10 Steps From Couch Potato to 5K
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For the On-Again, Off-Again exerciser, here is a plan. .......

1. SET A GOAL TO WALK OR RUN A ROAD RACE.
The stability of needing to train will keep you in the process of working out. The 5K and ½ Marathon are the “hot” road races right now. The 5K is a great distance for beginning runners/walkers.

2. PSYCH YOURSELF UP!!
Paying attention to your physical training is important, but so is paying attention to your mental attitude.

➤ Don’t think about the distance, but instead the steps it takes to get there.
➤ When you have worked yourself up to a 1K (approx. 2/3 mile) do a self-evaluation. If you are thinking about pain and fatigue, you are probably doing too much too fast. If you are feeling “energized” it’s a good indication that you are doing the right things.
➤ Each time you meet a “process goal”, reward yourself by going to a movie or a trip to Scheels, Dunhams, or another sporting goods store to buy some running gear.
➤ Write down the reason(s) you want to do a road race. Ex: To improve your health, lose weight, look better in clothes, etc.

3. PICK A DATE FOR YOUR FIRST ROAD RACE.
One to Two Months minimum from the time you begin training/exercise.
I highly recommend the following website: www.fitnesssports.com as a resource to find and plan your first race/run/walk. Virtually every road race/fun run/walk is listed month-by-month on this website along with sign-up and contact information.

4. HOW TO BEGIN TRAINING.
➤ Start Slow.
➤ Pick distances that are doable.
➤ Pick terrain that is manageable.
➤ Make sure you have the most important equipment, SHOES, that are made for your feet.
➤ Proper Training Clothing. Light weight in summer. Add tights in the fall, spring, and winter months. Lightweight gloves, head bands during colder weather.

5. MORE “MIND GAMES”
➤ Depend on the support of co-workers who are runners. Look to them as people who understand what you are experiencing as a runner.
➤ Think about the fact that you are “taking control of your physical life.”
➤ Find a workout partner or group. The most successful adult runners that I have known find workout partners or groups, sometimes called running clubs.
6. **SAMPLE 12 WEEK 5K TRAINING SCHEDULE FOR THE BEGINNING RUNNER**

   A 5K training schedule that is great for beginning runners is to incorporate walking, jogging, cross-training, and long runs.

   Cross-training can include things like biking, roller-blading, racquetball, tennis, hiking. All geared at getting your cardiovascular system performing at an anaerobic level.

   Cross-training or walking should be no less than 1 hour of exercise.

   ***Note- XT refers to Cross-training***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>M-W-F</th>
<th>T-TH</th>
<th>Saturday</th>
<th>Sunday</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>walk or XT</td>
<td>run 10-15 min.</td>
<td>off</td>
<td>1 mile</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
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<td>run 15 min.</td>
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<td>1 mile</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>walk or XT</td>
<td>run 15 - 20 min.</td>
<td>off</td>
<td>1.5 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
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<td>run 15 - 20 min.</td>
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<td>1 mile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>walk or XT</td>
<td>run 20 - 25 min.</td>
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<td>2 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
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<td>1 mile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>walk or XT</td>
<td>run 25 - 30 min.</td>
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<td>2.5 miles</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>walk or XT</td>
<td>run 25 - 30 min.</td>
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<td>1.5 miles</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>walk or XT</td>
<td>run 25 - 30 min.</td>
<td>off</td>
<td>3 miles</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>walk or XT</td>
<td>run 30 min.</td>
<td>off</td>
<td>3.5 miles - (over distance)</td>
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<td>11</td>
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<td>run 30 min.</td>
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<td>4 miles - (over distance)</td>
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<td>12</td>
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<td>run 30 min.</td>
<td>off</td>
<td>5K Race</td>
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</table>

7. **HOW TO INCREASE YOUR DISTANCE.**

   In coaching terminology, we call it “Plateauing”. That is, you get yourself to a distance or time “plateau” that you can maintain for a set period of days/weeks and then jump to the next “plateau”. Ex: Run 5K successfully for a period of 2-3 weeks, then jump to an 8K or just under 5 mile distance.
8. STRETCHING.

I recommend “Dynamic” or what we refer to stretching with movement. It promotes cardiovascular blood flow to the muscle groups you will be using and helps prevent muscle soreness. Some “Static” or stationary stretches are effective too.

SAMPLE STRETCHING ROUTINE - Using a distance of about 10 yards or 30-40 feet.

➤ Easy Jog with both forward and backward arm swings.
➤ Toe-Up Walking – Step forward on heel and lift to toe on each step.
➤ Ankle Walks – Walk continuously on heels.
➤ Lift Thigh to Chest Walks
➤ Lift Heel to But and Grab Heel
➤ Leg Lifts – Swing one leg out to the side, then swing it back across your body in front of your other leg. Repeat 10 times on each side. Hold onto steady object.
➤ Pike Stretch/Toe Grab – Get in a “pike position” (hips in air). Put your right foot in front of your left foot. Reach down and grab your toe and pull toe up so arch is off of the ground.
➤ Toy Soldier – Keeping your back and knees straight, walk forward, lifting your legs straight out in front flexing your toes.
➤ Walking Lunges – Step forward using a long stride, keeping the front knee over or just behind your toes. Lower your body by dropping your back knee toward, but not touching the ground. Maintain upright posture and keep your abdominal muscles tight.

9. USE TECHNOLOGY.

➤ IPODS, MP3 players, etc., are great for long runs. Music helps take your mind off how your body is feeling at the moment.
➤ TRAINING AIDS are made by companies like Nike, etc., that will allow you to put a sensor in or attached to your shoe and measure distances run, etc.
➤ GPS training watches. Also nice for the veteran runners who want to measure distance, time, even heart rate, etc.
➤ FACEBOOK your performances and questions to other runners you know. Great support system that helps make running a passion.

10. NUTRITION AND HYDRATION

➤ There is tremendous runner’s nutrition and hydration information found on the web at the following sites:
   www.runnersworld.com
   www.fitnesssports.com
   www.gatorade.com

FINALLY!! Have Fun becoming a runner. Once you have caught the “runner’s bug” you will begin to notice changes in how you look, feel, energy levels, etc.