



What is Couch to 5K?

Couch to 5K is a running plan developed to help absolute beginners get off the “couch” and into running. This beginners’ running plan was developed by a novice runner who wanted to help his fifty-something mother get off the couch and start running too. Now there are many variations but most plans involve three runs per week, with a day of rest in between, with a different schedule for each week of the plan.

How does Couch to 5K work?

Probably the biggest challenge a novice runner faces is not knowing how or where to start. Often when trying to get into exercise, we can overdo it, feel defeated and give up when we’re just getting started. Couch to 5K works because it starts with a **mix of running and walking, to gradually build up your fitness and stamina.**

Who is Couch to 5K for?

Couch to 5K is for almost everyone. Whether you’ve never run before, or if you want to get back into being more active, Couch to 5K is a free and easy way of getting fitter and healthier. **If you have any questions or health concerns about beginning an exercise program such as Couch to 5K, you should discuss it with your doctor!**

What are the benefits?

There are plenty of benefits from getting into running. For starters, it’s an easy way of improving your physical health. Running regularly will improve the health of your heart and lungs. Running can also help you lose weight, especially if combined with a healthy diet, and it may boost bone density.

Taking on the challenge of Couch to 5K can help boost your confidence and self-belief, as you prove that you can set yourself a target and achieve a goal. Running regularly can also be a great stress reliever and has even been shown to combat depression.

How will Live Well Clover's Couch to 5K work?

A **group run for our registered participants**, led by one or more **volunteer run leaders**, will be held each **Monday, Wednesday and Friday** from **February 29 to April 20, 2016, starting at 6:30pm** at the **Blue Eagle Academy Walking Track**. You should attend as many group runs as you can. For a number of reasons, you will be more likely to succeed with Couch to 5K if you participate in the group runs.

The goal of our program is to get participants to cross the finish line of the April 23 Live Well Clover 5K! To do this, our program will follow a **training schedule** that will change each week and, later on, each training day of the 8-week program. In the first couple of weeks, there will be short runs with walking mixed in. Gradually, the run times will increase and the walk times will decrease and become less frequent. For those that have a smart phone, there are a number of free apps you can download to your phone (for example, C25K by Zen Labs LLC). Our training schedule is aimed at getting participants in shape for the full 5K – whether by running the entire 3.1 miles or doing a combination of running & walking.

For the first 4 weeks, the group runs will be at the Blue Eagle Academy Walking Track on Memorial Drive. In the final weeks, the run leader may select different routes around Town so that participants can experience different scenery and be prepared for changing elevations.

What if it's bad weather? The group runs will not be rescheduled due to inclement weather. We will run when it's cold, windy, and cloudy. The only time we will not run is during heavy rain storms, lightning storms or if the walking track and/or roads are flooded. During the early weeks, we will use the Clover Armory during bad weather but after Week 3, the Armory is not a suitable option.

Participants should think about **safety** each and every time you go out. Make sure to stretch before and especially after each session. Each participant should be aware of his/her own physical limitations, infirmities and injuries. Participants must also be aware of the surroundings at all times watching out for other pedestrians, keeping aware of motorists (especially at intersections and driveways) and paying attention to sidewalks.

What to bring? The most important item you need for this program is a good pair of running shoes. The correct shoes may reduce your risk of injury. However, you need not spend a fortune on shoes or any other accessory. Ladies should also invest in a proper fitting athletic bra. Other items you may wish to bring to each training session include water, sunscreen, hat, epi-pen, mobile phone, etc.

You will be required to sign a **Liability Waiver**. This is a volunteer-led program and you will be participating at your own risk. It is important for you to know your own limits. Advice shared by the volunteer program leaders, Live Well Clover members or Town employees is not a substitute for doctor's advice or for your own intuition!