

The Run/Walk Method

Michael Brennan

Ask serious runners if they've ever walked during a race and most will only talk about the time they 'hit the wall' or otherwise faded late in a race. Walking, for most, is not part of their accomplishment or their strategy.

Most runners in beginner running clinics start off in run/walk training, alternating both for a set period, and increasing the running regularly until they get up to nine or ten minutes nonstop. It's the perfect mix to create a slow, methodical buildup of endurance.

Some experienced long distance runners, no matter what speed they run at, consider walking during a race or run to be a sign of failure, hitting 'the wall' or some physical or mental lapse. "Yet the goal of a workout is not to avoid walking," says Amby Burfoot, Runner's World writer, "but to feel better, get in better shape, reduce tension, lose weight, train for races, etc., and they're all worthwhile goals." He goes on to say that you can achieve these goals more easily if you incorporate some walking into your running. It can help you train more (for better half and full marathon prep and calorie burning); it can help you train healthier (fewer injuries and burnout); and can even help you get faster.

Jeff Galloway, another Runner's World writer, has been advocating walking breaks during training for years, especially for beginning runners but also for first time marathoners, and even those who get exhausted in the last few miles. Galloway found that "By walking early and often, most runners survive the final miles in much better shape, they feel better and often run faster." Many seasoned runners have found this to be true too if they've tried it.

The Strategy

Start your workout with 5 minutes of brisk walking to loosen the joints and warm up your leg muscles. The walk has to be brisk, you have to 'walk with a purpose' and maintain good form (including arm movement) throughout. As you get more used to this plan you'll find that you can vary your running during the run segments, you can even get speedy, you'll have fewer injuries, better recovery, you sightsee more and more people can work out with you (like a partner).

Running and walking are totally complementary. Walking doesn't require as much body force that impacts knees, shins and feet, yet it keeps you moving only slightly slower than running. Runner's World suggests the following:

If you run a mile in...	and then walk for 60 seconds...	your overall pace will be...
6:00.....		6:40
7:00.....		7:37
8:00.....		8:34
9:00.....		9:31
10:00.....		10:29
11:00.....		11:26
12:00.....		12:23

As you can see, if you're walking, you're still moving toward your goal, but the walking breaks give your body a chance to slow down your rate of breathing and your heart rate, give your legs muscles a rest and conserve some energy. In longer runs, it can make the difference in how you're able to do the last quarter of your workout or race.

"Many potential runners," says Burfoot, "never get into the rhythm of running because it can be hard work. They get frustrated early on because they go out too hard." These are the very people who need the run/walk plan, the potential runners and recreational runners, early in their running interest. Later they can use it just for long runs and races, but like thousands before them, the run/walk plan gets them into running easily, safely and comfortably.

The **RUN/WALK** plan **WORKS!** Consider it. Try it.

(referenced from Amby Burfoot's article in Runner's World, April 1998)

RUN-WALK TRAINING

CHART A

Week	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Total
1	rest	30 min.	rest	30 min.	rest	30 min.	40 min.	
2	rest	30 min.	rest	30 min.	rest	30 min.	40 min.	
3	rest	30 min.	rest	30 min.	rest	30 min.	40 min.	
4	rest	30 min.	rest	30 min.	rest	30 min.	40 min.	
5	rest	30 min.	rest	30 min.	rest	30 min.	40 min.	
6	rest	30 min.	rest	30 min.	rest	30 min.	40 min.	
7	rest	30 min.	rest	30 min.	rest	30 min.	40 min.	
8	rest	30 min.	rest	30 min.	rest	30 min.	40 min.	

Notes for A:

1. **This page is designed to START you running or jogging.** See other schedules for moving up in distance.
2. Schedule is flexible... move workouts to different days when you need to. Use with Chart B (gives walking times).
3. Always start a workout with a 5-minute brisk walk, or 10min. if your joints creak loud enough to wake neighbors.
4. Your goals are to Run-Walk continuously for longer periods by the end, and to extend the 'Run' portion of each week's workout so that by the end of the program you may be running 15 min.(or more), walking 1 min.
5. To guide you through each of the above workout days, use Chart B to determine your effort. Increase your running times on a weekly, or every other day basis, depending on how comfortably you're running.
6. As you do any workout, jot down on the chart above either the actual time you were out, or distance if you know it. Later you'll be glad you recorded what you've done and that in itself becomes a motivator to continue.
7. By the end of this schedule you'll be up to or beyond 5km!

CHART B

Use this chart with the above schedule

Select any day's workout from above and use one of these paces for it

Week 1	Easy (new to exercise)	Moderate (2x/wk walker)	Challenging (4x/wk walker)
1	Run 1 min/walk 2 min	Run 3 min/walk 1 min	Run 7 min/walk 1 min
2	Run 1 min/walk 2 min	Run 3 min/walk 1 min	Run 7 min/walk 1 min
3	Run 1 min/walk 2 min	Run 3 min/walk 1 min	Run 7 min/walk 1 min
4	Run 2 min/walk 2 min	Run 5 min/walk 1 min	Run 10 min/walk 1 min
5	Run 2 min/walk 2 min	Run 5 min/walk 1 min	Run 10 min/walk 1 min
6	Run 2 min/walk 2 min	Run 5 min/walk 1 min	Run 10 min/walk 30 sec
7	Run 3 min/walk 1 min	Run 7 min/walk 1 min	Run 10 min/walk 30 sec
8	Run 3 min/walk 1 min	Run 7 min/walk 1 min	Run 15 min/walk 1 min

Notes for B:

Example: Select from Chart A a day's workout, say, Tuesday of week 1, which is 30 minutes. Go to Chart B and select one of the 'paces' from it depending on your level of fitness, ease of breathing and sign of the zodiac (okay, kidding on the last one). Say you're new to exercising so you take Week 1 'Easy' which says 'Run 1 min/walk 2 min'. This means that for Tuesday of Week 1 you're going to start with a 5 minute warmup walk, then alternately 'Run 1 min walk 2 min.' for the remaining 25 minutes. The 5 min. warmup walk and 25 min. of run/walking gives you a 30-min. total.

Use the EASY list: If new to running, use it for your 8 weeks of Run-Walking.

Use the MODERATE list: If, say, walking 2 or more times a week at a moderate pace.

Use the CHALLENGING list: If, say, walking 3 or more times a week at a brisk pace.

Use any of the 'Paces' (from Chart B) on any given day if not feeling good, or take the day off, but try to follow this chart (since it gradually builds your endurance over 8 weeks) by working your way to the longer run segments in the Challenging column.

Always consult a medical doctor before engaging in any rigorous exercise activity.

Think you're ready for longer distances? Here's a schedule for building to run a 5km race at the end of the program.

5km RUNNING SCHEDULE

Goal: to aim for a 30-minute 5k on race day

Week		Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun		Total Distance
		Rest	Regular	Rest	Regular	Rest	Easy	Long		
1	Km	rest	3	rest	3	rest	easy run or	5	Km	11
	Mi		2		2		crosstrain	3	Mi	7
2	Km	rest	4	rest	4	rest	easy run or	5	Km	13
	Mi		2.5		2.5		crosstrain	3	Mi	8
3	Km	rest	4	rest	4	rest	easy run or	5	Km	13
	Mi		2.5		2.5		crosstrain	3	Mi	8
4	Km	rest	4	rest	4	rest	easy run or	7	Km	15
	Mi		2.5		2.5		crosstrain	4	Mi	9
5	Km	rest	4	rest	4	rest	easy run or	7	Km	15
	Mi		2.5		2.5		crosstrain	4	Mi	9
6	Km	rest	4	rest	4	rest	easy run or	8	Km	16
	Mi		2.5		2.5		crosstrain	5	Mi	10
7	Km	rest	4	rest	5	rest	easy run or	8	Km	17
	Mi		2.5		3		crosstrain	5	Mi	10.5
8	Km	rest	4	rest	5	rest	easy run or	8	Km	17
	Mi		2.5		3		crosstrain	5	Mi	10.5

Notes:

1. This is designed to gradually increase your distances run with the focus on your long run and being able to run 5k easily.
2. Schedule is flexible... move workouts to different days when you need to. Example: switch Sunday for Saturday's run.
3. Run the first 5-minutes of each run at an easy jog to warm up, or 10 if you hear joints creaking.
4. As you do any workout, jot down on the chart above either the actual time you were out, or distance if you know it.
Keeping track of workouts done gives you a record of just how far you've come and becomes a motivator in itself.
5. Always consult a medical doctor before engaging in any rigorous exercise activity.

PACING

- 1) **Regular Runs:** this is a pace during which you can run comfortably and chat (even to yourself!);

These could include Run/Walking segments - not a problem - it's a good way to build endurance.

- 2) **EASY** runs are just that. No speed like you're used to, and a pace as slow as or slower than your long run.

If not up to the pace stated on a given day, make it an EASY run day. If doing an extra run in the week this is the kind of run you'd do. You also go easy to recover, or the day before or after a long run so as not to fatigue your legs.

3) The **LONG RUN** is your most important run of the week. If you have to miss a long run, swap it for another run that week. These could include Run/Walking segments - not a problem - it's a good way to build endurance.

How to know if doing correct pace: you should be able to easily talk while doing your long run. By the end it will be more difficult because of fatigue, heat and effort.

4) **CROSSTRAINING** would include cycling, swimming, in-line skating, hiking, walking, aerobics, etc. This is an optional workout but makes for a great change of 'pace'. If you want to get into it gradually, do it on alternate weeks, otherwise do it each week.

5) Note that as the schedule progresses, some of your long runs are over 5k... this is okay and in fact builds your endurance even more so that by race day 5k will be easy to do and it will be more a matter of how fast you can fly it!