

## **GETTING OUT, OFF THE COUCH & HITTING THE ROAD FOR THE FIRST TIME**

So you want to join the thousands who complete and compete in road races each week: You to want to experience the joy of being out in the open running and walking, feeling the sun on your back, the wind in your hair, and yes sometimes even the cooling drizzle of rain on a hot humid Durban evening: you want to see how fast you can cover a 10km or how far you can go or perhaps you just want to improve your health – but where do you start?

### **The Bad News**

There is just no use denying it running is one of the hardest sports to get into and enjoy. This is not always a journey of pleasure and virtually all runners will tell you that they first four to eight weeks can be frustratingly tough, but before those words have been lost to the wind they will enthusiastically tell you about the life-changing, and exhilarating experiences that they have had since becoming regular runners.

Running becomes addictive: it quickly becomes a stabilizing anchor in your life – BUT first your body has to adapt to the rigours of the sport.

In many other sports, and team sports in particular, you are able to take recovery breaks when you get tired, but in running if you stop – well – you no longer make forward progression and you get left behind the rest of the field. Being an individual sport you feel more vulnerable as your performance is determined by your own efforts. As a novice this is often viewed negatively, but as a runner we see this as a positive as we know we can achieve whatever we dream, or desire through our own discipline and determination. We are not reliant on others – we challenge ourselves and we answer to our selves. We are masters of our own destiny, and that is what drives us..... but first we need to gently make our way into the sport. Physically we need to gradually introduce our muscles tendons and bones the extra impact loading of throwing our bodyweight from one foot to the other. But the initial conditioning is also when we learn to put our ability into perspective. For years we may have been watching sportmen and women from the safety and comfort of the couch: The ease with which they cover prodigious distances, their speed of acceleration, their ability to jump or dive often changes our perspective of our own ability. The first weeks of training will quickly bring us to identify what our realistic introductory levels of exertion. This will be one of the greatest boons in the massive progression that will follow, but initially this can be quite a difficult and

demoralising reality to accept.

### **The Good News:**

There is light at the end of the tunnel ... and it's very bright!!

Firstly the answer to 'Where do I start?' is directly below. Secondly once you conquer the 2-3 month adaptation hump you enter an arena where your progression is likely to be fast and vast for at least the next 4-5 years, and it doesn't matter what age you start your initial progression will, with the correct training and dedication, be dramatic.

Furthermore you can look forward to around 15 to 20 years of progression albeit that after eight to ten years greater effort is required to make significant improvement, but the sport is continually providing examples of runners who find the sport in their mid thirties, forties and even fifties who commence to run the legs off many younger participants!

But before you can Do Great Things! You have to take the first steps and these are below....

### **Programmes:**

The initial four weeks of the following schedules cater for the person who has not done any exercise in recent times. Of course the very first step is to go to your medical professional and have them assess you in terms of commencing an exercise programme. The programmes should only be commenced when that clearance has been given.

Walking should be at a "brisk - strong" pace. As a guide you can initially expect to cover about 4.5-6 kms per hour.

If you have regularly participated in sport in recent months and been given clearance by your medical professional to take on a running programme, then you may want to commence at week 5 on the run and walk programme.

When you have completed these two programmes you will be well capable of completing a 10km event and ready to review what you want out of the sport or running: - competition, social, health, weight control or just to experience the daily stress-free tour

of the countryside .... it's your choice and running is there for you to enjoy as you will.

For your convenience this programme has been provided in a useful Logbook format. This will assist you in learning how your body reacts to exercise, provide the motivation to work through the initial weeks and creates a record of your achievement – You will be amazed how soon you will be looking back at the Great Strides you have made!

[NOTE: This schedule is based on the advice and structure provided in “Every Beginners Guide to Walking, Jogging and Running” by Old Mutual’s Virtual Coach, Norrie Williamson and published by Penprint – Copies are available by contacting the Virtual Coach on Old Mutual’s Two Oceans web site or [norrie@coachnorrie.co.za](mailto:norrie@coachnorrie.co.za) ]

Week/Day	Session	Actual training route and Time	Comments	Pulse	Waking Pulse	Weight	Hours Sleep
Wk1 / D1	Walk 10 mins						
D2	rest						
D3	Walk 15 mins						
D4	rest						
D5	Walk 10 mins						
D6	Rest						
D7	Walk 15 mins (Record Time and						

	route accurately)						
<b>Week/Day</b>	<b>Session</b>	<b>Actual training route and Time</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Pulse</b>	<b>Waking Pulse</b>	<b>Weight</b>	<b>Hours Sleep</b>
Wk2 /D1	Rest						
D2	Walk 15 mins						
D3	Rest						
D4	Walk 20 mins						
D5	Rest						
D6	Walk 15 mins						
D7	Walk 15 mins						

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Week/Day	Session	Actual training	Comments	Pulse	Waking Pulse	Weight	Hours Sleep
Wk3 / D1	Rest						
D2	Walk 20 mins						
D3	Rest						
D4	Walk 25 mins						
D5	Rest						
D6	Walk 20 mins						
D7	Walk 15 mins						

Week/Day	Session	Actual training	Comments	Pulse	Waking Pulse	Weight	Hours Sleep
Wk4 /D1	Rest						
D2	Walk 25 mins						
D3	Rest						
D4	Walk 30 mins						
D5	Rest						
D6	Walk 20 mins						
D7	Walk 20 mins						

Providing you feel you are able to handle the above schedules you can now move onto the run/jog and walk programme starting with week 5

First week of the walk and run/jog programme. If you are or have recently been involved in regular sports training and have been cleared by your medical professional you may start here with a run and walk programme.

Week/Day	Session	Actual training	Comments	Pulse	Waking Pulse	Weight	Hours Sleep
Wk5 / D1	Rest						
D2	Walk 5mins, then (Run 30 secs, walk 3 mins) repeat 3-4 times, walk 5 mins						
D3	Rest						
D4	Walk 30 mins						
D5	Rest						
D6	Walk 5 mins then (run 30 seconds, walk 3 mins) repeat 3-4 times., walk 5 mins						
D7	Walk 20 mins or rest						

Week/Day	Session	Actual training	Comments	Pulse	Waking Pulse	Weight	Hours Sleep
Wk6 /D1	Rest						
D2	Walk 5 mins then (run 30 seconds, walk 3 mins) repeat 5 times, walk 5 mins						
D3	Rest						
D4	Walk 5 mins then (run 30 seconds, walk 3 mins) repeat 4 times, walk 5 mins.						
D5	Rest						
D6	Walk 5 mins then (run 30 seconds, walk 3 mins) repeat 5 times, walk 5 mins.						
D7	rest or walk 20						

Week/Day	Session	Actual training	Comments	Pulse	Waking Pulse	Weight	Hours Sleep
Wk7 / D1	Walk 5 mins then (run 30 seconds, walk 3 mins) repeat 5 times, walk 5 mins.						
D2	Rest						
D3	Walk 5 mins then (run 30 seconds, walk 3 mins) repeat 4 times, walk 5mins						
D4	Rest						
D5	Walk 5 mins then (run 30 seconds, walk 3 mins) repeat 5 times, walk 5mins						
D6	Rest						
D7	Walk 5 mins then (run 30 seconds, walk 3 mins) repeat 5 times walk 5 mins						

Week/Day	Session	Actual training	Comments	Pulse	Waking Pulse	Weight	Hours Sleep
Wk8/D1	Rest						
D2	Walk 5 mins then (run 40 seconds, walk 3 mins) repeat 5 times, walk 5 mins						
D3	Rest						
D4	Walk 5 mins then (run 30 seconds, walk 3 mins) repeat 5 times, walk 5 mins						
D5	Rest						
D6	Walk 5 mins then (run 30 secs, walk 2 1/2 mins) repeat 4 times, walk 5mins						
D7	Walk 30 mins or rest						

Week/Day	Session	Actual training	Comments	Pulse	Waking Pulse	Weight	Hours Sleep
Wk9 / D1	Walk 5 mins then (run 45 seconds, walk 3 mins) repeat 5 times, walk 5 mins						
D2							
D3	Walk 5 mins then (run 30 seconds, walk 3 mins) repeat 5 times, walk 5 mins						
D4							
D5	Walk 5 mins then (run 30 secs, walk 2 1/4 mins) repeat 4 times, walk 5mins						
D6							
D7	Walk 5 mins (run 30 seconds, walk 3 mins) repeat 6-7x, walk 5 mins						

Week/Day	Session	Actual training	Comments	Pulse	Waking Pulse	Weight	Hours Sleep
Wk10/D1	rest						
D2	Walk 5 mins then (run 55 seconds, walk 3 mins) repeat 3-4 times, walk 5 mins						
D3							
D4	Walk 5 mins then (run 30 seconds, walk 3 mins) repeat 5 times, walk 5 mins						
D5							
D6	Walk 5 mins then (run 30 secs, walk 2 mins) repeat 4 times, walk 5mins						
D7	rest or walk 20-30 mins						

By the 10<sup>th</sup> week – fifth week of the run and walk schedule - the standard session involving 30 second runs with 3 minutes recovery should be quite easy. If you feel it is too easy you may increase the number of repeats to 6-8. Providing your resting pulse, (the day after exercise), is showing that you are handling each of these sessions, you may move on. If they cause a rise in resting pulse of over 6 beats per minute on the day following exercise, you should repeat the last two weeks until you have adapted to this training.

Week/Day	Session	Actual training	Comments	Pulse	Waking Pulse	Weight	Hours Sleep
Wk11 / D1	## Walk 5 mins then (run 1 min, walk 3 mins) repeat 3-4 times, walk 5 mins						
D2	rest						
D3	** Walk 5 mins then (run 30 seconds up a gradual incline, walk back down and around until 3 mins) repeat 5 times, walk 5 mins						
D4	rest						
D5	^^ Walk 5 mins then (run 30 secs, walk 1min 45 mins) repeat 4 times, walk 5mins						
D6	rest						
D7	Walk 5 mins then (run 30 seconds, walk 3 mins) repeat 5 times, walk 5 mins						

Week/Day	Session	Actual training	Comments	Pulse	Waking Pulse	Weight	Hours Sleep
Wk12/D1	rest						
D2	## Walk 5 mins then (run 1 min, walk 3 mins) repeat 3-4 times, walk 5 mins						
D3	Rest						
D4	^^ Walk 5 mins then (run 30 secs, walk 1min 45 mins) repeat 4 times, walk 5mins						
D5							
D6	++ Walk 5 mins, then AT <u>AN EASY PACE</u> jog for as long as you can within a 55-65% pulse range, (note the time), walk 5 mins.						
D7	REST or Walk 20-30 mins						

Repeat this last two week block until you can handle a) 8 repeats of 1 minute run 3 min walk in sessions ## AND b) 8 repeats of 30 second uphill running reducing the rest gradually to a slow walk downhill then restart in sessions ^^, AND c) you can jog/run 25 minutes non stop in session ++ with a 5 minute walk to start and finish. Once you have reached this stage you will be able to handle a 5km Funrun, but remember this should not be considered a race but rather a continuous run at +- 70%-75% of Max Pulse. Further progression can be had from either a) gradually reducing the recovery periods in ## sessions to 2 minutes walk, OR b) gradually increasing the uphill runs to 1 minute, (use 5 second increases), or c) gradually increasing the length of the non stop run from 25 to 35 minutes in 1 minute steps. Only progress in one session per week. Alternatively, move onto the next two week block

Week/Day	Session	Actual training	Comments	Pulse	Waking Pulse	Weight	Hours Sleep
Wk13 / D1	## Walk 5 mins then (run 1 min, walk 3 mins) repeat 6-8 times, walk 5 mins						
D2	rest						
D3	** Walk 5 mins then (run 30 seconds up a gradual incline, walk back down and repeat after 15 sec rest) repeat						

	6-8 times, walk 5 mins						
D4	rest						
D5	^^ Walk 5 mins then jog / run 20 mins, at 55-65% of Max pulse, walk 5mins						
D6	rest or walk 20 mins						
D7	\$\$ Walk 5 mins then (run 30 seconds, walk 3 mins) repeat 8-10 times, walk 5 mins						
<b>Week/Day</b>	<b>Session</b>	<b>Actual training</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Pulse</b>	<b>Waking Pulse</b>	<b>Weight</b>	<b>Hours Sleep</b>
Wk14/D1	rest						
D2	## Walk 5 mins						

	then (run 1 min, walk 3 mins) repeat 6-8 times, walk 5 mins						
D3	Rest						
D4	^^ Walk 5 mins then (run 30 secs, walk 1min 30 secs ) repeat 3 times, walk 5mins, (then run 30 secs walk 1min 30 secs) then walk 5 mins						
D5	Rest						
D6	++ Walk 5 mins, then AT <u>AN EASY</u> <u>PACE</u> jog for as long as you can within a 55-65% pulse range, (note						

	the time), walk 5 mins.						
D7	REST or Walk 20-30 mins						

NOTE: You can repeat the above two weeks until your resting pulse the day following exercise does not rise more than 5 beats above normal resting pulse.

At this stage you will be able to commence the Novice programme for a 10km / half marathon in the main Virtual Coach site providing you are starting within the first three weeks of the programme date.