



Chapel Challenge

Couch to 5K Training Plan

The two most powerful training tools for a runner are consistency and time. Even if you haven't run a step this summer – or ever -- If you start gently and follow a consistent plan for the next two months, you'll be ready to complete – and enjoy! – the Chapel Challenge 5K in October.

As with any new exercise plan, check with your doctor to make sure you're healthy enough to get started. It also helps to have comfortable, appropriate, and not too worn-out shoes for the running and walking you'll be doing. All set? Then let's get started!

The essence of the couch-to-5K plan is to work out at least three days a week with a combination of jogging and walking. You'll gradually increase the amount of jogging and decrease the amount of walking until you can run continuously for 5K. If possible, I recommend that you exercise at the same time of day each day to help your body establish the habit. On days when you're not jogging, feel free to walk, bike, or stay active in other ways. If you experience pain or soreness, listen to your body, and rest instead of pushing through it.

I also recommend that at the beginning of every workout you give yourself a few minutes to “activate” your body and mind with a routine of simple movements: e.g., making circles with your arms, standing on each foot in turn and making circles with the foot that's off the ground, marching in place for 30 seconds, gently swinging your legs forward and back and side to side, etc. Feel free to add or subtract movements until you have a brief routine that helps you “wake up” the muscles you'll use for walking and jogging. After the workout, be sure to give yourself 10-15 minutes to cool down with some light stretching.

Each week, you'll do the workout three times, on non-consecutive days.

Week 1

Walk for 5 minutes

Alternate 2 minutes jogging with 2 minutes walking, 5-6 times

Week 2

Walk for 5 minutes

Alternate 3 minutes jogging with 2 minutes walking, 4-5 times

Week 3

Walk for 5 minutes

Alternate 5 minutes jogging with 3 minutes walking, 3 times

Week 4

Alternate jogging for 8 minutes, walking for 3 minutes, 2-3 times

Week 5

Alternate jogging for 12 minutes, walking for 5 minutes, 2 times

Week 6

Jog for 20 minutes, walk for 3 minutes, jog for 10 minutes

Week 7

Jog for 25 minutes, walk for 3 minutes, jog for 10 minutes

Chapel Challenge:

Run the whole thing without stopping!

Remember there are no secrets to getting shape; it really is just a matter of being consistent and building up gradually while valuing small gains. As you do, remember to listen to your body, and if you feel any unusual discomfort, rest for a few days before starting up again.

Good luck, you got this!