

SUMMER CHALLENGE III: FASTEST & FUN 5K'S

FASTEST 5K OR SUMMER OF FUN 5K'S. OPTION ONE: Consider making your summer challenge all about being FAST. Spend these next few months training to turn in a personal best finish time in a 5K race near summer's end. At least a PR in your own version of 'modern history,' This is not a challenge to recreate the glory days of high school cross-country team fame.

Why try for a PR? Because it's difficult to IMPROVE on a previous best in so many other areas of life, that being able to do so in running would be monumentally uplifting and encouraging. Well, maybe at least a confidence booster.

Chances of success in this challenge are greater if you have not previously incorporated speed work, hill repeats, tempo runs, or long runs into your training plan for this distance race. Come to think of it, if you have never specifically trained for a 5k you have the potential to be faster. Adding strength, balance, mobility, and flexibility work will likely contribute to a speedier you also.

"Fastest 5K" plan:

- Start on this quest by identifying a goal 5k that is later in the summer, on a date that allows completion of an 8-10 week training plan.
- Find a training plan* designed to improved speed that is roughly 9-10 weeks duration. . Remember to allow for vacation days and occasional missed workouts.
- Establish a baseline pace on which to improve by running an easy Earned Runs personal 5K or organized 5K race on Memorial Day weekend without pushing the limits of your performance ability.
- Identify a "test" 5k event that can be run to check progress, roughly half way through the training period. Again, don't run all out in this race.
- Make adjustments as needed; most importantly, train safely to avoid injury!

In 2016 this challenge was MOST important to me. It paid off, as I did record a personal best in an August race. Last summer it was also, but I took on too much hard work too soon and neglected to adequately rest during each training week. I wasn't ever able to compete in the July 30 event and, supported by borrowed crutches, watched the other uninjured runners cross the finish line.

Learn from my mistake! If over 40, add extra days to the training week, like champion, now retired, marathoner [Meb Keflezighi advises](#), who stretches his to 9 days. Don't double up on workouts if you miss a day. If you begin to hurt, stop running, re-evaluate, and take sufficient time off to prevent further injury.

OPTION TWO: "Summer Full of Fun 5ks" plan:

This is for runners and walkers who are regularly covering training distances over 4 miles. Identify races all through the summer that you wish to walk or run just because they promise to be enjoyable: the theme is fun or has meaning, the location is unique or amazing, the date is one of general celebration, or others are available to join you, etc. Continue to practice safe running and walking training. The object is to finish not to punish, to fill the summer months with personal or organized fun 5ks.

Earned Runs will post items that offer training advice that for faster running and walking performance and highlight fun races when possible.

REQUEST Earned Runs bibs to plan and custom design your own 5k's.

RUN & MOVE HAPPY!

*Hal Higdon offers these options:

Intermediate <http://www.halhigdon.com/training/50934/Intermediate-5K-Training>

Advanced <http://www.halhigdon.com/training/50935/Advanced-5K-Training>

<https://www.runnersworld.com/newswire/how-meb-keflezigghi-trained-to-win-the-boston-marathon>

<http://www.earned-runs.com/resources.html>

Image Plan a custom fun 5k in Washington DC if you have a visit planned. Loop around the Lincoln Memorial and Reflecting Pool, and other monuments. Taken by PKSenagore October 16, 2016. All rights reserved.