



FREE TRAINING PLAN

Sub 20 5k Training Plan

A repeatable 3-week block plus 1 recovery week for runners chasing the classic sub-20 5k barrier.

TARGET

Sub 20

20:00 5k barrier

TARGET PACE

6:25/mile

3:59-4:00/km

CYCLE

4 weeks

3 build weeks + recovery

LEVEL

Advanced

PB-focused 5k block

IS THIS PLAN RIGHT FOR YOU?

Best suited to runners who can already run close to 20 minutes for 5k, hold 6:25/mile for at least a mile, or have a 5k PB under around 22 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/sub-20-5k-training-plan/>

Week 1: Set the rhythm

Establish sub-20 pace with 1km and 800m work, supported by easy running.

Monday**EASY / BREAKEVEN****30 min easy**

Controlled aerobic running. Finish feeling better than you started. | Pace: No quicker than 8:25/mile

Tuesday**INTERVALS / BREAKTHROUGH****5 x 1km**

Run each rep at target 5k pace. | Pace: 4:00/km / 6:25/mile | Recovery: 90s jogged recovery

Wednesday**EASY / BREAKEVEN****30 min easy**

Keep this genuinely easy and relaxed. | Pace: No quicker than 8:25/mile

Thursday**INTERVALS / BREAKTHROUGH****6 x 800m**

Race-pace repetitions to build confidence and economy. | Pace: 3:12 per 800m / 6:25/mile | Recovery: 200m jogged recovery

Friday**REST / RECOVERY****Rest or cross-train**

Absorb the two quality sessions. Easy bike, swim or mobility only if it helps.

Saturday**EASY / BREAKEVEN****30 min easy**

Relaxed shakeout before the long run. | Pace: Comfortable only

Sunday**LONG RUN / BREAKEVEN****Long run**

Slow and steady aerobic run, kept under an hour. | Pace: Easy conversational pace

Week 2: Sharpen and strengthen

Add faster 400m repetitions, hills, and another 800m session.

Monday**EASY / BREAKEVEN****30 min easy**

Keep the legs moving without adding fatigue. | Pace: No quicker than 8:25/mile

Tuesday**INTERVALS / BREAKTHROUGH****10 x 400m**

Sharper than race pace, but controlled. Do not turn the first five into a race. | Pace: 93s per 400m / 6:15/mile | Recovery: 60s standing recovery

Wednesday**EASY / BREAKEVEN****30 min easy**

Recovery run. Keep it soft and boring in the best way. | Pace: No quicker than 8:25/mile

Thursday**HILLS / BREAKTHROUGH****Hills**

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

Friday**REST / RECOVERY****Rest**

Protect the Saturday quality work. Rest is part of the plan, not a weakness.

Saturday**INTERVALS / BREAKTHROUGH****6 x 800m**

Repeat the 800m session and aim for calm consistency. | Pace: 3:12 per 800m / 6:25/mile | Recovery: 200m jogged recovery

Sunday**LONG RUN / BREAKEVEN****Long run**

Slow and steady aerobic run, kept under an hour. | Pace: Easy conversational pace

Week 3: Specific strength

Combine hills, fartlek and 1km race-pace work before backing off.

Monday

EASY / BREAK EVEN

30 min easy

Reset after the long run. Keep this relaxed. | Pace: No quicker than 8:25/mile

Tuesday

HILLS / BREAKTHROUGH

Hill sprints

Short, powerful efforts focused on form and drive. | Pace: Fast but controlled | Recovery: Full walk/jog recovery

Wednesday

FARTLEK / BREAK EVEN

Fartlek run

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

Thursday

INTERVALS / BREAKTHROUGH

5 x 1km

Return to target 5k pace and practise rhythm. | Pace: 4:00/km / 6:25/mile | Recovery: 90s jogged recovery

Friday

REST / RECOVERY

Rest or cross-train

Back off and let the race-specific work land.

Saturday

EASY / BREAK EVEN

30 min easy

Easy aerobic running only. | Pace: Comfortable only

Sunday

LONG RUN / BREAK EVEN

Long run

Slow and steady aerobic run, kept under an hour. | Pace: Easy conversational pace

Recovery Week: Absorb and reset

Reduce impact, keep the legs ticking over, and prepare to repeat or taper toward a race.

Monday	REST / RECOVERY Rest or cross-train Low-impact movement only if it helps recovery.
Tuesday	REST / RECOVERY Rest or cross-train Keep the load low. No heroics.
Wednesday	TEMPO / BREAKTHROUGH Tempo run Controlled tempo insertion, not a full race effort. Pace: Include 3 miles at 6:40/mile
Thursday	REST / RECOVERY Rest or cross-train Prioritise freshness.
Friday	EASY / BREAKEVEN 30 min easy Gentle running to keep the legs moving. Pace: Easy only
Saturday	REST / RECOVERY Rest or cross-train Stay patient and absorb the block.
Sunday	REST / RECOVERY Rest or cross-train Finish the cycle fresh enough to repeat or sharpen.

Paces and session guide

RACE PACE

6:25/mile / 3:59-4:00/km

The rhythm you need to break 20 minutes.

TREADMILL EQUIVALENT

9.3 mph / 15.0 km/h

Useful for controlled indoor sessions.

400M SPLIT

96s at race pace

Use roughly 93s for the sharper 400m reps.

800M SPLIT

3:12

Sub-20 race pace for 800m repetitions.

Breakeven sessions

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

Easy / steady run

Run by feel, no quicker than 8:25/mile. Focus on recovery, posture and relaxed form.

Long run

Slow and steady, kept under 1 hour. This supports endurance without draining the speed work.

Fartlek

Unstructured speed play. Use it to vary pace without obsessing over exact splits.

Breakthrough sessions

These are the challenging sessions that move you toward sub-20. Treat them as controlled milestones, not tests of ego.

400m reps

Run around 93 seconds per 400m, roughly 6:15/mile pace, with 60 seconds standing recovery.

800m reps

Run 3:12 per 800m, around 6:25/mile pace, with a 200m jogged recovery.

1km intervals

Run 4:00 per km, around 6:25/mile pace, with 90 seconds jogged recovery.

Hills

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

How to use this plan

1. Run the 3 build weeks, then take the recovery week seriously.
2. Repeat the 4-week cycle if you need more time before your target race.

TRAINING PLAN

3. After around three months on this plan, reduce running load for one to two weeks and use more cross-training with a couple of easy runs to keep the legs moving.
4. Keep easy days easy. The quality sessions only work if you arrive recovered enough to run them well.

YOUR NEXT PB**18 Minute 5k Training Plan**

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