

Spring for a 5K

Spring is finally here and with it comes warmer temperatures and lots of sunshine. This is a great time of year to take the workout outdoors. Running has become a very popular sport. There are lots of trails in the tri-state area to keep your workout fresh. Not a runner, but wish you could be? The following are some simple tips on improving your running.

First thing first, get fitted for the right shoes for your feet. Check out a local running store like Chester County Running Store (<http://www.runccrs.com>) and have the professional's measure and watch you walk and run in the shoes. Try going towards the end of the day while your feet are swollen from the day's activities. The shoes should be comfortable, otherwise keep looking. Shoes should be replaced every 350-500 miles.

Next, you should sign up for a race. The race with a set date will keep you motivated and give you a timeframe. Instead of running to run, you now have a larger purpose. You are preparing for race day. Check out the Y's Events bulletin board for local races. Most require a fee of some sort that goes to a good cause. However, in return, many provide racers with a shirt or other prize. Of course, the best prize of all is the feeling of accomplishment.

Now you need to start training. If you're brand new to running, start off with mostly walking for 20- 30 minutes. When you're ready add a sprinkling of running. Start with one minute running followed by two minutes walking. Repeat this through the rest of your run. Add more running to each run until eventually you are running the entire 30 minutes. Always begin each session with a five minute warm-up and end each session with a five minute cool down.

As with any workout regimen, be sure to incorporate rest days. Rest days allow the body to fully recover from the stress you placed upon it. Also, incorporate total body strength training exercises to the regimen. Strength training will improve your efficiency and form and decrease the risk of injury.

Here is an example of a 1-week training program:

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| Day 1 Run 20-30 minutes | Day 2 Strength Training | Day 3 Run 20-30 minutes | Day 4 Strength Training | Day 5 Run 20-30 minutes | Day 6 Strength Training/ Yoga | Day 7 REST |
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Don't forget to keep it fun. Find a training buddy that will motivate you. Another way to add some fun is to change the goal. Whether it is running longer, faster, or a different race; any of these can keep you motivated to continue running, even with a walker.

By Heidi Lilac

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