



For More Information Contact:

Stephanie Weiss
Life Fitness
847-288-5808 or stephanie.weiss@lifefitness.com

Weekly Fit Tip

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RUNNING WILD
From Couch to 5k

If the New Year is increasing your desire for a 'runner's high,' training for a 5k, 10k or even half marathon might be right for you. Having a race-day goal can help you stay motivated and improve fitness and stamina. But without proper training, you may just find yourself running out of steam.

Too often exercisers push their training limits and wind up feeling miserable as their bodies rebel. Starting slowly by walking, jogging, then running gradually takes you from couch potato to finish line and reduces your risk of injury.

But before you hit the ground running, consider these tips from the experts at [Life Fitness](#):

Walking: Start your fitness quest by walking for five minutes to warm up. A good [walking speed](#) starts around 2 mph. Aim to walk for 20 minutes three times a week for three weeks before progressing to the next level. If you feel like you need an extra challenge, add incline to the treadmill or choose a hill or cross-training program from your program options.

Jogging: Start transitioning to jogging (or 4 mph) slowly by adding 60-90 seconds of jogging to your walking workout. Increase your time with 30-second intervals as you get more comfortable. Continue to add distance and time, and [remember to stretch](#) before and after your jog to get the maximum benefit.

Running: As you gain confidence in your jogging, slowly add speed and distance until you can comfortably run at a 6 mph pace for 3 miles. If you're training for a race, whatever the distance, ensure that you build up to enough miles to cover the distance. Try midweek runs at a slower speed while longer weekend runs can be done at a faster, race pace.

Before starting any exercise program, seek medical advice from a doctor and training advice from a personal trainer to ensure success.

Fit Tips are provided by Life Fitness, the leader in designing and manufacturing high-quality exercise equipment for fitness facilities and homes worldwide. For more information on FitTips and other fitness advice and expertise visit www.lifefitness.com or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/lifefitness or join our facebook fan page at www.facebook.com/lifefitness.