

Preparing for a 5 K
4th article in a series of 4

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In the fourth and final article in this series on how to prepare for a 5K we will be discussing what to eat prior to the big day and how to increase your mileage, and intensity. Before the big race you should stretch and warm up properly. Warm up by walking or jogging for a few minutes prior to the race to get those muscles loosened up.

What should you eat/drink the day before the big day?

To prepare right for the big day drink extra fluids beginning 2 days before the event. Limit caffeinated and alcoholic beverages as this can cause a poor nights sleep and dehydration. Eat a big lunch and a normal size high carbohydrate dinner. It's also a good idea to eat a bed time snack such as peanut butter and crackers. Eat meals that contain high complex carbohydrates such as pasta or breads. This is sometimes referred to as carbohydrate loading.

To help avoid stomach problems eat familiar foods. Don't decide to try something new on race day as it may cause some adverse stomach side effects.

What and when should you eat the morning of the big race?

The big race is finally here and you are curious what to eat. The race starts at 8:00AM and there are several factors to consider. The first major concern is fluid replacement, especially in the west Texas sun. Ideally you should get up early enough and drink 3 glasses of fluid two hours before the race. Then right before the race (5-10 minutes) drink 1-2 cups. The next concern is what our muscles are going to use for fuel. Yesterday we loaded up on carbohydrates so our muscles would have stored energy. It's still a good idea, however, to get up at 6:00AM and eat a light meal such as yogurt and a banana, or one or two sports bars with your favorite beverage. You might want to avoid foods with high sugar content as this makes some people feel tired shortly after beginning the race.

Experiment! Keep a log of your really good runs and compare different meals /fluids to see what works best for you.

How do I increase my distance and intensity?

The key to increasing your intensity is variety. Have you ever heard the saying “variety is the spice of life.” Changing up your workout will also inject freshness into your routine and improve your performance. There are several ways to mix up your daily run. These include adding hill work which improves strength, speedwork/sprinting at a track to improve your speed for the end of the race kick, and varying your speed during long runs to train different muscle types.

To increase your distance, use the 5 percent rule. Take your mileage and add 5 percent every other week. Then level off when you reach 30-35 miles. This will be a good base to work from. Remember that the more fit you are the more difficult it is to see improvements. Also begin each session with easy jogging and stretching and if possible crosstrain (cycling, and swimming) during the week. Doing this may prevent overuse injuries. Also remember to incorporate rest into your routine, as this is a major component to a good running program.

Have fun and good luck!!! See you at the Movin’ at Midnight walk/run – registration on Sept 3, 2011 starting at 11:00 p.m. the run will be at 12:01 a.m. on Sept. 4, 2011.

Registration Forms at TX Sport & Spine, www.txsportspine.com; www.doxjox.com and www.abilenerunners.com

This week’s running schedule is as follows:

Wednesday: Rest or easy run

Thursday: Run 3 miles

Friday: Rest and have a good pre-race meal

Saturday: THE BIG DAY!!

Sunday: Rest or easy walk