



**JOIN THE PACK**  
Step up your running  
by entering a race

# The race is on

Get in touch with your competitive side

**A**lways wanted to try a race? Go for it: even complete beginners thrive on the excitement of organised events. “I always structure training around target races,” says running coach Janice Moorekite. “Not only does it improve confidence and provide a goal, but the lively atmosphere makes you realise you’re not alone.” Join in the buzz with our guide to racing.

**Target 1: 5K**

Long enough to provide a challenge but still an achievable goal, 5Ks are a great place to meet like-minded people. “You don’t have to be overly competitive,” says personal trainer Liz Fulford (fitnesstrainingspecialists.co.uk). Check out the women-only Race For Life series, which also runs a men’s race in aid of the Bobby Moore Fund. **HOW LONG?** Beginners should aim to finish in 25-35 minutes.

**TRAINING TIP** Aim for a 30-minute run, three times a week. But don’t push yourself; gradually build it up. “Try a run-walk session to start: run a minute, walk a minute and so on,” says Moorekite.

**Target 2: 10K**

When you can run for 35-40 minutes without stopping, double your pleasure with a 10K. By this stage, your aerobic capacity will have increased and you’ll have more stamina, as well as stronger muscles. **HOW LONG?** 50-70 minutes. **TRAINING TIP** Make training fun by including a fartlek (speed play) session once a week: pick a route with plenty of landmarks and use them as a guide while you experiment with jogging, running and sprinting.

**Target 3: Half-marathon**

Endurance events are a great way of proving to yourself that the hard work is paying off.

When you feel ready, try a half-marathon of 13.1 miles.

**HOW LONG?** 1:45 to 2:30.

**TRAINING TIP** Gradually extend one of your weekly runs into an eight to 10-miler, adding one mile per week. Now’s also the time to strengthen your legs to help you go the distance: Fulford recommends that you do squats, lunges and leg extensions after a run.

**Target 4: Marathon**

The ultimate test of stamina, yet it has an addictive appeal, as Fulford explains: “A marathon gives people an invincible feeling. Suddenly they can’t stop trying to beat their best time.” And with an incredible range of marathons worldwide, you can go on to chase a new best time in anywhere from Namibia to New York.

**HOW LONG?** Anywhere from three and a half to six hours.

**TRAINING TIP** The key is long runs. Most experts recommend three to five training runs of 16 miles or longer, but the more miles you can accumulate the better. You don’t have to run fast, just at conversational pace.



**Q** How should I warm up on the day of a race?

**A** Try ‘dynamic stretching’. This is fantastic at elongating the hamstrings and adductors - the muscles that run down your inner thigh. First go for a gentle jog, then hold yourself steady using a wall or tree. Slowly begin to swing your left leg forwards and backwards, to a count of 40. Gradually increase the range of movement. Perform



the stretch on both legs, repeating once. Graeme Hilditch, author of *The Marathon and Half Marathon: A Training Guide* (Crowood Press, £14.99)

Email questions to [rwedit@runnersworld.co.uk](mailto:rwedit@runnersworld.co.uk)

## Try this...

**PARTNER UP**

If you like company during a run but you’re intimidated by your local clubs, try this site, [runningpartners.org.uk](http://runningpartners.org.uk). Designed to pair up like-minded runners with similar goals, you can also check out and recommend local running routes.



## Say What?

### RUNNING TERMS EXPLAINED

**Isotonic:** This marketing buzzword refers to any liquid solution that replaces the carbs and salts that are lost through sweat when you run. More hydrating than pure water, isotonic drinks replenish electrolytes, carbohydrates, and other important nutrients.