

Guidelines for beginner's walking/running program.

Commitment

The most essential component of an exercise schedule is to set aside a regular time – preferably at the same time each day. The schedules below suggest 45 minutes to begin and increasing to 60 minutes on the days that you run. Some days per week can be exercise while other days may be a period of meditation or stretching or any relaxing activity. We find it is best to have that time set aside EVERY day, if possible, but you can choose different activities each day. Creating a routine establishes this as part of your lifestyle. Finding one or more partners to join you is also an excellent motivational tool.

Health

A thorough consultation with your physician is recommended prior to beginning an exercise program. This is to ensure there are no underlying health issues which might pose some risks or hinder the development of your fitness. Some minor aches and pains in the muscles are likely at the beginning of exercise and your doctor can advise you on what is considered normal compared to any symptoms that may warrant further medical intervention.

Pace and Duration

Three days of aerobic exercise per week is good – four or five is better – six or seven is too much at this stage. The schedule below has three sessions per week listed. If you exercise more than that please repeat one of the given sessions for that week. Do NOT move to the following week's session.

Walking in the first part is essential to building leg strength. Too much running early on will break down the muscles. The lungs adapt rapidly and you have to give the legs more time to catch up. Otherwise you will feel sore and lethargic after about five sessions.

Running must always be at a conversational pace. You should be stopping because the prescribed time has elapsed and not because you are puffing too much! Some people may choose to monitor heart rate by checking their pulse or wearing a heart rate monitor. In this case the heart rate should not exceed 70% of your maximum heart rate. For most of you this is not necessary as most beginners can be guided by the conversational pace suggestion.

The program is designed to provide steady progression for beginners. Small increases each week will build a high level of fitness and maintain motivation. At the end of four months you will have progressed safely to running 3 miles continuously. Individuals with a higher degree of fitness at the beginning may skip some weeks.

Detailed weekly schedule.

Abbreviations:

w = walk; r = run

e.g. “w 5; (r 2, w 3) by 6; w 5” means that you warm up by walking for 5 minutes; then run for 2 minutes and walk for 3 minutes and repeat the sequence 6 times; finally cooldown by walking for 5 minutes. That would be a total of 40 minutes of exercise.

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| Wk 1 | w 25 | w 30 | w 35 |
| Wk 2 | w 40 | w 40 | w 5; (r 1, w 3) by 6; w 5 |
| Wk 3 | w 5; (r 1, w 3) by 6; w 5 | w 5; (r 1, w 3) by 6; w 5 | w 5; (r 1, w 3) by 6; w 5 |
| Wk 4 | w 5; (r 2, w 3) by 6; w 5 | w 5; (r 2, w 3) by 6; w 5 | w 5; (r 2, w 3) by 6; w 5 |
| Wk 5 | w 5; (r 2, w 2) by 7; w 5 | w 5; (r 2, w 2) by 7; w 5 | w 5; (r 2, w 2) by 7; w 5 |
| Wk 6 | w 5; (r 3, w 3) by 5; w 5 | w 5; (r 3, w 3) by 5; w 5 | w 5; (r 3, w 3) by 5; w 5 |
| Wk 7 | w 5; (r 4, w 3) by 5; w 5 | w 5; (r 4, w 3) by 5; w 5 | w 5; (r 4, w 3) by 5; w 5 |
| Wk 8 | w 5; (r 5, w 2) by 5; w 5 | w 5; (r 5, w 2) by 5; w 5 | w 5; (r 5, w 2) by 5; w 5 |
| Wk 9 | w 5; (r 5, w 2) by 6; w 5 | w 5; (r 5, w 2) by 6; w 5 | w 5; (r 6, w 2) by 5; w 5 |
| Wk 10 | w 5; (r 7, w 2) by 4; w 5 | w 5; (r 7, w 2) by 4; w 5 | w 5; (r 7, w 2) by 5; w 5 |
| Wk 11 | w 5; (r 8, w 2) by 4; w 5 | w 5; (r 8, w 2) by 4; w 5 | w 5; (r 8, w 2) by 5; w 5 |
| Wk 12 | w 5; (r 9, w 2) by 4; w 5 | w 5; (r 9, w 2) by 4; w 5 | w 5; (r 9, w 2) by 5; w 5 |
| Wk 13 | w 5; (r 10, w 2) by 4; w 5 | w 5; (r 10, w 2) by 4; w 5 | w 5; (r 10, w 2) by 4; w 5 |
| Wk 14 | w 5; (r 12, w 2) by 3; w 5 | w 5; (r 12, w 2) by 3; w 5 | w 5; (r 12, w 2) by 3; w 5 |
| Wk 15 | w 5; (r 15, w 3) by 2; w 5 | w 5; (r 15, w 3) by 2; w 5 | w 5; (r 15, w 3) by 2; w 5 |
| Wk 16 | w 5; (r 18, w 3, r 10); w 5 | w 5; (r 18, w 3, r 10); w 5 | w 5; (r 18, w 2, r 12); w 5 |
| Wk 17 | w 5; (r 20, w 2, r 10); w 5 | w 5; (r 20, w 2, r 10); w 5 | w 5; (r 25, w 1, r 10); w 5 |
| Wk 18 | w 5; (r 25, w 1, r 10); w 5 | w 5; (r 26, w 2, r 12); w 5 | w 5; r 30; w 5 yipee!!! |

This schedule may be modified a little as long as the overall principle of steady progression is followed. Progress may be faster or slower depending on individual genetics and time commitment. We emphasize again that all running must be at a conversational pace!

Support

This schedule was designed by Jerry Dwyer of the West Texas Running Club and a member of the Get Fit Lubbock organizing committee. He will be happy to consult on any issue of the program or developing fitness. Please call him at 742-2580 ext 230 or e-mail jerry.dwyer@ttu.edu.

Sustainability

The level outlined above is adequate for major health benefits if maintained consistently. However you may continue, if you wish, to increase the time or distance you run. Advice on more advanced training programs and club races can be obtained from Jerry or other members of the committee.