your 5K training programme

Training programmes for beginners can be expressed either in terms of the distance you've run, or the time in which you've completed your run. It's a matter of personal preference, but I always feel it's easier to start off by thinking in terms of the time you've spent running. This saves you the hassle of having to drive around measuring how many blocks make one mile, and so on. Here, for this eight-week training programme example, I've broken it

down by time (eight weeks is roughly how long you'll need to prepare for a 5K race). I've assumed that you can already walk a distance of 5K (or 3.1 miles, which is 5,280 yards, if you prefer!) and I've based it on three runs per week at an average running speed of 13 minutes per mile. Don't give up the first time you try following this programme – if it feels a bit like hard work initially, take heart: your fitness levels will pick up, that I promise!

	monday	tuesday	wednesday
week 1	Rest	3-min run/1-min walk 7 repetitions = 28 mins	Rest
week 2	Rest	5-min run/1-min walk 5 reps = 30 mins	Rest
week 3	Rest	7-min run/1-min walk 5 reps = 40 mins	Rest
week 4	Rest	10-min run/1-min walk 4 reps = 44 mins	Rest
week 5	Rest	15-min run/2-min walk 3 reps = 51 mins	Rest
week 6	Rest	25-min run (no walking) 1.9 miles	Rest
week 7	Rest	35-min run (no walking) 2.7 miles	Rest
week 8	Rest	Race week: run for 25 mins (ease off to be strong on race day)	Rest

notes

- I've assumed that the long run will be done by most people on the weekends; but if it suits you to do it on a different day, by all means just schedule the rest of your week's runs around it.
- 'Cross-train' means an easy session of non-running aerobic exercise, e.g. swimming or cycling.
- This programme assumes a speed of 13 mins per mile: bear in mind that it's just a guide some runners are faster than others.
- As in all things to do with exercise, listen to your body. Learn to watch out for signs of excessive fatigue (rather than an excuse for a lie-in) or viruses, and adjust your programme or take a day's rest accordingly.

thursday	friday	saturday	sunday
Same as Tuesday	Rest	Cross-train	4-min run/1-min walk 6 reps = 30 mins
Same as Tuesday	Rest	Cross-train	6-min run/1-min walk 5 reps = 35 mins
Same as Tuesday	Rest	Cross-train	9-min run/1-min walk 4 reps = 40 mins
Same as Tuesday	Rest	Cross-train	12-min run/1-min walk 4 reps = 52 mins
Same as Tuesday	Rest	Cross-train	20-min run/2-min walk 2 reps = 44 mins
Same as Tuesday	Rest	Cross-train	30-min run (no walking) 2.3 miles
Same as Tuesday	Rest	Cross-train	40-min run (no walking) 3.1 miles (well done!)
Same as Tuesday	Rest	Cross-train *	RACE DAY!