

PREPARATION FOR A 10K

INTRODUCTION:

Having a goal at the start of any exercise programme can be a great motivator and in many cases can make the difference between sticking with it or giving up.

For someone starting a jogging or running programme for the first time or just getting back into it after a long break it can be a difficult and daunting experience. How much should I do? How far should I run? What pace should I run at? What rest should I have between runs? These are all questions that are common, so if you have asked yourself any of them, don't worry – you're not alone!

The good thing about starting out on a beginners programme is that the terms 'walk' and 'rest' are used quite a lot! Once you have decided on the run to take part in you should work backwards to however many weeks programme you are following. The sample programme lasts sixteen weeks and is aimed at getting you to the onto the start line in a fit and healthy state and with enough preparation behind you to get to the finish line! It assumes that you have no major health problems, if in doubt consult your GP before starting the programme.

The programme is only a suggestion and should be adapted to suit your work and home life and the days of the week that it is most convenient for you to exercise.

As with all exercise programmes you should always do some gentle movement warm-up exercises beforehand and some stretching exercises to warm-down afterwards. If you have read this then you have taken the first steps towards getting fit enough for the 10k! Happy running!

TERMINOLOGY

Walk: Brisk walking pace (faster than walking to the newsagents).

Jog: Gentle running pace (able to chat easily throughout).

Walk/Jog: Periods of walking followed by periods of jogging (vary the times and number of walks and jogs depending on total target time/distance).

Run: Faster pace than jogging but still able to chat (not continuously though!).

Rest: Either a day off exercise completely or other exercise such as swimming, aerobics or cycling.

THE 4 ZONE PLAN

To help you run more effectively and recover properly after exercising we have put together **The 4 Zone Plan**. There is no exact point where one zone stops and the next starts and you may find that you experience more than 1 or all of them during hard training or in a race!

- 1. The Blether Zone.** As the name suggests this zone enables you to easily run along and have a good blether with your running buddies (if you run alone feel free to blether to yourself, but remember what is said about people who talk to themselves!). You don't need any scientific measurements or principles to run in the Blether Zone, quite simply if you are able to run comfortably and blether then you are not going into oxygen deficit and your heart rate will be higher than at rest but not nearly as high as when you run faster. As a very rough guide each person has a maximum heart rate (MHR) of around 220 beats per minute minus their age (so a 40 year old would be $220 - 40 = 180$). Aerobic running (i.e. running without going into oxygen deficit) is achieved at a level around 60% - 85% of your MHR, Blether Zone would be at the lower end of this range.

This type of running is appropriate for warming up for a harder run or race, or for a recovery run the day after a hard run/race.

To measure your heart rate after exercise it is best to take a pulse measurement from the Carotid artery on your neck, this should be easy to find as it pumps quite hard at higher levels. Measure your pulse for 10 or 15 seconds and multiply by 6 or 4 to get your heart rate per minute. Your pulse rate is the same as your heart rate.

- 2. The Puff Zone.** This is a gradual step up from Blether Zone. You should still be able to chat to your running buddies but it may not be as easy to get your words out. Most of your regular weekly running should be in the Puff Zone as this will give you the best cardiovascular (heart and lungs) exercise benefit, which is important for maintaining or improving your long term health and also important in building a solid foundation for improving your running times or distances (if that is what your goals are). In Puff Zone you should be aiming for around 70 - 80% of your MHR.
- 3. The Pant Zone.** If you start to feel and look like a Husky pulling a sled then you have probably entered The Pant Zone! At this level your heart rate is probably getting up to 80 - 90% of your MHR and you will have started to exercise anaerobically (this means that you have gone into oxygen deficit and are effectively running without oxygen and building up waste products, predominantly lactic acid). Once you have entered this zone it becomes increasingly difficult to sustain your running pace. This zone is usually only entered towards the end of a very hard training run or race, or during specific training sessions where you vary your pace between slow and fast for a period of time or a set distance. For beginners it is not really advisable to do much training in this zone, it is better to build up an endurance/aerobic base from Blether and Puff Zone training. This also has the advantage of minimising the risks of injury or illness from overdoing things before your body has become accustomed to increased intensity of exercise. Once you have been running for several months and perhaps taken part in your first organised race you can then think about introducing Pant Zone training to improve your times, you should also feel that you are running easier in the Blether and Puff Zones.
- 4. The Gasp Zone.** The Gasp Zone is not a place that you want to be in too often! It would really only be entered at the very end of a full out training run or race, even then only over the last few hundred metres as you try to coax a final sprint out of your weary muscles! In Gasp Zone you will probably be exercising at 90 - 100% of MHR. The other time you would enter Gasp Zone would be during short interval training at high intensity, which is used to develop speed. For most recreational and health runners it is not advisable to do this type of training, unless of course you have secret ambitions of being the next Lee McConnell or Tom McKean!

THE PROGRAMME

Weeks until run	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
16	REST	½ mile walk/jog*	REST	½ mile walk/jog*	REST	20 minute gentle walk	Alternate exercise**
15	REST	½ mile walk/jog*	REST	½ mile walk/jog*	REST	20 minute gentle walk	Alternate exercise**
14	REST	1 mile walk/jog*	REST	1 mile walk/jog*	REST	30 minute walk	Alternate exercise**
13	REST	1 mile walk/jog*	REST	1 mile walk/jog*	REST	30 minute walk	Alternate exercise**
12	REST	1½ mile walk/jog*	REST	1½ mile walk/jog*	REST	40 minute walk	Alternate exercise**
11	REST	1½ mile walk/jog*	REST	1½ mile walk/jog*	REST	40 minute walk	Alternate exercise**
10	REST	2 mile walk/jog*	REST	2 mile walk/jog*	REST	45 minute walk	Alternate exercise**
9	REST	2 mile walk/jog*	REST	2 mile jog/run*	REST	45 minute walk	Alternate exercise**
8	REST	2½ mile walk/jog*	REST	2½ mile jog/run*	REST	50 minute walk	Alternate exercise**
7	REST	2½ mile jog/run*	REST	3 mile jog/run*	REST	50 minute walk	Alternate exercise**
6	REST	3 mile jog/run*	REST	3½ mile jog/run*	REST	55 minute walk	Alternate exercise**
5	REST	3 mile jog/run*	REST	4 mile continuous jog	REST	55 minute walk	Alternate exercise**
4	REST	3½ mile jog/run*	REST	4½ mile continuous jog	REST	60 minute walk	Alternate exercise**
3	REST	3½ mile jog/run*	REST	5 mile continuous jog	REST	60 minute walk	Alternate exercise**
2	REST	4 mile jog/run*	REST	5 mile continuous jog	REST	45 minute walk	Alternate exercise**
1	REST	4 mile jog/run*	REST	2 mile gentle jog	REST	20 minute gentle walk	THE BIG DAY!

*You should alternate 30 seconds walk and 30 seconds jog or 30 seconds walk and 30 seconds run depending on what is stated on the programme. In the early weeks of the programme don't worry if you cannot do more than a couple or repetitions of walk/jog, it will get easier as the weeks go on!

** Alternate aerobic exercise includes activities such as swimming, cycling, exercise classes, rowing machines, stair climbers, etc. If you are exercising at a gym or sports centre consult staff about suitable classes and equipment.

FINAL NOTES

The programme is suggested advice and should be adapted to suit your work and home life and the days of the week that it is most convenient for you to exercise. Do not worry too much about exact distances, just try to cover the approximate time for each distance stated at your normal running pace.

As with all exercise programmes you should always do some gentle movement warm-up exercises beforehand and some stretching exercises to warm-down afterwards. As with any physical activity programme please consult your GP before commencing if you have any health concerns.

Everyone is individual in how they approach and prepare for a 10k event, some people like to run together in groups, others prefer to run alone or with a buddy. Some are early larks, others are night owls. Whatever category you are in, we can help in some way.

To find jogging groups in your area go to: www.jogscotland.org.uk/local_groups

*If running with a group is not your thing the jogscotland website at www.jogscotland.org.uk contains loads of tips and advice to help you with your running – and it's **FREE** to sign up!*

GOOD LUCK!