

Real Insurance Sydney Harbour 10k

2021 BEGINNERS TRAINING PROGRAM



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Beginners Program Overview

This 10-week training program is suitable for those who have never completed a 10k race before but can currently walk/jog at least 2km. The target finish time for this beginners' program is 60+ minutes. It has been designed by dual Olympian and previous Australian 10k record holder (27:24.95), Ben St Lawrence, who is also a co-founder and coach of [RunCrew](#), one of Australia's top running and coaching groups.

This program will help participants:

- ✔ Improve cardiovascular fitness and stamina
- ✔ Get into a good running routine
- ✔ Train for a maximum of 3 days a week for 10 weeks

Before you start

Have a health check

If you have any health concerns, it might be a good idea to check with your GP or physiotherapist to ensure you're able to begin this training program. Listen to your body, and if you're unwell or have any acute pain, give yourself a day off. It's better to be cautious than to obtain an injury.

Personalise and persist

Each program is provided as a guide only. If you can't yet run the recommended duration, feel free to take extra walk breaks. As your fitness improves, aim to walk less often. If you do take extra walk breaks throughout this program, it may mean you will complete the Real Insurance Sydney Harbour 10k with some walk breaks, which is absolutely fine, particularly for your first race. The most important aspect of training is consistency, so do your best to get through the suggested training for the full 10 weeks and you will be rewarded!

Progressive adaptation

This program increases in difficulty to allow for improvements in your fitness and running ability. The training days are interspersed with plenty of rest days to allow your body to adapt and recover. Your final week of training will be quite easy so you'll be fresh and ready to race on the big day. This reduction in exercise before a race is called tapering.

Stay connected

Make sure you follow the official [Real Insurance Sydney Harbour 10k & 5k Facebook](#) for helpful tips and videos to help keep you motivated and inspired.

Rest and recover

On rest days, don't feel you need to spend the day on the couch. Active recovery days are fine – go for a walk or do some low impact exercise such as swimming or cycling if you feel up to it.

Seek support

If you need more encouragement or support and think you would benefit from training in a group environment, consider joining a group such as [RunCrew](#). All sessions are led by expert coaches and cater to runners of all abilities. RunCrew offer personalised online programming if you're not Sydney based.

FREE TRAINING

All Real Insurance Sydney Harbour 10k entrants will receive their first RunCrew training session free. To register, contact info@runcrew.com.au



Beginners Types of Training

Below is an explanation of the different types of training you'll be doing over the next 10 weeks.

Warm-up

Before all of your training sessions, and particularly your interval sessions, you should complete at least a 5–10 minute walk (or slow jog as your fitness improves), as well as some dynamic warm-up exercises such as: side-to-side leg swings, forward leg swings, leg-lifts, and 3–4 x 15 second run-throughs progressing up to the pace at which you plan to complete your session.

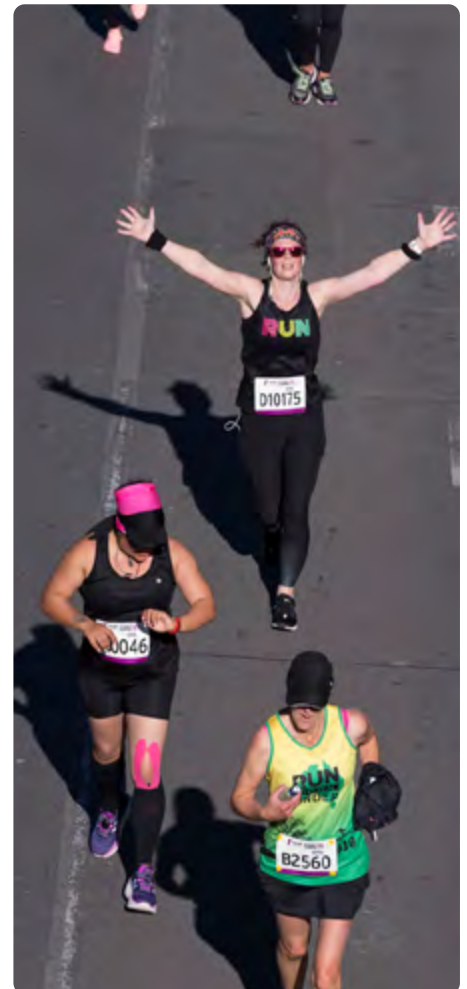
Run/Walk

Having a walk break and progressively increasing the total duration of this session will allow for more improvement than simply running until you're out of breath and then stopping. Try to find a good rhythm with your breathing, breathe deep into your tummy and count the steps per 'breath in' and steps per 'breath out'. This will help you to stay relaxed as your breathing starts to labor.

You may aim for 2 steps for a breath in and 2 for a breath out, or 3/3 etc. Slow the running down as much as you need to, to try to get through the full 'run' section, this is better than starting out very fast and then walking more.

Long Run (General Aerobic)

Each weekend you will increase your 'Long Run' by 1km, all the way up to 9km. This doesn't need to be fast, just aim to get through the distance. Don't worry that you won't have completed the full 10km until race day, as you'll always find that little bit extra with the energy of the crowd and the benefit of a 'Taper' to give your legs some more bounce and freshness.



Beginners

Types of Training

Interval Sessions

This will be your fastest running session each week and some discomfort is to be expected; however, you will also get regular rest periods. This faster running will complement your other sessions well. Aim to run the intervals at an even pace, with the final repetition at a similar pace to your first – rather than going too fast early on and slowing significantly. As the program progresses, you will complete more intervals and the recovery will reduce allowing for improvements in fitness and running ability.



TIP: LISTEN TO YOUR BODY, AND IF YOU'RE UNWELL OR HAVE ANY ACUTE PAIN, GIVE YOURSELF A DAY OFF. IT'S BETTER TO BE CAUTIOUS THAN TO OBTAIN AN INJURY.



Beginners Abbreviations & Scales

Rate of Perceived Exertion (RPE)

The RPE scale will help you get the most from your training sessions by helping you measure the intensity of your exercise.

The RPE scale runs from 0–10, depending on the level of difficulty and exertion. For example, 0 (nothing at all) would be how you feel when sitting in a chair; 10 (very, very heavy) is how you feel at the end of an exercise stress test or fast race.

GPS and Heart Rate (HR)

These are great tools if you choose to use them; however, don't become too fixated on pace and HR for now. Aim to get a good feel for each session based on the RPE guides provided.

RPE scale	Running activity	Talk test	% of Max Heart Rate (MHR)
0 Nothing at all			40–45%
0.5 Just noticeable	Comfortable very easy run/jog and walking	Very easy, you can easily carry a conversation.	46–50%
1 Very light			
2 Light	General aerobic/recovery run	Very easy, you can converse with almost no effort. Moderately easy, you can converse with a little more effort.	51–55%
3 Moderate			
4 Somewhat heavy			
5 Heavy	Long/medium-long run	Starting to get challenging, conversation requires effort.	61–67%
6	Tempo run	Difficult, conversation requires a lot of effort. Very difficult, conversation requires maximum effort.	68–75%
7 Very heavy			
8			
9	Race pace	Full out effort, no conversation possible.	86–92%
10 Very, very heavy	Race pace/race pace to win		



17 May

10 Weeks to Go

Week N°	Day	Session	Distance (km)	Pace	RunCrew Comments
1	Monday	Rest			Active recovery/rest day.
	Tuesday	Run/Walk/Run	3k approx. in total	Moderate	Run 5 min at an RPE of 5–6, walk 5 min at an RPE of 3–4, run 5 min at an RPE of 5–6.
	Wednesday	Cross Train			Do another training session that is not running-related. Pilates, yoga, swimming, core-strength are all good options.
	Thursday	Intervals	3k approx. in total	This will be your fastest pace of the week.	Warm-up then run 30 sec at an RPE of 7, followed by a jog or walk for 1 min at an RPE of 4. Repeat for a total of 5 x 30 sec runs with 1 min walk or jog recovery. Run your first interval at a pace you feel you could run for all of them.
	Friday	Rest			Active recovery/rest day.
	Saturday	Long Run	2k approx. in total	Comfortable	2k continuous running at an RPE of 5.
	Sunday	Rest			You can choose to do your long run (see above) either on Saturday or Sunday.



24 May

9 Weeks to Go

Week N°	Day	Session	Distance (km)	Pace	RunCrew Comments
2	Monday	Rest			Active recovery/rest day.
	Tuesday	Run/Walk/Run	3k approx. in total	Moderate	Run 6 min. at an RPE of 5–6, walk 5 min at an RPE of 3–4, run 6 min at an RPE of 5–6.
	Wednesday	Cross Train			Pilates, yoga, swimming, core-strength are all good options.
	Thursday	Intervals	3k approx. in total	Challenging	Warm-up then run 1 min at an RPE of 7, followed by a jog or walk for 1 min at an RPE of 4. Repeat for a total of 5 x 1 min. runs with 1 min walk or jog recovery. Run your first interval at a pace you feel you could run for all of them.
	Friday	Rest			Active recovery/rest day.
	Saturday	Continuous Run	3k approx. in total	Comfortable	3k continuous running at an RPE of 5.
	Sunday	Rest			Active recovery/rest day.



31 May

8 Weeks to Go

Week N°	Day	Session	Distance (km)	Pace	RunCrew Comments
3	Monday	Rest			Active recovery/rest day.
	Tuesday	Run/Walk/Run	4k approx. in total	Moderate	Run 7 min. at an RPE of 5–6, walk 5 min at an RPE of 3–4, run 7 min at an RPE of 5–6.
	Wednesday	Cross Train			Pilates, yoga, swimming, core-strength are all good options.
	Thursday	Intervals	4k approx. in total	Challenging	Warm-up then run 30 sec at an RPE of 7, followed by a jog or walk for 1 min at an RPE of 4. Repeat for a total of 6 x 30 sec runs with 1 min walk or jog recovery. Run your first interval at a pace you feel you could run for all of them. Aim for a slightly faster pace than in week 2.
	Friday	Rest			Active recovery/rest day.
	Saturday	Continuous Run	4k approx. in total	Comfortable	4k continuous running at an RPE of 5.
	Sunday	Rest			Active recovery/rest day.



7 June

7 Weeks to Go

Week N°	Day	Session	Distance (km)	Pace	RunCrew Comments
4	Monday	Rest			Active recovery/rest day.
	Tuesday	Run/Walk/Run	4.5k approx. in total	Moderate	Run 10 min at an RPE of 5–6, walk 5 min at an RPE of 3–4, run 10 min at an RPE of 5–6.
	Wednesday	Cross Train			Pilates, yoga, swimming, core-strength are all good options.
	Thursday	Intervals	5k approx. in total	Challenging	Warm-up then run 1 min. at an RPE of 7, followed by a jog or walk for 1 min at an RPE of 4. Repeat for a total of 6 x 1 min. runs with 1 min. walk or jog recovery. Run your first interval at a pace you feel you could run for all of them. Aim for a slightly faster pace than in week 3.
	Friday	Rest			Active recovery/rest day.
	Saturday	Continuous Run	5k approx. in total	Comfortable	5k continuous running. RPE of 5.
	Sunday	Rest			Active recovery/rest day.



14 June

6 Weeks to Go

Week N°	Day	Session	Distance (km)	Pace	RunCrew Comments
5	Monday	Rest			Active recovery/rest day.
	Tuesday	Run/Walk/Run	5k approx. in total	Moderate	Run 10 min. at an RPE of 5–6, walk 10 min. at an RPE of 3–4, run 10 min. at an RPE of 5–6.
	Wednesday	Cross Train			Pilates, yoga, swimming, core-strength are all good options.
	Thursday	Intervals	4k approx. in total	Challenging	Warm-up then run 30 sec at an RPE of 7, followed by a jog or walk for 1 min. at an RPE of 4. Repeat for a total of 7 x 30 sec runs with 1 min. walk or jog recovery. Run your first interval at a pace you feel you could run for all of them. Aim for a slightly faster pace than in week 4.
	Friday	Rest			Active recovery/rest day.
	Saturday	Continuous Run	6k approx. in total	Comfortable	6k continuous running at an RPE of 5.
	Sunday	Rest			Active recovery/rest day.



21 June

5 Weeks to Go

Week N°	Day	Session	Distance (km)	Pace	RunCrew Comments
6	Monday	Rest			Active recovery/rest day.
	Tuesday	Run/Walk/Run	5k approx. in total	Moderate	Run 15 min. at an RPE of 5–6, walk 10 min at an RPE of 3–4, run 15 min at an RPE of 5–6.
	Wednesday	Cross Train			Pilates, yoga, swimming, core-strength are all good options.
	Thursday	Intervals	4k approx. in total	Challenging	Warm-up then run 1 min at an RPE of 7, followed by a jog or walk for 1 min at an RPE of 4. Repeat for a total of 7 x 1 min. runs with 1 min walk or jog recovery. Run your first interval at a pace you feel you could run for all of them. Aim for a slightly faster pace than in week 5.
	Friday	Rest			Active recovery/rest day.
	Saturday	Continuous Run	7k approx. in total	Comfortable	7k continuous running of an RPE of 5.
	Sunday	Rest			Active recovery/rest day.



28 June

4 Weeks to Go

Week N°	Day	Session	Distance (km)	Pace	RunCrew Comments
7	Monday	Rest			Active recovery/rest day.
	Tuesday	Run/Walk/Run	5k approx. in total	Moderate	Run 15 min. at an RPE of 5–6, walk 10 min at an RPE of 3–4, run 15 min at an RPE of 5–6.
	Wednesday	Cross Train			Pilates, yoga, swimming, core-strength are all good options.
	Thursday	Intervals	4k approx. in total	Challenging	Warm-up then run 30 sec at an RPE of 7, followed by a jog or walk for 30 sec at an RPE of 4. Repeat for a total of 8 x 30 sec runs with 30 sec. walk or jog recovery. Run your first interval at a pace you feel you could run for all of them. This week you have halved your recovery.
	Friday	Rest			Active recovery/rest day.
	Saturday	Continuous Run	8k approx. in total	Comfortable	8k continuous running at an RPE of 5.
	Sunday	Rest			Active recovery/rest day.



5 July

3 Weeks to Go

Week N°	Day	Session	Distance (km)	Pace	RunCrew Comments
8	Monday	Rest			Active recovery/rest day.
	Tuesday	Run/Walk/Run	5k approx. in total	Moderate	Run 20 min at an RPE of 5–6, walk 10 min at an RPE of 3–4, run 10 min at an RPE of 5–6.
	Wednesday	Cross Train			Pilates, yoga, swimming, core-strength are all good options.
	Thursday	Intervals	5k approx. in total	Challenging	Warm-up then run 1 min. at an RPE of 7, followed by a jog or walk for 1 min at an RPE of 4. Repeat for a total of 8 x 1 min. runs with 1 min walk or jog recovery. Run your first interval at a pace you feel you could run for all of them. Aim for a slightly faster pace than in week 7.
	Friday	Rest			Active recovery/rest day.
	Saturday	Continuous Run	9k approx. in total	Comfortable	9k continuous running at an RPE of 5.
	Sunday	Rest			Active recovery/rest day.



12 July

2 Weeks to Go

Week N°	Day	Session	Distance (km)	Pace	RunCrew Comments
9	Monday	Rest			Active recovery/rest day.
	Tuesday	Run/Walk/Run	7k approx. in total	Moderate	Run 20 min at an RPE of 5–6, walk 10 min at an RPE of 3–4, run 10 min at an RPE of 5–6.
	Wednesday	Cross Train			Pilates, yoga, swimming, core-strength are all good options.
	Thursday	Intervals	6k approx. in total	Challenging	Warm-up then run 30 sec at an RPE of 7, followed by a jog or walk for 30 sec. at an RPE of 4. Repeat for a total of 8 x 30 sec runs with 30 sec walk or jog recovery. Run your first interval at a pace you feel you could run for all of them. Aim for a slightly faster pace than in week 8.
	Friday	Rest			Active recovery/rest day.
	Saturday	Continuous Run	6k approx. in total	Comfortable	6k continuous running at an RPE of 5.
	Sunday	Rest			Active recovery/rest day.



19 July

1 Week to Go

Week N°	Day	Session	Distance (km)	Pace	RunCrew Comments
10	Monday	Rest			Active recovery/rest day.
	Tuesday	Run/Walk/Run	5k approx. in total	Moderate	Run 10 min at an RPE of 5–6, walk 5 min at an RPE of 3–4, run 5 min at an RPE of 5–6. This week will be easier to allow you to be fresh for race day
	Wednesday	Cross Train			Pilates, yoga, swimming, core-strength are all good options.
	Thursday	Intervals	4k approx. in total	Challenging	Warm-up then run 30 sec at an RPE of 7, followed by a jog or walk for 30 sec at an RPE of 4. Repeat for a total of 5 x 30 sec runs with 30 sec walk or jog recovery. Run your first interval at a pace you feel you could run for all of them.
	Friday	Rest			Active recovery/rest day.
	Saturday	Rest			Active recovery/rest day.
	Sunday	Race Day	10k	Target race pace	Race Day. You're ready! Make sure you warm-up and set out at a pace that you're confident you can maintain. Be proud of yourself and enjoy the recovery!

Sydney, let's start running!

To learn more about the Real Insurance Sydney Harbour 10k and 5k visit the website: sydneyharbour10k.com.au

Be social! Keep up to date, check the 2019 archives and join the fun.

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