



# SYDNEY HARBOUR 10 & 5K

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2024

# 5K BEGINNERS

TRAINING PROGRAM

 SH10K

 @SH10K





# Beginners Program Overview

This 5-week training program is suitable for those who have never completed a 5k race before and has been designed by dual Olympian and previous Australian 10k record holder (27:24.95), Ben St Lawrence, who is also a co-founder and coach of [RunCrew](#), one of Australia's top running and coaching groups.

## This program will help participants:

- ✔ Improve aerobic fitness and stamina
- ✔ Get into a good running routine
- ✔ Train for a maximum of 3 days a week for 5 weeks

## Before you start

### Have a health check

If you have any health concerns, it might be a good idea to check-in with your GP or physiotherapist to ensure you're able to begin this training program.

Listen to your body, and if you're unwell or have any acute pain, give yourself a day off. It's better to be cautious than to injure yourself.

## Personalise and persist

Each program is provided as a guide only. If you can't yet run the recommended duration, feel free to take extra walk breaks. As your fitness improves, aim to walk less often. If you do take extra walking breaks throughout this program, it may mean you will complete the Real Insurance Sydney Harbour 5k with some walk breaks, which is absolutely fine, particularly for your first race. The most important aspect of training is consistency, so do your best to get through the suggested training for the full 5 weeks and you will be rewarded!

## Progressive adaptation

This program increases in difficulty to allow for improvements in your fitness and running ability. The training days are interspersed with plenty of rest days to allow your body to adapt and recover. Your final week of training will be quite easy so you'll be fresh and ready to race on the big day. This reduction in exercise before a race is called tapering.

## Stay connected

Be sure to follow the official [Real Insurance Sydney Harbour 10k & 5k Facebook](#) for tips and videos to help keep you motivated and inspired.

## Rest and recover

On rest days, don't feel you need to spend the day on the couch. Active recovery days are fine – go for a walk or do some low impact exercise such as swimming or cycling if you feel up to it.

## Seek support

If you need more encouragement or support and think you would benefit from training in a group environment, consider joining a group such as [RunCrew](#). All sessions are led by expert coaches and cater to runners of all abilities. RunCrew offer personalised online programming if you're not Sydney based.

### FREE TRAINING

All Real Insurance Sydney Harbour 5k entrants will receive their first RunCrew training session free. To register, contact [info@runcrew.com.au](mailto:info@runcrew.com.au)



# Beginners Types of Training

Below is an explanation of the different types of training you'll be doing over the next 5 weeks.

## Warm-up

Before all of your training sessions, and particularly your interval sessions, you should complete at least a 5-10 minute walk (or slow jog as your fitness improves), as well as some dynamic warm-up exercises such as: side-to-side leg swings, forward leg swings, leg-lifts, and 3-4 x 15 second run-throughs progressing up to the pace at which you plan to complete your session.

## Run/Walk

Having a walk break and progressively increasing the total duration of this session will allow for more improvement than simply running until you're out of breath and then stopping. Try to find a good rhythm with your breathing, breathe deep into your tummy and count the steps per 'breath in' and steps per 'breath out'. This will help you to stay relaxed as your breathing starts to labor. You may aim for 2 steps for a breath in and 2 for a breath out, or 3/3 etc. Slow the running down as much as you need to, to try to get

through the full 'run' section, this is better than starting out very fast and then walking more.

## Long Run (General Aerobic)

Each weekend you will increase your 'Long Run' by 1km, all the way up to 4.5km. This doesn't need to be fast, just aim to get through the distance. Don't worry that you won't have completed the full 5km until race day, as you'll always find that little bit extra with the energy of the crowd and the benefit of a 'Taper' to give your legs some more bounce and freshness.



Ben St Lawrence



# Beginners Types of Training

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## Interval Sessions

This will be your fastest running session each week and some discomfort is to be expected; however, you will also get regular rest periods. This faster running will complement your other sessions well. Aim to run the intervals at an even pace, with the final repetition at a similar pace to your first – rather than going too fast early on and slowing significantly.

As the program progresses, you will complete more intervals and the recovery will reduce, allowing for improvements in fitness and running ability.



**TIP: LISTEN TO YOUR BODY, AND IF YOU'RE UNWELL OR HAVE ANY ACUTE PAIN, GIVE YOURSELF A DAY OFF. IT'S BETTER TO BE CAUTIOUS THAN TO OBTAIN AN INJURY.**



# Beginners Abbreviations & Scales

## Rate of Perceived Exertion (RPE)

The RPE scale will help you get the most from your training sessions by helping you measure the intensity of your exercise.

The RPE scale runs from 0-10, depending on the level of difficulty and exertion. For example, 0 (nothing at all) would be how you feel when sitting in a chair; 10 (very, very heavy) is how you feel at the end of an exercise stress test or fast race.

## GPS and Heart Rate (HR)

These are great tools if you choose to use them; however, don't become too fixated on pace and HR for now. Aim to get a good feel for each session based on the RPE guides provided.

| RPE scale           | Running activity                           | Talk test  | % of Max Heart Rate (MHR) |
|---------------------|--|--|---------------------------|
| 0 Nothing at all    |  |  | 40-45%                    |
| 0.5 Just noticeable | Comfortable. Very easy run/jog and walking | Very easy, you can easily carry a conversation.              | 46-50%                    |
| 1 Very light        |  |  |                           |
| 2 Light             |  |  |                           |
| 3 Moderate          | General aerobic/recovery run               | Very easy, you can converse with almost no effort.           | 51-55%                    |
| 4 Somewhat heavy    |  | Moderately easy, you can converse with a little more effort. | 56-60%                    |
| 5 Heavy             | Long/medium-long run                       | Starting to get challenging, conversation requires effort.   | 61-67%                    |
| 6                   |  | Difficult, conversation requires a lot of effort.            | 68-75%                    |
| 7 Very heavy        | Tempo run/ lactate threshold               | Very difficult, conversation requires maximum effort.        | 76-80%                    |
| 8                   |  |  |                           |
| 9                   | V02 Max/race pace                          |  | 86-92%                    |
| 10 Very, very heavy | Race pace/race pace to win                 | Full out effort, no conversation possible.                   | 93-100%                   |



# MAY 20

FIVE WEEKS TO GO!

| Week N° | Day       | Session   | Distance            | Pace                 | RunCrew Comments  |
|---------|-----------|-----------|---------------------|----------------------|---|
| 1       | Monday    | Rest      |                     |                      | Active recovery/rest day.   |
|         | Tuesday   | Run/Walk  | 3k approx. in total | Comfortable          | Warm-up then run for 3 min. at an RPE of 5-6, followed by a 2 min. brisk walk. Repeat 4 times, then cool-down.  |
|         | Wednesday | Rest      |                     |                      | Active recovery/rest day.   |
|         | Thursday  | Intervals | 3k approx. in total | Moderate/challenging | Warm-up then run for 30 sec. at an RPE of 7-9, followed by a 30 sec. walk at an RPE of 4-5. Repeat for a total of 8 min. then cool down.  |
|         | Friday    | Rest      |                     |                      | Active recovery/rest day.   |
|         | Saturday  | Long Run  | 3k approx. in total | Comfortable/moderate | Warm-up and then run for 3k without stopping at an RPE of 5 if you can, followed by a cool-down. Walk breaks are ok if you plan to have walk breaks on race day. Note: you can choose to do your weekend session on either Saturday or Sunday to suit your needs. |
|         | Sunday    | Rest      |                     |                      | Active recovery/rest day.   |



# MAY 27

## FOUR WEEKS TO GO!

# 2

| Week N° | Day       | Session   | Distance              | Pace                 | RunCrew  |
|---------|-----------|-----------|-----------------------|----------------------|--|
|         | Monday    | Rest      |                       |                      | Active recovery/rest day.  |
|         | Tuesday   | Run/Walk  | 3k approx. in total   | Comfortable/moderate | Warm-up then run for 4 min. at an RPE of 5-6, followed by a 1 min. brisk walk. Repeat 4 times then cool-down.  |
|         | Wednesday | Rest      |                       |                      | Active recovery/rest day.  |
|         | Thursday  | Intervals | 3.5k approx. in total | Moderate/challenging | Warm-up then run for 30 sec. at an RPE of 7-9, followed by a 30 sec. walk at an RPE of 4-5. Repeat for a total of 10 min. then cool-down.  |
|         | Friday    | Rest      |                       |                      | Active recovery/rest day.  |
|         | Saturday  | Long Run  | 3.5k approx. in total | Comfortable/moderate | Warm-up and then run for 3.5km without stopping at an RPE of 5 if you can, followed by a cool-down. Walk breaks are ok if you plan to have walk breaks on race day. Note: you can choose to do your weekend session on either Saturday or Sunday to suit your needs. |
|         | Sunday    | Rest      |                       |                      | Active recovery/rest day.  |



# JUNE 3

## THREE WEEKS TO GO!

| Week N° | Day       | Session   | Distance              | Pace                   | RunCrew Comments  |
|---------|-----------|-----------|-----------------------|------------------------|---|
| 3       | Monday    | Rest      |                       |                        | Active recovery/rest day.   |
|         | Tuesday   | Run/Walk  | 3.5k approx. in total | Comfortable / moderate | Warm-up and then run for 5 min. at an RPE of 5-6, followed by a 2 min. brisk walk. Repeat for 21 min. then cool-down.   |
|         | Wednesday | Rest      |                       |                        | Active recovery/rest day.   |
|         | Thursday  | Intervals | 4k approx. in total   | Moderate / challenging | Warm-up then run for 30 sec. at an RPE of 7-9, followed by a 30 sec. walk at an RPE of 4-5. Repeat for a total of 12 min. then cool-down.   |
|         | Friday    | Rest      |                       |                        | Active recovery/rest day.   |
|         | Saturday  | Long Run  | 4k approx. in total   | Comfortable / moderate | Warm-up then run for 4k without stopping at an RPE of 5 if you can, followed by a cool-down. Walk breaks are ok if you plan to have walk breaks on race day. Note: you can choose to do your weekend session on either Saturday or Sunday to suit your needs. |
|         | Sunday    | Rest      |                       |                        | Active recovery/rest day.   |





# JUNE 10

TWO WEEKS TO GO!

4

| Week N° | Day       | Session   | Distance              | Pace                   | RunCrew   |
|---------|-----------|-----------|-----------------------|------------------------|---|
|         | Monday    | Rest      |                       |                        | Active recovery/rest day.   |
|         | Tuesday   | Run/Walk  | 4.5k approx. in total | Comfortable/moderate   | Warm-up then run for 5 min. at an RPE of 5-6, followed by a 1 min. brisk walk. Repeat 4 times then cool-down.   |
|         | Wednesday | Rest      |                       |                        | Active recovery/rest day.   |
|         | Thursday  | Intervals | 3.5k approx. in total | Moderate / challenging | Warm-up then run for 30 sec. at an RPE of 7-9, followed by a 30 sec. walk at an RPE of 4-5. Repeat for a total of 10 min. then cool-down.   |
|         | Friday    | Rest      |                       |                        | Active recovery/rest day.   |
|         | Saturday  | Long Run  | 4.5k approx. in total | Comfortable/Moderate   | Warm-up then run for 4.5k without stopping at an RPE of 5 if you can, followed by a cool-down. Walk breaks are ok if you plan to have walk breaks on race day. Note: you can choose to do your weekend session on either Saturday or Sunday to suit your needs. |
|         | Sunday    | Rest      |                       |                        | Active recovery/rest day.   |



# JUNE 17

## ONE WEEK TO GO!

| Week N° | Day       | Session   | Distance            | Pace        | RunCrew  |
|---------|-----------|-----------|---------------------|-------------|--|
| 5       | Monday    | Rest      |                     |             | Active recovery/rest day.  |
|         | Tuesday   | Run/Walk  | 3k approx. in total | Comfortable | Warm-up then jog continuously for 15 min. followed by a cool-down.   |
|         | Wednesday | Rest      |                     |             | Active recovery/rest day.  |
|         | Thursday  | Intervals | 3k approx. in total | Comfortable | Warm-up and then run for 30 sec. at an RPE of 6-7, followed by a 30 sec. walk at an RPE of 4. Repeat for a total of 5 min. (that's right, just a little taper session). Make sure you finish with a cool-down. |
|         | Friday    | Rest      |                     |             | Active recovery/rest day.  |
|         | Saturday  | Rest      |                     |             | Active recovery/rest day.  |
|         | Sunday    | RACE DAY  |                     | 5k          | Challenging/difficult  |

# LET'S GO RUNNING

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To learn more about the  
Real Insurance Sydney Harbour  
10 & 5k, visit the website:  
[sydneyharbour10k.com.au](https://sydneyharbour10k.com.au)

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