

Recipe for a Fast 5K

By Dave McGovern



A while back the New York Road Runners' Club put together a cookbook filled with the favorite recipes of elite athletes. I contributed some bizarre, top-of-my-head ground-turkey burrito concoction. Writing the recipe was a tough assignment because I never measure anything in the kitchen. A little of this, a bit of that; sometimes more, sometimes less, depending upon how I feel on that particular day. But one thing is for certain: without a

bunch of ground turkey and tortillas, you're not going to get very far. (Of course you may think I'm still talking about the burritos here, but I'm one of the many coaches who firmly believe you'll never be a good 5K racewalker without lots of ground turkey and tortillas, but that's another story for another article.)

As goes for ground-turkey burrito recipes, so too for racewalk training. For a training plan to be successful, all the important ingredients need to be there. Sometimes you need more endurance, sometimes more speed; sometimes more economy workouts, sometimes more tempo workouts or rest. Leave out or substitute one minor ingredient and you'll still have a pretty good burrito. Just as there's no perfect turkey burrito recipe, there's no one perfect recipe for a fast 5K (or 10K or half marathon...). But the major elements need to be in place: be it turkey and tortillas, or tempos and track intervals.

The following is my recipe for a fast 5K. The key to success in the kitchen and on the track is the same: be creative. Find what mix works best for you. Adjust the workouts and rest, throw in a dash of technique work, stretching and strengthening, and with any luck you'll be cooking on the track or roads in no time.

Ingredients:

- 1 long easy day of 6 to 12 miles
- 1-2 interval days of 100-meter to 1-kilometer repeats at 5K race pace or faster with 1:00 to 2:00-minute recoveries between each
- 1 tempo day of 2 to 4 miles at a pace 30 seconds or so slower than 5k race pace
- 2-5 (or more?) recovery workouts. These could be easy 2- to 6-mile racewalking workouts or easy cross training.

A dash of technique work/drills

Stretching/strengthening, rest, good food and drink to taste

Directions:

In a seven-day week combine one long, slow day with one short-interval day and one tempo day. Mix liberally with recovery days/workouts. Beginners may take two to four days off per week, intermediates will take off one to two days per week, and

more advanced walkers will take zero or one day off per week and may do double workouts (i.e., walk twice per day) several days per week. Work load for all walkers should be cut back by one-third to one-half of usual weekly mileage in the week leading up to a 5K race. Intensity should remain the same, but at a reduced volume (do fewer intervals and less total weekly mileage, but at the same paces as always.)

Just as no two burritos are alike, no two walkers will follow the same schedule. Beginner, intermediate and advanced schedules may look like the following:

Typical beginner's 5K training schedule:

Monday	Off
Tuesday	Easy 3 miles
Wednesday	8 x 400 meters fast with 2:00-minute easy walking recoveries
Thursday	Off
Friday	3 miles "not so easy" (tempo) workout
Saturday	Off
Sunday	Easy 6 miles

Typical intermediate 5K training schedule:

Monday	Off
Tuesday	6 x 800 meters or 5 x 1 kilometer at up to 10 seconds faster than 5K race pace with 2:00-minute easy walking recoveries
Wednesday	Easy 4 miles
Thursday	3 miles "not so easy" (tempo) workout
Friday	Easy 4 miles
Saturday	8 x 400 meters from 5K pace down to 6-8 seconds per 400 m faster than 5K pace
Sunday	Easy 8-10 miles

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Coach's Corner

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Typical advanced 5K training schedule:

Monday Morning: Easy 3-5 miles racewalk or cross-train
Afternoon: Easy 3-5 miles

Tuesday Morning: Easy 3-5 miles
Afternoon: 6 x 800 meters or 5 x 1 kilometer at up to 10 seconds faster than 5K race pace with 2:00-minute easy walking recoveries

Wednesday Morning: Easy 3-5 miles racewalk or cross-train
Afternoon: Easy 3-5 miles

Thursday Morning: Easy 3-5 miles
Afternoon: 5 miles "not so easy" (tempo) workout

Friday Morning: Easy 3-5 miles racewalk or cross-train
Afternoon: Easy 3-5 miles

Saturday Morning: 8 x 400 meters from 5k pace down to 6-8 seconds per 400m faster than 5K pace.
Afternoon: Easy 3 miles

Sunday Morning: Easy 10-12 miles with the last 3 miles faster, approaching tempo pace
Afternoon: Off

OK, so that's the whole enchilada. Put on your shoes and get cookin'! Hasta invierno!♦

Dave McGovern is a member of the U.S. National Racewalking Team and the author of **The Complete Guide to Racewalking** and **The Complete Guide to Marathon Walking**. Visit his web site at www.racewalking.org.