

Your guide to using the Run Happy and Healthy Plan

Our Run Happy and Healthy Plan will help you build up to completing the 10K distance in just 10 weeks. It's the perfect plan if you're new to running or looking to target your first 10K event, like the Vitality London 10,000!

We know how rewarding it can be to hit a goal you've worked towards, but we also understand that life can sometimes get in the way, so we've put together the Run Happy and Healthy Plan to help you achieve your 10K goal in 2021.

We want to help you every step of the way on your 10K journey, and the 10-week Run Happy and Healthy Plan is at the very heart of this.

The plan is aimed at first-time or novice runners and features mental health advice, as well as inspiring interviews with runners just like you, alongside three weekly exercise sessions.

Each week the plan suggests simple ways to feel more motivated, beat boredom and celebrate successes big and small. The aim is for you to feel not just healthier but happier in the run-up to the Vitality London 10,000.

We believe it's the first plan of its kind to support runners' heads as well as their hearts and we hope you enjoy following it.

By committing to three simple sessions per week, for 10 weeks, you'll build your mileage, as well as your confidence, as you get in shape to run 10K (which is just 12,500 steps!)

Check out the advice below on how to use the plan before you get started!

How to use the plan

The Run Happy and Healthy Plan is for you if you're stepping up to a 10K event like the Vitality London 10,000 for the first time. You'll do three runs a week and start your programme by building up a mixture of walking and running, before gradually adding more running. You'll develop an understanding of different running speeds and increase your stamina enough to complete the 10K distance as the weeks progress.

Running for your head and your heart

Every rest day in the plan features inspiring content to help you make the most of your downtime. We've included a selection of our favourite podcasts on topics such as running and mental health, as well as interviews with amazing runners just like you who have discovered the many benefits that regular activity delivers.

We've also included advice from our partner Vitality, on everything from mindfulness to getting the basics right, to support you on your 10K journey. We'd love to hear how you're getting on every week, as you run for your head and your heart, so we hope you'll stay in touch with us on social media

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Walking

You'll start the Run Happy and Healthy Plan with walking. This doesn't mean heading out for a casual stroll, but equally it's not race walking at top speed; ideally you will be walking at a brisk pace and getting into a smooth rhythm. However, if you've never run a step before – and are uncertain that you can – kick off with a gentle walking programme before starting a running plan like this one.

Walk/run

This is a combination of paced walking interspersed with light jogging. The amount of time you spend walking and jogging can and should vary. As you get fitter, you'll spend more time jogging and less time walking. Landmarks such as lampposts, street corners, road junctions and trees make excellent targets to jog to or walk between.

Easy runs

These are slow runs or jogs. During an easy run you should feel relaxed. You should be breathing comfortably and be capable of holding a conversation throughout the run. If you can't, you're going too fast – slow down and walk if necessary. An easy run should feel comfortable and is a natural progression from your walk/jog/walk introduction.

Many of your first runs as you build and progress through the Run Happy and Healthy Plan will be easy runs. However, as you improve, your easy runs will start to feel easier, and you'll want to include other types of running in your sessions.

Steady runs

During a steady run, conversation is still possible but it's certainly harder to keep it flowing. You should feel in control: a steady run should feel manageable but require some work and concentration. You might only be able to manage short periods to begin with but, as your fitness builds, your ability to run for longer at a steady pace will improve.

Good luck with your Run Happy and Healthy Plan and don't forget to let us know how you get on via social media

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