Plan: your first 10K

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Train for 10 weeks with three or four runs a week: easy runs, one faster session and a weekly long run that grows by no more than about 10% at a time. The last two weeks are lighter so you start the race rested.

Why it matters: A 10K (6.2 miles) is double a 5K, and many first-timers take an hour or more. Building gradually lowers injury risk (see "Running injuries"), and a short taper (a planned cut in training before race day so you start fresh) helps you race fresh (see "Tapering before a race").

Who it suits

- People who can run 30 minutes without stopping, three times a week. If you can't yet, start with "Plan: your first 5K."
- 5K finishers ready for a longer goal.

What it costs

Item	Commitment
Running	3 or 4 sessions a week, 20 to 66 minutes
Strength	2 sessions a week, about 40 to 45 minutes; 1 during the taper
Total time	About 3 to 4½ hours a week at the peak, including strength
Equipment	Running shoes and a watch or phone
Difficulty	Beginner

How the sessions work

- **Easy:** you can talk in full sentences (see "Endurance training basics").
- **Strides:** 4 to 6 short bursts of about 20 seconds at a quick, relaxed pace near the end of an easy run. Faster than your race pace, but not an all-out sprint, with full recovery between.
- **Intervals:** after 10 minutes easy, repeat 3 minutes hard and 2 minutes easy, then 10 minutes easy.
- **Steady:** after 10 minutes easy, run at a "comfortably hard" pace, then 10 minutes easy.
- **Race effort:** the pace you plan to hold in the race.
- **Long run:** easy pace the whole way. Walking breaks are fine.
- **Sample week:** Tuesday faster session, Thursday easy run, Friday optional easy run, Saturday long run; strength Monday and Wednesday.
- **Log each run** in the **cardio log** (Plan my workouts, then Today's workout, then Cardio). It totals your weekly miles and shows your longest run.

The 10-week plan

All times are in minutes and include warm-up and cool-down.

Week	Easy run	Faster session	Easy run (optional)	Long run
1	30	30 easy	25	40
2	30	30 easy with strides	25	44
3	30	35 easy with strides	25	48
4 (easier)	25	30 easy	20	40
5	30	Intervals, 4 rounds (40)	30	52
6	35	Steady 15 (35)	30	57
7	35	Intervals, 5 rounds (45)	30	62
8 (peak)	35	Steady 20 (40)	30	66
9 (taper)	30	Intervals, 3 rounds (35)	25	50
10 (race week)	25	25 easy with 3 × 3 min at race effort	20, two days before	Race

Check your progress: each long run stays within about 10% of your longest in the past month. Weeks 9 and 10 drop to about 80% and 40% of week 8, not counting the race.

Skip the optional run in any week you feel tired or sore. Repeat a week if you need to.

Strength, twice a week

Heavy lifting makes runners more efficient, and adding jumps helps most (see "Strength training for endurance athletes"). Strength work also lowers injury risk (see "Running injuries"). Plan my workouts puts these sessions on your strength days.

Weeks	How often	What to do
1 to 3 (learn the lifts)	Twice a week	Squat jumps first, landing in place: 3 × 5. Leg press and dumbbell Romanian deadlift: 2 × 10 to 12. Barbell split squat, light: 2 × 8 to 10 on each leg. Lat pull-down and dumbbell bench press: 2 × 10 to 12. Single-leg calf raise: 2 × 10 to 12 on each leg. Suitcase carry: 2 × 30 to 45 seconds on each side. Use weights you could lift a few more times.
4 to 8 (heavy)	Twice a week	Jumps first, with full rest: box jumps 3 × 5 in weeks 4 to 6, then broad jumps 3 × 5 and single-leg hop and stick 2 × 4 on each leg in weeks 7 and 8. Leg press and barbell Romanian deadlift: 3 × 4 to 6, heavy, with a rep or two to spare. Barbell split squat: 2 × 6 to 8 on each leg. Lat pull-down and dumbbell bench press: 3 × 6 to 8. Single-leg calf raise: 3 × 8 to 12 on each leg. Suitcase carry: 2 × 30 to 45 seconds on each side, heavier over time.
9 (taper)	Once a week	Leg press and Romanian deadlift: 2 × 4 to 6 at the same weight. Lat pull-down and dumbbell bench press: 2 × 6 to 8. Single-leg calf raise: 2 × 8 to 12 on each leg. Leave out the jumps.
10 (race week)	None	Rest from strength.

- **Put heavy leg days** two or more days before the long run and away from hard sessions where you can.
- **Squat instead of the leg press** once you know the lift (see "Learning a new lift").
- **Jumps follow** the beginner progression in "Plyometrics: jumps and throws": land quietly, and move on only when landings are controlled.
- **Upper body too:** a pull and a push each session keep your whole body strong, as "How much exercise is enough?" recommends.

Race week and race day

- **Eat normally** in the days before; a 10K doesn't need carb loading for most people. Have a familiar breakfast 1 to 4 hours before the start (see "Fueling for endurance events").
- **Drink to thirst** (see "Hydration, sodium and race day").

- **Start a little slower than race effort** for the first mile, then settle in.

After the race

- Take a few easy days.
- Next goals: a faster 10K, or "Plan: your first half marathon."

Related guides

- Plan: your first 5K
- Plan: your first half marathon
- Race week and race-morning eating

Related articles

- Endurance training basics
- Running injuries
- Tapering before a race
- Fueling for endurance events
- Hydration, sodium and race day