FREE TRAINING PLAN

THE SMART ATHLETE

Couch to 5K

8 Week Beginner Running Programme

Goal	Run 5km without stopping
Duration	8 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 will take you from the couch to running 5km without stopping in 8 weeks. It uses a run/walk method that gradually increases the running portions each week while giving your body time to adapt. The single most important rule: go slower than you think you need to. If you cannot hold a conversation while running, you are going too fast. Slow down. Every runner who finishes this plan does so because they were patient in the early weeks.

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 — WALK MORE, RUN A LITTLE

This week is about getting your body used to movement. Do not push. Walk more than you run.

DAY	SESSION	EFFORT	TIME
Monday	Run 1 min / Walk 2 min x 6 rounds. Cool down walk 5 min.	Easy Jog	25 min
Tuesday	Rest Day	Rest	—
Wednesday	Run 1 min / Walk 2 min x 6 rounds. Same as Monday.	Easy Jog	25 min
Thursday	Rest Day	Rest	—
Friday	Run 1 min / Walk 2 min x 7 rounds.	Easy Jog	28 min
Saturday	Rest Day or gentle walk	Rest/Walk	—
Sunday	Full Rest	Rest	—

WEEK 2 — BUILDING CONFIDENCE

Run intervals get slightly longer. Walk less. You are stronger than last week.

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

WEEK 3 — LONGER RUNS

This week you run for up to 3 minutes at a stretch. Still conversational pace.

DAY	SESSION	EFFORT	TIME
Monday	Run 2 min / Walk 2 min x 5. Then run 3 min / Walk 2 min x 1.	Easy Jog	30 min
Tuesday	Rest Day	Rest	—
Wednesday	Run 3 min / Walk 90 sec x 6 rounds.	Easy Jog	28 min
Thursday	Rest Day	Rest	—
Friday	Run 3 min / Walk 90 sec x 6 rounds.	Easy Jog	28 min

Saturday	Rest or gentle walk	Rest	—
Sunday	Full Rest	Rest	—

WEEK 4 — THE FIRST 5 MINUTES

You will run for 5 continuous minutes this week. That is a milestone.

DAY	SESSION	EFFORT	TIME
Monday	Run 3 min / Walk 90 sec / Run 5 min / Walk 2.5 min / Run 3 min / Walk 90 sec / Run 5 min.	Easy Jog	30 min
Tuesday	Rest Day	Rest	—
Wednesday	Repeat Monday session.	Easy Jog	30 min
Thursday	Rest Day	Rest	—
Friday	Run 5 min / Walk 3 min x 3 rounds.	Easy Jog	30 min
Saturday	Rest or walk	Rest	—
Sunday	Full Rest	Rest	—

WEEK 5 — HALFWAY THERE

This is the big leap week. By Friday you run for 20 continuous minutes. You can do this.

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 5 min / Run 8 min.	Easy Jog	30 min
Thursday	Rest Day	Rest	—
Friday	Run 20 min non stop. Go slow. You will make it.	Easy Jog	25 min
Saturday	Rest — celebrate Friday	Rest	—
Sunday	Full Rest	Rest	—

WEEK 6 — BUILDING TO 25 MINUTES

You ran 20 minutes. Now we build toward 25. Keep the pace easy.

DAY	SESSION	EFFORT	TIME
Monday	Run 5 min / Walk 3 min / Run 8 min / Walk 3 min / Run 5 min.	Easy Jog	32 min
Tuesday	Rest Day	Rest	—

Wednesday	Run 10 min / Walk 3 min / Run 10 min.	Easy Jog	28 min
Thursday	Rest Day	Rest	—
Friday	Run 22 min non stop.	Easy Jog	27 min
Saturday	Rest or walk	Rest	—
Sunday	Full Rest	Rest	—

WEEK 7 — ALMOST THERE

Three continuous runs this week. Each one a little longer. The finish line is in sight.

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

WEEK 8 — YOU RUN 5KM

This is it. By the end of this week you run 5km without stopping. Trust the training.

DAY	SESSION	EFFORT	TIME
Monday	Run 28 min non stop.	Easy Jog	33 min
Tuesday	Rest Day	Rest	—
Wednesday	Run 28 min non stop.	Easy Jog	33 min
Thursday	Rest Day	Rest	—
Friday	RUN 5KM. Go slow. Enjoy every step. You earned this.	Easy Jog	5km
Saturday	Rest and celebrate	Rest	—
Sunday	Full Rest — well done. You are a runner.	Rest	—

Tips for Success

→ Run slower than feels necessary. Seriously. Slower.

→ The walk intervals are not failure. They are part of the plan.

→ Rest days are as important as run days. Do not skip them.

→ Drink water on the days you do not run too.

→ Wear proper running shoes. Your joints will thank you.

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

→ Finished this plan? Book a free call with Tom to take the next step.

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

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