

How to train for and complete the Flinders 5 fun run or walk (by the local physio)

Set an Appropriate Goal: A 5K fun run or walk can take as little as 15 or 20 minutes for fast runners and as much as an hour for walkers. Because there is such a wide range of abilities, it's important to keep in mind that you are the only one you are competing against, and your goal is to do the best that you can do, avoid injuries, and have fun.

Register for the Flinders 5: Pick up an entry form or register online for The Flinders 5. It's that easy. Committing to the race in advance gives you more incentive to train and sets an expectation that you will plan for the race accordingly.

Start Training: There are very elaborate 5K training programs, but a simplified program should include three days of exercise per week with one day of rest in between workouts. You have plenty of time to train up for the distance so start slowly and over short distances. Depending on your fitness level begin walking or jogging to a level where you can have a conversation but that you are slightly out of breath. Gradually increase the time and distance that you walk or jog for. Aim to reach the 5km distance the week before the event. If you are more serious then contact the local running group. Remember if in doubt about any health issues please see the doctor first..

Strength Training: Some light weight training two to three times per week is another way to improve your 5K run. Not only will it strengthen the muscles, ligaments and tendons to help prevent injury, it will make the leg muscles less prone to fatigue during the event. See your physiotherapist or fitness coach.

Warm-up Before Exercise: A proper warm-up increases the blood flow to the working muscle which results in decreased muscle stiffness, less risk of injury, improved performance and psychological preparation for an event. Before your 5K training and racing, a good warm-up includes a brisk walk or jog for several minutes to prepare your body for action!

Stretch After Exercise: Flexibility is an important component of fitness, and exercise tends to increase the amount of flexibility in

a joint. Flexibility is also specific to the type of movement needed for a sport, so it is more important for some sports than others. Runners should focus on the hip flexors and the hamstrings. The following stretch is ideal for these muscles. Start in a lunge position, with one leg back and one leg forward. Straighten the back leg to stretch the hip flexors. Return to the starting position, then straighten the front leg to stretch the hamstrings. Hold each stretch about 15 seconds.



Lunge Stretch

Eat Right Before Exercise: Eating a simple meal of 200 to 400 calories about two to three hours before the race is important to have fuel for the event, but also have time to digest the food. Never experiment with food or drink on race day.

Eat Right After Exercise: What and when you eat following exercise can be just as important as what you eat before. While the pre-exercise meals can ensure that adequate glycogen stores are available for optimal performance, the post-exercise meal is critical to recovery and improves your ability to train consistently.

Listen to Your Body: If you experience any sharp pain, weakness or light-headedness during exercise, pay attention. This is your body's signal that something is wrong and you should stop exercise. Pushing through acute pain is the fastest way to develop a severe or chronic injury. If you don't feel well, you should take time off.

Avoid Pre-Race Jitters: Pre-race jitters are normal, so try not to misinterpret it or think it is fear; that adrenaline rush you feel is normal and it is part of your body's natural preparation for the competition. To help avoid nervousness before the event, arrive with plenty of time so you aren't rushed, get a thorough warm-up, know the course, and dress for the weather. Remember goal number one: you are only competing against yourself, so enjoy the moment.