

Maximize your 5K plan

By Paul Sims

As any competitive runner knows it takes a plan to run a faster race or to get that PR (personal record). But what kind of plan? Many runners think that running more miles is the plan or losing 10 pounds will make them faster. However, the plan that I present to you today is based on quality, not quantity. That's speed work.

> **Workout # 1** Start with a slow one- or two- mile warm-up; then run 10 X 200 meter intervals with a 1 minute rest in between. The 200 meters should be run fast but not a full sprint, because you might not recover in one minute. All 10 of them should be run about the same pace. This workout could also be done with 300 or 400 meter intervals.

> **Workout # 2** is higher intensity. Run the same slow warm-up as the first workout; then sprint 20 seconds and rest 20 seconds. Do this 10 times, then walk or jog a few minutes and repeat. Walk or jog a few minutes and repeat for your third, and hopefully your last round, unless you really want a fourth round.

> **Workout # 3** is a tempo run. The idea here is to run the pace you want for the 5 K (not the pace you can run but the faster one you want to run). This tempo run is going to be 1.5 miles or 2 miles or 2.5 miles. The reason it's shorter than 5 K is so you can run it faster than your 5 K pace. A 1 mile warm-up would be good for this workout.

You should run three times a week. Two of the workouts above and a longer run of 5 to 9 miles. If this doesn't sound like much running, don't forget that it's based on quality. There is a pace that we can run at that is just under the point that we really start breathing so heavy that we have to slow down. This would be our anaerobic threshold or lactate threshold. Something called VO2max is our maximal oxygen uptake, and if we train as outlined above our max gets higher. All of this means that you will be able to sustain a faster pace.

I plan on being at the finish line to see you run your fastest 5K.

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