



GUIDANCE FOR BEGINNERS

This guide provides key information to help you get the most out of your 'online' couch to 5k course. If you need any advice on the course or any other aspect covered briefly below, please see the contact details at the end of this document.

A few words of encouragement (by way of a bit of myth-busting!) before you begin:

- Runners come in all shapes, sizes and ages
- Running should not be painful – 'no pain, no gain' is wrong! When you begin running, your muscles will ache and you will get short of breath. This is completely normal and to be expected. Pain, though, is your body's way of telling you that something is wrong, so stop!
- You don't have to wear Lycra! The most important thing is that you feel comfortable, can move freely and won't chafe
- Running is a great way of losing weight, but it won't happen overnight and needs to be combined with a good nutritional plan

First Steps:

- HEALTH:** If you have any concerns about your health and/or suffer from any medical conditions (e.g., high blood pressure, heart conditions etc.), or have recently given birth, then please make sure that you see a doctor before starting the course.

Under normal circumstances, Bourn-Running requests that all runners complete a confidential medical form. However, if you are using the online resources, you undertake any running activity at your own risk. If you are unsure how to proceed then please see the contact details at the end of this document. It is not advisable to run when you are feeling unwell and/or have an elevated resting heart rate and/or temperature from illnesses such as coughs and colds. This is particularly important in the current Covid19 situation: if you are showing any symptoms of the Covid19 (Corona virus), please adhere to the NHS and Government guidelines of staying at home.

- CLOTHING:** You can wear what you like to run in as long as it is comfortable (see above). Although high visibility clothing won't be needed for day time running, it is recommended that you wear light layers of clothing that can be removed if you get too warm. You will find that you can get too hot very quickly if wearing waterproofs. If you decide that you would like to invest in running-specific clothing (such as moisture wicking tops), several local shops sell such gear relatively cheaply. Please ask if you need advice.
- TRAINERS:** These are the most important piece of your running kit. To begin with, however, use a pair of comfortable trainers you already have (if you do) that have been used for other sports or exercise. If you do need to purchase running trainers for the first time, you can

either purchase an inexpensive pair from local outlets or visit a specialist running shop that can advise you on the best type of footwear for your particular running style (again, please ask if you are unsure as the latter can be very expensive for a sport you are unsure of at this stage).

- d. **UNDERWEAR:** Women will need a medium or high impact sports bra (guide: medium impact for A cup, high impact for B to larger cup). General sports socks are generally a good start, although like trainers there are specialist socks you can purchase for considerably more money.

Ready, set....

So, whether you are standing there in old gear from the cupboard under the stairs with your granny's sandals on, or poised ready in matching red and gold attire with flashing lights (if you are, you haven't read the advice above), here are some handy tips as you begin running:

- Any time you decide to run it is best to **warm your joints and muscles up gently first** with some **dynamic** exercises that prepare your body and help minimise the risk of injury. Please visit the separate links for these warm up exercises.
- **Leave a reasonable amount of time between eating and running.** This does vary from person to person, but a guide is to leave two hours between eating and exercise. See below for further nutritional advice.
- **Don't do too much too soon.** It is tempting to go faster and further each time you run, but your body needs time to adjust to any new routine. When first starting to run, focus more on how long you can run for, than how fast. The golden rule for runners is 'not to add more than 10% effort to any one run at a time'.
- **Do not compare yourself to others** – running is about you and your goals, in your own time.
- **Listen to your body.** Warm ups can be really helpful in spotting early warning signs that something is wrong before running. Do not run through pain and seek advice if any pain does not go away after a couple of days rest. Remember that any chest or head pain should be taken seriously and you should seek medical attention.
- **Rest** – Rest days are essential, not voluntary! Your body will thank you for it and you will run better because of it! When you first start running, try at the most to run alternate rather than consecutive days – if your muscles are still aching after a day or so, try walking then gently stretching as shown at the sessions. Swimming can also be a good way of easing aching muscles.
- **Stay hydrated** – in order to maintain optimum hydration, it's more effective to sip water throughout the day rather than drinking large amounts just before running.
- **Safety awareness** – be aware of potential hazards in the places you might run. Traffic aside, some of the biggest obstacles are other people, cyclists and dogs. Also make sure that you are visible if running in the evening or at night. I recommend that you don't wear headphones when running as they can reduce awareness of hazards.
- **Nutritional tips** – as a specialist subject, I can only offer a simple guide as a non-expert:
 - Stay well fuelled. You shouldn't need to increase the amount you eat! However, it's important to consider what you eat as a balanced diet is essential. Don't miss meals even if you are trying to lose weight as you won't get very far or have much fun when running.
 - Don't skip breakfast – it's the most important meal of the day as it sets you up with enough fuel to get through the morning. Otherwise you'll probably find that you are reaching for those less than healthy mid-morning snacks. Porridge is a great choice as it provides a slow release of energy.
 - Snacks – if you need to snack in order to stop yourself from getting really hungry then go for apples

or bananas rather than crisps or chocolate – it's hard but worth it!

- Re-fuel after running. Try to ensure that you replenish your carbohydrate stocks within 2 hours of exercise. This will assist with the muscle healing process and encourage your body to store more glycogen (energy). Bananas are a great post-run snack.

THE COURSE ITSELF:

The course incorporates a mixture of walking and running which will gradually move towards more running/less walking so that you will be able to run 5km by the end of the 10 weeks.

It is expected that in order to achieve the 5km distance in 10 weeks, you will schedule at least one run and no more than 3 runs per week with adequate rest days in between each run. Please see the schedule for further information.

Please note:

- The online resources are free to the community. If you wish to join Bourn-Running once we are operating again, please contact Alison Davies. Anyone able to complete 5k running (not walking!) is welcome to join the improvers sessions.
- If you wish to receive a medal and t-shirt from Bourn-running, the cost is £10. Proof of completing the 5k can be done via a few different methods:
 - A running watch (e.g. Garmin)
 - Your mobile phone
 - Apps such as STRAVA are popular.
- A WhatsApp group is available for all beginners if you wish to be added. The purpose is purely to receive notifications, encouragement and general questions about running.

Contact information:

- Email Alison Davies at: boorn-running@hotmail.com

Alison Davies is a qualified Coach in Running Fitness (CiRF) through the England Athletics Association. She is also member of the Bournville Harriers and a keen middle-distance runner, competing in races from 10k to half marathon.