

## **Training for your maiden 5k - If you can walk 5 kilometres, you can run 5 kilometres**

Of the many things that gets one hooked on running, the first 5k is something special. For most people a 5k is the first ever organised running event they are a part of. The early hours, the crowd, the inspiration, the excitement, the energy are all very different from the usual training run and this experience makes it something worth remembering for a long time.

Firstly, here is something to keep in mind - If you can walk 5 kilometres, you can run 5 kilometres. You may not be able to run it currently or you may have never tried, but you can. It is just a matter of time and training.

### **The program**

#### **Part 1**

On your first day of running, set a 20 minute timer and head out. Run for just 20 seconds and then walk for 40 seconds. Repeat this 20 times. That's it. If you felt this was hard, do the same thing for a few more days till you finish feeling better. Once that happens and you finish all 20 minutes fairly comfortably, for the next day (which may even be the very next day) increase your running time by 5 seconds and reduce your walking time by 5 seconds i.e run for 25 seconds and walk for 35 seconds). Do that 20 times.

Similarly, continue progressing every time you complete all 20 rounds comfortably. You can do that by increasing your running time and decreasing your walking time by 5 seconds.

In about 1-3 weeks you will progress to being able to run for the entire 20 minutes without any walking breaks.

#### **Part 2**

Once you can run for 20 minutes at a stretch, it's just a matter of building enough strength and endurance to run for enough time to cover the required distance. So that's what we need to work on next - distance.

On your first day of part 2, head out for your usual 20 minute run. Again, don't worry about how fast you run but run the entire 20 minutes. And at the end of the 20 minutes calculate how long you have run. Let's say you ran 2 kilometres. On your next running day, your goal will be to run 2.5

kilometres. This is just 500 metres more than your previous run and so is definitely something you can do. Don't worry about how long it took you. You may have been faster or slower than your previous running day but you are running longer and that's our focus right now.

If you completed the 2.5 kilometres comfortably, then plan to run 3 kilometres during your next running day. In case you were not comfortable or had to resort to walking a little bit to complete the 2.5 kilometre run, then run the same 2.5 km distance again on your next running day. Do this till you are able to complete it comfortably and only then move on to the next level i.e. 3km. Continue doing this till you reach the 5 kilometre mark.

How long this will take depends purely on the person doing it - current endurance levels, time availability and motivation - and typically this takes anywhere from 3 to 8 weeks to complete. So if you are planning on registering for an organised 5k run, be sure to give yourself enough time.

If you end up running 5k a few weeks before race day, then you can start working on improving your speed. You can do that in a fashion very similar to how you improved your running ability (part 1) and running distance (part 2).