


Presenting partner

RSL Queensland

## Congratulations on deciding to participate in the 2026 Run Army event.

### Background

Run Army is in its sixth year, having held its inaugural event in 2021. Run Army was born out of an internal running program within the Army, Running Change, an 8-week program that utilises running as a tool to enrich lives and recover from injury or illness. A significant focus of the Running Change program is education and understanding that consistent application can achieve excellent results.

This training program is designed to provide you the guidance to train safely for either the 5 or 10km run at the 2026 Run Army events. The program has been designed by Simon O'Regan, the Run Army Technical Advisor, a Level 2 Athletics Coach, and a lifetime runner.

## Program Overview



The programs are aimed at completing the 5km or 10km events with some additional guidance included for those who may want to target a faster time for the 10km event.

5km – the 5km program is aimed at someone new to running or returning after a long absence. You should be in generally good health and able to walk at a brisk pace for 45-60mins and able to run pain-free for 10-15 mins with walk breaks if required.

10km – the beginner 10km program is aimed at someone who has been exercising regularly and is able to run for approx. 20-25 mins at an easy pace. There will be two 10km options, one aimed at finishing and the other at running faster than you currently run. The advanced program is aimed at someone who has completed 5km and possibly 10km events previously and running 2-3 times a week for at least 30mins.



Key points to remember during your training:

- You should be injury-free and generally in good health prior to starting the program. Anyone with pre-existing injuries/conditions or commencing exercise after a long absence should consult their GP before commencing this program.
- Running slow and taking walk breaks is acceptable and expected depending on what fitness level you start with.
- Be patient and don't be too hard on yourself. You should see the program as an opportunity to enjoy your running.

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- More running is not always better. Engage with a qualified coach or trainer to guide you if you think you should be doing more.
- Listen to your body – if you are new to running or it has been some time since regular running, expect some soreness and general fatigue whilst your body adapts. However, sharp, and consistent pain is not normal and should be reviewed by a health professional.
- Start the program with good footwear. Engage with a reputable shoe store if your runners are more than 9-12 months old or if you have not run in some time.
- Know that every day you lace up your shoes, you commit to being better. Enjoy the journey and the rewards from training for and meeting your goals.
- The programs will have a mix of both time and distance. This is intentional – on days where time is prescribed, the distance covered is irrelevant and it is about being on your feet for the time prescribed.
- Run slow to get fast. This may not make sense if you read it for the first time; however, most people stop running because they always run hard. Most elite runners spend around 80% of their training running 'slow', and a focus on your journey should be consistency over intensity in the first instance.
- There are several methods to measure the general intensity of your runs (how fast you run) – use the method most appropriate for your situations;







Talk test. Run at a pace where you can still talk with someone. This is applicable to all easy and long runs.

**Rate of Perceived Exertion (RPE)**

https://marathonhandbook.com/rate-of-perceived-exertion/ A scale from 1 to 10 where 1 is walking, and 10 is an all-out effort. Easy and long runs are completed around RPE 3– 4 whilst fartlek, intervals/tempo workouts range from 5 to 9.

**Heart rate**

The Running Change program, which is a pillar of Run Army, utilises the Maffetone system: https://philmaffetone.com/180-formula/ In its basic form, your easy and long runs are done at a heart rate of no higher than 180 – age. For example, for a 40-year-old this would equal 140 beats per minute (BPM) as the upper limit for your runs with the lower limit being 10 beats below, thus 130 – 140 BPM. Measurements tend to be more accurate if you own a heart rate chest strap as wrist monitors can experience some variability. In the absence of a heart rate monitor, the talk test and RPE are effective methods for this program.

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**Easy runs:** These runs are completed at a relaxed pace where the focus is on completing the distance/time without concern for the pace. As a guide, these would be approximately 60-90 sec slower than you could hold for 5km (RPE 3-4). If you own a heart rate monitor, then these runs would be at a heart rate no higher than 180-age. If the time or distance set is further than you can currently do, take 1-2min walk breaks every 5 – 10mins to make the time or distance prescribed.

**Long runs:** Not dissimilar to the easy run with the focus on building into a steady relaxed pace over the set distance/time. The distance makes you tired rather than the speed at which you run. The focus is on getting the job done. Stay relaxed and if possible, do these runs on softer surfaces.

**Fartlek:** periods of faster running interspersed with walking or jogging to recover. These should not be sprints but will be at a prescribed pace or feel to make running at a set pace on the day of the event feel more comfortable. This training can be unstructured, for example, run hard for 2-3 light poles followed by 1 easy. For this program, it will be time-based repetitions of a shorter duration.




**Interval training:** Periods of faster running with set rest periods. Slightly harder and sustained running for set periods at around 6 - 9 out of 10 efforts. The pace will vary and be outlined within the weekly program. Intervals can be distance-based, such as 5 x 1km, or use times with additional guidance on the effort/intensity.

**Rest days:** Depending on your fitness background, these may be opportunities to cross-train (no impact cardio), go for a walk, or strength train in the gym (if it is a part of your normal routine). It can also be a day of complete rest.



**Warm-up:** For easy and long runs, start each session with a 2-3min walk, followed by 3-5mins easy jogging to allow the body to warm up. For tempo and fartlek sessions, follow the same routine with some people needing a longer jog to warm up, then conduct 4-5mins of range of motion drills (leg swings, high knee skips etc) and finish the warm-up with 3-4 x 50m strides building up to, or just faster than the pace for the session.

**Cool down: s**pend 2-3 mins easy jogging or walking and then conduct 3-5mins of static stretching for the legs and lower back.

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WEEK ONE COMPLETE

# WEEK ONE

Set yourself a goal and hold yourself accountable. Whether finishing your first 5km or running a faster 10km, writing your goal down can contribute to your success. For example, the goal is to complete the 5km and I will run three times per week for 20-30 minutes to achieve this.

| WEEK 1 | MON | TUES | WED | THURS | FRI | SAT | SUN |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **5km** | 20 mins easy run | Rest | Rest / Cross-train | 15 mins easy run | Rest | 20 mins easy run | Long Walk Up to 45 mins |
| **10km beginner** | 20 mins easy run | Cross-train | 25 mins easy run | Rest | Cross-train | 20 mins easy run | Long Run 5-6km |
| **10km advanced** | 20 mins easy run | Cross-train | 40 mins easy run | 20 mins easy run | 30 mins easy run | Rest | Long Run 8-9km |

WEEK TWO COMPLETE

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# WEEK TWO

Consistency is key. Long term success with running and any sport comes from the consistent application. Well done on getting through Week One. Don't beat yourself up if you missed a session. Life, like running, is about continuing to move forward.

| WEEK 2 | MON | TUES | WED | THURS | FRI | SAT | SUN |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **5km** | 20 mins easy run | Rest | 20 mins easy run | Rest/ Cross-train | Rest | 20 mins easy run | Long walk up to 45 mins |
| **10km beginner** | 20 mins easy run | Cross-train | 30 mins easy run | Rest | Cross-train | 20 mins easy run | Long run 6-7km |
| **10km advanced** | 30 mins easy run | Cross-train | 40 mins easy run | Rest | 30 mins easy run | 5km Parkrun | Long run 10-11km |

WEEK THREE COMPLETE

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# WEEK THREE

Ego check - aim for positive habits. Review your first two weeks. How fast are you running? - if tired, don't be afraid to slow the pace down. Don't try and beat your pace and distance every day, fitness comes from incremental increases. Do the little things right, take the first 5 mins of each run easily to warm up and stretch when you finish.

| WEEK 3 | MON | TUES | WED | THURS | FRI | SAT | SUN |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **5km** | 20 mins easy run | Rest | 20 mins easy run or 50 min walk | Rest/ Cross-train | 20 mins easy | Rest | 25 mins long run |
| **10km beginner** | 20 mins easy run | Cross-train | 35 mins easy run | Rest | 20 mins easy | Rest | Long run 7km |
| **10km advanced** | Rest | Intervals | 45 mins easy run | Rest | 30 mins easy run | Fartlek | Long run 12 km |

Intervals: Following the warm-up. Run 4 x 5mins at 3-5sec per km faster than goal 10km pace with 2mins easy jog or walk between reps.

Example: if your goal is 50mins (5mins per km) then 5 min efforts are around 4.55 – 5min/km pace. (RPE 5-6)

Fartlek: Warm up and then complete 10 x 1min on / 1min jog or walk. Do 1min reps at around 5km pace or slightly faster. Aim to be smooth and fast. (RPE 6-7)

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WEEK FOUR COMPLETE

# WEEK FOUR

Find your Why. Congratulations on making it to the halfway mark of the program. By now your body should be starting to adapt and feel fitter. What have you learned about yourself these first four weeks? Reflect on those lessons and the positives of regular exercise. How fast you run or how much exercise you do should not define you, but aim for it to be a part of your list.

| WEEK 4 | MON | TUES | WED | THURS | FRI | SAT | SUN |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **5km** | 20 mins easy run | Rest | 20 mins easy run | Rest/ Cross-train | 40-50 mins walk | Rest | 30 mins long run |
| **10km beginner** | 20 mins easy run | Cross-train | 40 mins easy run | Rest | Rest | 5km time trial or Parkrun | 20 mins easy run |
| **10km advanced** | Rest or easy 15-20 mins run | Intervals | 40 mins easy run | Rest | 30 mins easy run | Fartlek | Long run 10km |

5km time trial. Warm up and then run 5km at a hard but sustained pace. As a guide, start at RPE 5-6 and by around 3-4km this will feel like RPE 8-9. Your finishing time will provide an idea of what you may be able to run for 10km.

A basic formula is to multiply your 5km time x 2 and add 70-90sec. Example: 25min 5km x 2 =50 mins. Add 90 sec =51.30. This is your predicted 10km. This may drift from 90sec out to 2-3mins depending on your running history.

Intervals: Warm up. Run 3-4 x 2km at goal 10km pace with 2mins easy jog between reps. (RPE 5-6)

Fartlek: Warm up. 8 x 2mins at around 5km pace with 60-90sec jog between reps. Aim to be smooth and fast. (RPE 6-7)

WEEK FIVE COMPLETE

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# WEEK FIVE

Sleep and nutrition check. Now you are in a regular exercise routine, check in on other habits that make up healthy living. For example, are you getting consistent enough sleep and eating regular healthy meals? There is no magic bullet to a healthy lifestyle, just good consistent choices.

| WEEK 5 | MON | TUES | WED | THURS | FRI | SAT | SUN |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **5km** | 20 mins easy run | Rest | 20 mins easy run | Rest/ Cross-train | 40-50 mins walk | Rest | 30 mins long run |
| **10km beginner** | 20 mins easy run | Cross-train | Intervals | Rest | Cross-train | 40 mins walk | Long run 7km |
| **10km advanced** | Rest or easy 15-20 min run | Intervals | 40 mins easy run | Rest | 30 mins easy run | 5km Parkrun | Long run 13km |

Intervals: 10km beginner: Run 3-4 x 5 mins mins at goal 10km pace with 2 mins walk between reps. (RPE 6-7)

10km advanced: 4 x 6 mins at goal 10km pace with 90 sec standing between reps, rest 3 mins after rep 4. 4 x 80m strides at 5km pace with 1 min rest between reps. (RPE 6-7)

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WEEK SIX COMPLETE

# WEEK SIX

Mindfulness and gratitude. Take time each week to take a break from your busy lifestyles and focus on you. Read, meditate, try some deep breathing exercises, or simply find a quiet place to reflect on what is good about your life and what you are grateful for.

| WEEK 6 | MON | TUES | WED | THURS | FRI | SAT | SUN |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **5km** | 25 mins easy run | Rest | 30 mins easy run | Rest/ Cross-train | 40-50 min walk | Rest | 35 mins long run |
| **10km beginner** | 25 mins easy run | Cross-train | 40 mins easy run + 4 x 80m strides* | Rest | 30 mins easy | 40 mins walk | Long run 9km |
| **10km advanced** | Rest or easy 15-20 min run | Intervals | 45 mins easy run | Rest | 30 mins easy run | Fartlek | Long run 15km |

Intervals Run 3 x 2.5km at goal 10km pace with 2mins easy jog between reps. Finish with 4 x 80m strides at 3km pace with 60 sec between reps. (RPE 6-7)

Fartlek: 12-15x1 min on / 1 min off. Aim for between 5 and 10km pace for the 1min on and easy jog for the off periods. Aim to be smooth and fast. (RPE 8)

* 4 x 80 m strides at the end of the 40min easy run. The aim of strides is to run fast and smoothly. These give you the 'spring' in your legs to run fast but without the stress of a more strenuous session.

WEEK SEVEN COMPLETE

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# WEEK SEVEN

SMART goals. Take the time to again reflect on where you have come from and start to think about what is next. Setting goals that are Specific, Measurable, Attainable (yet challenging), Realistic, and Time-based can ensure you stay on track. This process works for all aspects of life.

| WEEK 7 | MON | TUES | WED | THURS | FRI | SAT | SUN |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **5km** | 25mins easy run | Rest | 25mins easy run | Rest / Crosstrain | 40-50 min walk | Rest | 30mins long run |
| **10km beginner** | 25mins easy run | Cross-train | Fartlek | Rest | 30mins easy | 40mins walk | Long run 8 km |
| **10km advanced** | Rest or easy 15-20 mins run | Intervals | 45mins easy run | Rest | 30mins easy run | Fartlek | Long run 11 km |

Intervals: Run 6 x 1km 3-5sec per km faster than 10km pace with 2mins easy jog between reps. (RPE 7-8)

Fartlek: Mona fartlek (named after Steve Moneghetti). 2 x 90 sec, 4 x 60 sec, 4 x 30 sec, 4 x 15 sec all with 1:1 jog recovery between reps. For example. Run 90 sec, jog 90 sec x 2, then run 60 sec, jog 60 sec x 4. (RPE 8) Your aim should be to start the 90-sec efforts around 10km pace and get faster as the reps get shorter.

# WEEK EIGHT

WEEK EIGHT COMPLETE

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Race/Event Week - self-appreciation week. Well done, you have made it to the start line. Even if your plan has been just to finish, have a plan - start conservatively, aim to get to halfway feeling comfortably fatigued, and then build, aiming to finish strong. As you come over the finish line, enjoy the atmosphere and celebrate achieving a goal. If you are aiming for a time, don't go out too fast - build into the event and aim to finish strong.

| WEEK 8 | MON | TUES | WED | THURS | FRI | SAT | SUN |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **5km** | Rest | 20 mins easy run | Rest / Cross train | 20 mins easy run | Rest / Cross train | Rest | 5km Run Army |
| **10km beginner** | Rest | Fartlek | 25-30 mins easy run | Rest | 20 mins easy run | Rest | 10km Run Army |
| **10km advanced** | Rest or easy 15-20 mins run | Intervals | 35 mins easy run | Rest | 30 mins easy run +4 x 100m strides | Rest or easy 10-15 mins run | 10km Run Army |

Fartlek: 8-10 x 1min at goal race pace with 2 mins easy jog or walk between reps. Smooth and controlled. You should finish this session feeling like you could do several more reps and be close to fully recovering between each rep. (RPE 7-8) Volume and intensity are reduced this week.

Intervals: Run 3 x 1km 3-5sec per km faster than 10km pace with 90 sec standing between reps (RPE 6-7). Rest 3 mins after rep 3 and then do 4 x 200m at a smooth, fast and relaxed pace with 90 sec standing between reps.

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Notes