



Live Your Best Life Sweepstakes

Get Moving in May

Walk, Walk/Run, or Run a 5K With Us!

Ever think about walking or running a 5K? Do you tell yourself there's no way you can do that? Other people do that, but not you. Right? Wrong! Walking, run-walking, or running a 5K (3.1 miles) is a very attainable distance. Especially if you follow RunnerDude's 12-week plan.

Starting a new fitness routine can be a daunting and scary thing. You're putting yourself out there. Others are going to know what you're doing. They're going to be holding you to a certain standard and have certain expectations of your abilities, right? Wrong. These are often thoughts that enter our minds when we start something new, especially when we start a new fitness program. We are often our own worst enemy. We're defeated before we even begin.

The following five steps will start you off on the right foot with your walking/running journey.



1 Do it for You.

You have to decide this is something you want to achieve. If you're doing it for any other reason than because you want to do it for yourself and improve your own health, then chances are you won't be successful. Put yourself first.

2 Clear your mind of "CAN'T."

When you tell yourself you can't do something, you're setting yourself up for failure. It's perfectly normal to be a little scared of the unknown, but "can't" is a strong word. Give yourself a chance.

3 Strive for progress not perfection.

Nobody is perfect. Even Olympic level athletes have areas where they can improve. Perfection is not attainable, progress is.

4 Set attainable goals with realistic timeframes.

I once had a prospective client come for a consultation. He told me he wanted to run a marathon (26.2 miles). My first question was, "How many miles a week are you currently running?" His answer was, "Zero." I said, "Okay," thinking that his desired marathon was a year or so away and we'd be working our way up to this ambitious goal. So, my next question was, "When is the marathon you've decided to run?" His response, "In two months." My jaw dropped. I told him I'd be happy to schedule him for my next beginning running group or work one-on-one with him to safely begin a beginning running program, but that I could not help him reach the goal of running a marathon in two months with no current running under his belt. Setting huge unrealistic goals for ourselves creates a scenario for failure or worse, injury.

5 Step 5: Celebrate the small gains.

Progress takes dedication, consistency, and hard work. There is no magic pill. Setting intermediary goals to help you reach your ultimate goal will help you better monitor your progress. It's kind of like that cross-country road trip with the family. If all you think of is getting there, it seems like forever before you reach your destination. However, if you plan some sightseeing along the way, before you know it, voilà, you're there! Same thing applies with fitness. Each time you reach a new level in your fitness or running, you should celebrate your progress. Those little accomplishments in your running and fitness journey add up to big change over time.

Working for the next 12 weeks to achieve this goal is very realistic and attainable. First, however, you need to decide if you want to walk, run-walk, or run the 5K. Once you've decided, you can follow one of the three training plans I've create to help you achieve your 5K goal.

Walking the 5K

For the Walking plan, you'll be walking at least 4 days a week, for about 30-45 minutes each. For the Run-Walk and Beginning Running plans, you'll be running 3 days a week for about 30 mins each.

I highly recommend that you ease into your training. It's much easier to start slowly and build your endurance over time than to burn out quickly because you're going too fast or too hard too soon. Also, understand that while running can be a very social sport, physically it is a very individual sport. What I mean by this is that your starting natural pace may be slightly faster or slightly slower than your buddy. You need to find and run (or walk) your own natural pace. If you're going too slowly or being pushed too hard to keep up with your buddies, then you'll get frustrated, or worse—injured. Remember, you're doing this for you.

Rest is good. You need rest to allow your body to recover before your next workout. For the walking program, I recommend you walk 3-4 days a week. That could be Sunday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday. The next week could be Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday, and so on. If you need to stick to the same 4 days each week, then it's okay to have two walking days (like Saturday and Sunday) be back-to-back.

Run-Walk and Running the 5K

For the Run-Walk and beginning Running Programs, it's good to stick to the same three days weekly. So, you could run Monday, and Wednesday and then do a third run on Saturday or whatever configuration works best for you and your schedule.

Treat your walks or runs as a part of your weekly schedule. Put it on your calendar and work schedule. Stick to a routine. If you treat your walks/runs as a part of your schedule equally as important as other work or family tasks, then you'll be more apt to get the workout in. If you save it for later, later often never comes.

Also, let your family and coworkers know what you're doing and that it's a priority. Getting everyone onboard will add to ensuring your success.

Choose Your 5K

Next, find a 5K. If you sign up for a "real" 5K, it will make it your training more meaningful to you. Go ahead and pay that race registration. For me, if I've paid for something, then I'm definitely going to follow through. Look for a 5K taking place around the beginning of August.

www.runningintheusa.com is a great website where you can search by state, month, and race distance. I believe a real, in-person race is best, but if you can't find a race near where you live and traveling isn't an option, there are virtual races for which you can register too. Check out www.virtualstrides.com for virtual race options.

Over the next 12 weeks, I'll be providing you with lots of tips to help you with your running such as breathing techniques, good running form tips, how to stay motivated and more. Pick your plan and get started. You can do this! I believe in you. *You* believe in you!

Trust. Believe. Conquer!

Thad McLaurin, aka RunnerDude





Meet Thad McLaurin

Thad McLaurin is a running coach and personal trainer who has helped hundreds of clients discover a love of running and fitness. A runner for over 30 years, Thad has run 15 marathons, 1 ultra marathon, dozens of half marathons, and too many 5K and 10K races to count. His credentials include: Personal Trainer certification from ACSM (American College of Sports Medicine), Personal Trainer and Nutrition Consultant diploma certifications from NPTI (National Personal Trainer Institute), RRCA Running Coach certification, and USA Track & Field Level 1 Coaching certification, in addition to a Bachelor's degree in Education from University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Thad is founder of RunnerDude's Fitness, a popular running-focused training center in Greensboro, North Carolina, author of RunnerDude's Blog, one of the top-ranked running blogs in the country, and has authored the book *Full Body Fitness for Runners* (a USA Best Book Awards Finalist). Thad is a contributing writer for Active.com and has written articles for AmateurEndurance.com, Fitter U Fitness, and Canada's IMPACT Magazine in addition to being featured in the "Ask the Experts" section of Runner's World.

PROTEIN-PACKED SMOOTHIE

If you have fruits and vegetables at home (fresh, frozen or even canned), a blender, and about 5 minutes- then you have a healthy smoothie at your fingertips!

Try this recipe for a quick boost pre-workout, or be creative by mixing some of your favorite produce together for a delicious and refreshing sports drink.

- 1 sliced banana
- 1 cup berries (black berries, raspberries or strawberries)
- 1/4 cup nonfat dry milk (slivered almonds or nut butters work great too!)
- 1 cup nonfat milk or milk substitute (almond, soy, rice)
- 1 cup ice

Blend together and enjoy!

