



FREE TRAINING PLAN

18 Minute 5k Training Plan

A demanding 3-week build plus 1 recovery week for experienced runners chasing an 18-minute 5k.

TARGET

18:00

5k PB target

TARGET PACE

5:45/mile

3:35/km

CYCLE

4 weeks

3 build weeks + recovery

LEVEL

Advanced

5k PB block

IS THIS PLAN RIGHT FOR YOU?

Best suited to runners who can already run around 5:45/mile for at least a mile and/or have a current 5k PB under around 20 minutes.



FOLLOW THE PLAN IN THE APP

Scan to get RunningFastr on iPhone

<https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/runningfastr/id6759058880>

<https://www.runningfastr.com/5k-training-plan/18-minute-5k-training-plan/>

Week 1: Find 18-minute rhythm

Use 1km and 800m race-pace work with easy support running.

Monday

EASY / BREAKEVEN

30 min easy

Controlled aerobic running. Keep this deliberately comfortable. | Pace: No quicker than 7:45/mile

Tuesday

INTERVALS / BREAKTHROUGH

4 x 1km

Run each rep at target 5k rhythm. | Pace: 3:35/km / 5:45/mile | Recovery: 90s jogged recovery

Wednesday

EASY / BREAKEVEN

30 min easy

Controlled aerobic running. Keep this deliberately comfortable. | Pace: No quicker than 7:45/mile

Thursday

INTERVALS / BREAKTHROUGH

6 x 800m

Fast controlled 800m repetitions. | Pace: 2:49 per 800m / 5:40/mile | Recovery: 200m jogged recovery

Friday

REST / RECOVERY

Rest or cross-train

Low-impact cross-training only if it helps recovery.

Saturday

EASY / BREAKEVEN

30 min easy

Controlled aerobic running. Keep this deliberately comfortable. | Pace: Comfortable only

Sunday

LONG RUN / BREAKEVEN

Long run

Slow and steady aerobic running, kept under an hour unless the plan notes otherwise. | Pace: Easy conversational pace

Week 2: Sharpen and extend

Use sharp 400s, Kenyan hills, and another 800m session.

Monday

EASY / BREAKEVEN

30 min easy

Controlled aerobic running. Keep this deliberately comfortable. | Pace: No quicker than 7:45/mile

Tuesday

INTERVALS / BREAKTHROUGH

10 x 400m

Short reps slightly quicker than race pace. | Pace: 84s per 400m / 5:35/mile | Recovery: 60s standing recovery

Wednesday

EASY / BREAKEVEN

30 min easy

Controlled aerobic running. Keep this deliberately comfortable. | Pace: No quicker than 7:45/mile

Thursday

HILLS / BREAKTHROUGH

Kenyan hills

Use Kenyan hills or hill sprints to build power, form and running economy. | Pace: Hard but controlled effort | Recovery: Jog back / controlled recovery

Friday

REST / RECOVERY

Rest or cross-train

Low-impact cross-training only if it helps recovery.

Saturday

INTERVALS / BREAKTHROUGH

6 x 800m

Repeat the 800m session and aim for even pacing. | Pace: 2:49 per 800m / 5:40/mile | Recovery: 200m jogged recovery

Sunday

LONG RUN / BREAKEVEN

Long run

Slow and steady aerobic running, kept under an hour unless the plan notes otherwise. | Pace: Easy conversational pace

Week 3: Specific strength

Add hills, a larger 1km session and fartlek before backing off.

Monday

HILLS / BREAKTHROUGH

Hill sprints

Use Kenyan hills or hill sprints to build power, form and running economy. | Pace: Hard but controlled effort | Recovery: Jog back / controlled recovery

Tuesday

INTERVALS / BREAKTHROUGH

6 x 1km

Practise calm target rhythm across more volume. | Pace: 3:35/km / 5:45/mile | Recovery: 90s jogged recovery

Wednesday

EASY / BREAKEVEN

30 min easy

Controlled aerobic running. Keep this deliberately comfortable. | Pace: No quicker than 7:45/mile

Thursday

FARTLEK / BREAKEVEN

Fartlek run

Unstructured speed play. Vary the effort without chasing exact splits. | Pace: Mixed effort

Friday

REST / RECOVERY

Rest or cross-train

Low-impact cross-training only if it helps recovery.

Saturday

EASY / BREAKEVEN

30 min easy

Controlled aerobic running. Keep this deliberately comfortable. | Pace: Comfortable only

Sunday

LONG RUN / BREAKEVEN

Long run

Slow and steady aerobic running, kept under an hour unless the plan notes otherwise. | Pace: Easy conversational pace

Recovery Week: Absorb and reset

Reduce impact while keeping one controlled tempo insertion.

Monday	REST / RECOVERY Rest or cross-train Low-impact cross-training only if it helps recovery.
Tuesday	REST / RECOVERY Rest or cross-train Low-impact cross-training only if it helps recovery.
Wednesday	TEMPO / BREAKTHROUGH Tempo run Controlled sustained running inserted into the week without turning it into a race. Pace: Include 3 miles at around 6:00/mile
Thursday	REST / RECOVERY Rest or cross-train Low-impact cross-training only if it helps recovery.
Friday	EASY / BREAKEVEN 30 min easy Controlled aerobic running. Keep this deliberately comfortable. Pace: Easy only
Saturday	REST / RECOVERY Rest or cross-train Low-impact cross-training only if it helps recovery.
Sunday	REST / RECOVERY Rest or cross-train Low-impact cross-training only if it helps recovery.

Paces and session guide

RACE PACE

5:45/mile / 3:35/km

The pace you need to run close to 18 minutes.

TREADMILL EQUIVALENT

10.4 mph / 16.6 km/h

Useful for controlled indoor efforts.

400M SPLIT

86s at race pace

Use roughly 84s for the sharper 400m reps.

800M SPLIT

2:52

Race-pace split for 800m repetitions; some reps are set slightly sharper.

Breakeven sessions

These maintain fitness, support recovery and prepare you for the breakthrough sessions.

Steady / easy run

Easy running should be by feel and no quicker than 7:45/mile. Focus on recovery and form.

Long run

Slow and steady, generally less than an hour of work.

Fartlek

Unstructured speed play. Use it to practise changing gears without obsessing over exact splits.

Breakthrough sessions

These are the hard sessions that move you toward the target. Treat them as mini-milestones, not ego tests.

400m reps

Run around 84 seconds per 400m at roughly 5:35/mile pace with 60 seconds standing recovery.

800m reps

Run around 2:49 per 800m at roughly 5:40/mile pace with a 200m jogged recovery.

1km intervals

Hit 3:35/km at around 5:45/mile pace with 90 seconds jogged recovery.

Hills

Alternate Kenyan hills and hill sprints to balance power and endurance.

How to use this plan

1. Start this plan only when you can already run around 5:45/mile for a mile or have a PB under around 20 minutes.
2. Run the 3 build weeks, then take the recovery week to absorb the work.

TRAINING PLAN

3. Repeat or tailor the cycle toward a specific race once the first block is complete.
4. After around three months following the plan, reduce training for 1-2 weeks with more cross-training and a couple of easy runs.

YOUR NEXT PB**16 Minute 5k Training Plan**

<https://www.runningfastr.com/5k-training-plan/16-minute-5k-training-plan/>

Free plan. No subscription required. Pick your target, follow the plan, run faster.

Training guidance is general information, not personalised medical advice. Reduce or stop training if pain changes your stride or worsens.