20 minutes	Slow 5 minute cool down walk
Week 3	Brisk 5 minute warmup walk	Two repetitions of the following: Jog 90 seconds – walk 90 seconds – jog 3 minutes – walk 3 minutes	Slow 5 minute cool down walk
Week 4	Brisk 5 minute warmup walk	Jog 3 minutes – walk 90 seconds – jog 5 minutes – walk 2 minutes – jog 3 minutes – walk 90 seconds – jog 5 minutes	Slow 5 minute cool down walk
Week 5a	Brisk 5 minute warmup walk	Jog 5 minutes – walk 3 minutes – jog 5 minutes – walk 3 minutes – jog 5 minutes	Slow 5 minute cool down walk
Week 5b	Brisk 5 minute warmup walk	Jog 8 minutes – walk 5 minutes – jog 8 minutes	Slow 5 minute cool down walk
Week 5c	Brisk 5 minute warmup walk	Jog 20 minutes with no walking	Slow 5 minute cool down walk
Week 6a	Brisk 5 minute warmup walk	Jog 5 minutes – walk 3 minutes – jog 8 minutes – walk 3 minutes – jog 5 minutes	Slow 5 minute cool down walk
Week 6b	Brisk 5 minute warmup walk	Jog 10 minutes – walk 3 minutes – jog 10 minutes	Slow 5 minute cool down walk
Week 6c	Brisk 5 minute warmup walk	Jog 25 minutes with no walking	Slow 5 minute cool down walk
For the last 3 weeks, repeat workout 3 days each week			
Week 7	Brisk 5 minute warmup walk	Jog 25 minutes	Slow 5 minute cool down walk
Week 8	Brisk 5 minute warmup walk	Jog 28 minutes	Slow 5 minute cool down walk
Week 9	Brisk 5 minute warmup walk	Jog 30 minutes	Slow 5 minute cool down walk