FREE TRAINING PLAN

THE SMART ATHLETE

Couch to 10K

12 Week Beginner Running Programme

Goal	Run 10km without stopping
Duration	12 weeks
Sessions per week	3 runs + 1 optional strength
Who is this for	Complete beginners or returning runners
Equipment needed	Running shoes. That is it.

Train Smart. Not Just Hard.

A Note from Tom

This plan takes you from the couch to running 10km in 12 weeks. It is designed for complete beginners but also works well for anyone who has done a Couch to 5K programme and wants to push further. The first four weeks use run/walk intervals to build your base. From week five onward, you transition to continuous running with increasing distance. The golden rule is the same as always: go slower than you think you need to. Patience in the early weeks pays off in the later ones.

How Hard Should I Run?

Walk	Normal walking pace. Comfortable.
Run / Jog	Slow enough to hold a full conversation. If you cannot talk, slow down.
Easy Run	Comfortable running. You could sing if you wanted to.
Rest	Complete rest or a very gentle walk.

WEEK 1 — START MOVING

Walk more than you run this week. Your joints and tendons need time to adapt.

DAY	SESSION	EFFORT	TIME
Monday	Walk 5 min / Run 1 min / Walk 2 min x 5 / Walk 5 min cool down	Easy Jog	25 min
Tuesday	Rest Day	Rest	—
Wednesday	Repeat Monday	Easy Jog	25 min
Thursday	Rest Day	Rest	—
Friday	Walk 5 min / Run 1 min / Walk 2 min x 6 / Cool down	Easy Jog	28 min
Saturday	Gentle walk 20 min — optional	Walk	20 min
Sunday	Full Rest	Rest	—

WEEK 2 — BUILDING RHYTHM

Run intervals get slightly longer. Walk breaks stay generous.

DAY	SESSION	EFFORT	TIME
Monday	Walk 5 min / Run 90 sec / Walk 2 min x 5 / Cool down	Easy Jog	27 min
Tuesday	Rest Day	Rest	—
Wednesday	Run 90 sec / Walk 2 min x 7 rounds	Easy Jog	28 min
Thursday	Rest Day	Rest	—
Friday	Run 2 min / Walk 2 min x 6 rounds	Easy Jog	28 min
Saturday	Rest or walk	Rest	—
Sunday	Full Rest	Rest	—

WEEK 3 — LONGER INTERVALS

You are running for up to 3 minutes at a stretch now. Still easy pace throughout.

DAY	SESSION	EFFORT	TIME
Monday	Run 3 min / Walk 2 min x 5 rounds	Easy Jog	30 min
Tuesday	Rest Day	Rest	—
Wednesday	Run 3 min / Walk 90 sec x 6 rounds	Easy Jog	30 min
Thursday	Rest Day	Rest	—
Friday	Run 5 min / Walk 3 min x 4 rounds	Easy Jog	35 min

Saturday	Rest or walk	Rest	—
Sunday	Full Rest	Rest	—

WEEK 4 — FIRST 10 MINUTES

You will run for 10 continuous minutes this week. A big milestone.

DAY	SESSION	EFFORT	TIME
Monday	Run 5 min / Walk 3 min / Run 5 min / Walk 3 min / Run 5 min	Easy Jog	30 min
Tuesday	Rest Day	Rest	—
Wednesday	Run 8 min / Walk 3 min / Run 8 min	Easy Jog	28 min
Thursday	Rest Day	Rest	—
Friday	Run 10 min non stop / Walk 3 min / Run 10 min non stop	Easy Jog	30 min
Saturday	Rest	Rest	—
Sunday	Full Rest	Rest	—

WEEK 5 — CONTINUOUS RUNNING BEGINS

This week you transition to mostly continuous running. Go very slow.

DAY	SESSION	EFFORT	TIME
Monday	Run 20 min non stop	Easy Jog	25 min
Tuesday	Rest Day	Rest	—
Wednesday	Run 22 min non stop	Easy Jog	27 min
Thursday	Rest Day	Rest	—
Friday	Run 25 min non stop	Easy Jog	30 min
Saturday	Rest	Rest	—
Sunday	Full Rest	Rest	—

WEEK 6 — BUILDING TO 30 MINUTES

Three continuous runs. You are now a runner.

DAY	SESSION	EFFORT	TIME
Monday	Run 25 min non stop	Easy Jog	30 min
Tuesday	Rest Day	Rest	—

Wednesday	Run 28 min non stop	Easy Jog	33 min
Thursday	Rest Day	Rest	—
Friday	Run 30 min non stop	Easy Jog	35 min
Saturday	Rest or walk	Rest	—
Sunday	Full Rest	Rest	—

WEEK 7 — ADDING DISTANCE

We shift from time to distance now. Keep the pace easy and patient.

DAY	SESSION	EFFORT	TIME
Monday	Run 4km at easy pace	Easy	30 min
Tuesday	Rest Day	Rest	—
Wednesday	Run 35 min non stop	Easy	35 min
Thursday	Rest Day	Rest	—
Friday	Run 5km at easy pace	Easy	35 min
Saturday	Rest	Rest	—
Sunday	Full Rest	Rest	—

WEEK 8 — THE HALFWAY POINT

Recovery week. Pull back slightly. Your body is building strength even on rest days.

DAY	SESSION	EFFORT	TIME
Monday	Run 4km easy	Easy	30 min
Tuesday	Rest Day	Rest	—
Wednesday	Run 30 min easy	Easy	30 min
Thursday	Rest Day	Rest	—
Friday	Run 4km easy	Easy	30 min
Saturday	Rest	Rest	—
Sunday	Full Rest	Rest	—

WEEK 9 — PUSHING FURTHER

Long run gets to 7km this week. Slow and steady.

DAY	SESSION	EFFORT	TIME
Monday	Run 5km easy	Easy	35 min
Tuesday	Rest Day	Rest	—
Wednesday	Run 40 min easy	Easy	40 min
Thursday	Rest Day	Rest	—
Friday	Run 7km easy	Easy	50 min
Saturday	Rest	Rest	—
Sunday	Full Rest	Rest	—

WEEK 10 — ALMOST DOUBLE DIGITS

8km long run this week. You are so close. Trust the process.

DAY	SESSION	EFFORT	TIME
Monday	Run 5km easy	Easy	35 min
Tuesday	Rest Day	Rest	—
Wednesday	Run 45 min easy	Easy	45 min
Thursday	Rest Day	Rest	—
Friday	Run 8km easy	Easy	55 min
Saturday	Rest	Rest	—
Sunday	Full Rest	Rest	—

WEEK 11 — FINAL PREPARATION

Last big week before your 10km. Include a 9km run. Go easy.

DAY	SESSION	EFFORT	TIME
Monday	Run 5km easy	Easy	35 min
Tuesday	Rest Day	Rest	—
Wednesday	Run 40 min easy	Easy	40 min
Thursday	Rest Day	Rest	—
Friday	Run 9km easy	Easy	60 min
Saturday	Rest	Rest	—

Sunday	Full Rest	Rest	—

WEEK 12 — YOU RUN 10KM

This is your week. Easy runs Monday and Wednesday. Then on Friday or Saturday you run 10km.

DAY	SESSION	EFFORT	TIME
Monday	Easy Run — short and slow	Easy	25 min
Tuesday	Rest Day	Rest	—
Wednesday	Easy Run — very easy, just keep the legs moving	Easy	20 min
Thursday	Rest Day — stay off your feet	Rest	—
Friday	RUN 10KM. Go slow. Enjoy every single step. You did the work.	Easy	10km
Saturday	Rest and celebrate	Rest	—
Sunday	Full Rest — you are a 10km runner. What's next?	Rest	—

Tips for Success

→ The run/walk method works. Trust it. Do not skip to continuous running too soon.

→ Going too fast is the number one mistake beginners make. Slow down.

→ If a week feels too hard, repeat it before progressing.

→ Hydrate between sessions, not just during runs.

→ One strength session per week will reduce your injury risk significantly.

→ Finishing this plan means you are ready for your first 10km race.

→ Want to go further? Talk to Tom about half marathon coaching.

Ready for personalised coaching? Book a free intro call with Tom.

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