



## Frederick Steeplechasers 5k Training Program for Women Information

### ***Training Program Purpose:***

To help women improve health and well-being through running; to help new runners gain confidence in running and complete a 5k race; and to help intermediate runners safely integrate new training techniques into their training to improve their 5k race times.

### ***Goal Race: Frederick Women's Distance Festival 5k***

### ***Description:***

This program is ideal for:

- Walkers who would like to begin adding short run segments to improve fitness and run-walk a 5k race.
- Casual runners who would like to be able to consistently run an entire 5k race.
- Intermediate runners comfortable with racing the 5k distance who would like to improve their race time.
- Any women who would like to run with other women to make friends and get motivated to move.

Each participant is given a training plan including recommendations for mileage, cross-training, and days off. While some runs will need to be done on your own, volunteer coaches lead group runs twice a week. Group runs are encouraged, but not mandatory. A private Facebook page provides a place to coordinate additional runs with other participants, and to get support and advice from more experienced participants and your volunteer coaches. We try our best to answer your questions, or at least connect you with someone who can.

### ***Cost***

\$0 for current Steeplechasers members.

### ***Prerequisites:***

To help protect against injury, we *strongly* recommend you are:

- Comfortable walking 30 minutes at any pace.
- Have the blessing of your physician if you have some sort of medical issue that may affect your participation (heart issues, orthopedic concerns, etc.)

### ***Training Plan:***

Each participant will be provided with a training plan, including recommended mileage, group runs, and possibly additional workouts including runs, cross training, and strength training.

### ***Weekly Coached Group Runs:***

**Group runs begin promptly.** Arrive early to have time to park, pee, whatever. Each run begins with a warm-up and dynamic stretching. Each run ends with static stretches and occasional form drills.

### ***Pace Groups:***

Runners will be placed with runners of similar pace into pace groups, which are led by volunteer pace leaders. These groups are intended to be fluid. If, on any given run, you wish to run slower, or faster, please join the pace group that meets your needs. As each pace group finishes, they will do their own static stretches and form drills, then depart when ready, rather than waiting for all groups to return.

### ***Education:***

Coaches and occasional guest speakers will share information on a variety of running and fitness related topics such as running form, proper stretching techniques, strengthening exercises, nutrition, injury prevention, etc.

### ***Gear:***

- Comfortable running shoes that fit well and are in good shape
- Water bottle
- Bright clothing or bright running vest for road runs. The brighter your clothes, the easier you can be seen by traffic.
- Weather appropriate clothing. Breathable, wicking, synthetic fabrics are best.
- Summer: Hat/visor/sunglasses, sunscreen, extra water
- (Optional) Running watch/GPS or smartphone app (e.g. mapmyrun, runkeeper)

### ***Safety:***

- Prior to a run, tell someone else where you are running and when you expect to return.
- Be aware of your surroundings – traffic, potholes, strangers.
- Wear bright clothing to make you more visible to drivers.
- For runs in the dark or near dusk/dawn, use a combination of reflective gear, a headlamp, and/or pod lights to see and be seen.
- Carry identification – ROAD iD or license, preferably with emergency contact information.
- Carry a cell phone in case you get lost or need help.
- If you must run on the road: RUN ON THE LEFT, AGAINST TRAFFIC. If a car approaches, drop to single file and warn runners with you loudly (“car up” if the car is approaching from in front of you, “car back” if the car is approaching from behind.) If a car does not seem to be moving over, STEP OFF THE ROAD. Remember, if the sun is to your back, the

approaching driver has the sun in their eyes, which significantly reduces their ability to see you.

- At intersections, ASSUME THE DRIVER DOES NOT SEE YOU. Even if they seem to make eye contact with you. Be particularly cautious with drivers making right-hand turns as they are generally looking left for traffic and may not see you.
- Do not assume that just because a runner in front of you crosses a street that it is safe for you to cross too.
- Headphones: We strongly recommend that you do not wear headphones during group runs. Hearing is an important sense when running near cars and other people. If you must run with music, try using only one earbud, or bone conduction headphones that do not go into the ear.

### ***Emergencies:***

Please put your coaches' cell numbers in your phone in case you get lost, or just need to let us know that you are having a longer than normal run. In case of emergency, call loudly for help from runners nearby and/or your pace group leader. Call 911 if necessary. (At least one pace leader per group should have a cell phone.) As soon as possible after calling 911, contact your coach by phone.

### ***Weather:***

We run in foul weather, but not dangerous weather. We will cancel for severe thunderstorms and severe winter weather. Cancellations will be posted on Facebook. Otherwise, as long as roads/sidewalks are safe, we run in rain, heat, and cold. Summer thunderstorms present the additional challenge of being very unpredictable. If we are out on a run and hear thunder, we will take the quickest route back to our cars. If we can't get back to our cars safely, we will seek shelter. Frederick has a number of runner-friendly businesses designated by a sticker in their window.

### ***Hydration and Nutrition:***

Proper hydration and nutrition are very important, not only to your performance but to your safety. As we build mileage you will need to learn to read your body's cues. There are as many hydration and nutrition strategies as there are runners. Use your fellow runners and coaches as a resource for ideas for methods to try on your runs. As a general rule, though:

- Keep it simple. The best pre-run fuel is easily-digestible, simpler carbs. Heavy proteins and high fiber foods are difficult to digest while running.
- Particularly for evening runs, try to eat a small snack about 2 hours before the run.
- For morning runs, few runners want to get up 2 hours early to eat. But try to have at least a few calories before you run. A few mandarin orange wedges, a few bites of oatmeal, or even some juice can help keep you from bonking towards the end of your workout.
- The hotter it is, the more you sweat, and the more hydration you need. This hydration should include some sort of electrolyte intake – electrolyte drink, salt tabs, even pretzels or other salty foods.

- The colder it is, the less you will feel like you need to drink. Drink anyway.
- Eat and hydrate well in the days leading up to your runs. For runs in heat, consume a little extra salt the day before the run to help you retain fluid.

### ***Pace:***

Learning to properly pace your runs is a key element of 5k success.

- 80 to 100% of your mileage will be done at a *conversational pace*, the pace in which you can easily talk. This includes the Saturday long run. Running greater than 20% of your mileage faster than conversational pace is strongly discouraged, as it leads to increased rate of injury, and fails to develop the cellular changes that are needed to run longer and faster. Trust us, run slow to run fast. For some this will mean you need to walk hills at first to be able to stay in the conversational zone. This is OK!
- 20% or less of your mileage will be done at a pace that is comfortably hard, but at which you can still speak a few words at a time. This harder pace develops mental toughness and metabolic fitness.

### ***Leaving a Run Early:***

If you need to leave a run early for any reason, please notify a pace group leader or your coach. This saves us from trying to find you or waiting unnecessarily for you to finish a run.

### ***Communications:***

Prior to each group run, you will receive an email with a link to our running route. The route will also be posted on the **Frederick Women's 5k Training Program** Facebook group. We ask that pace groups also communicate with each other on a regular basis to keep each other motivated and to sometimes run together on days that aren't official group runs. You are encouraged to post questions and comments on the Facebook page. Chances are high another runner has the same question, and someone else knows the answer.

### ***Tips for Success:***

Training for a 5k is not always easy. You will have great days and not so great days. You may even have days where you feel like quitting. Don't. We promise you, the feeling you get when you cross that finish line is well worth the effort. For the best chance of success:

- **Bring a positive attitude.** The more you tell yourself, "I can do this," the more likely you are to succeed. You may not fully believe you can, but tell yourself you can anyway.
- **Bring a goal.** Have a goal for the program, and every workout. Goals help keep you on track.
- **Be consistent.** Consistently getting out there and running, even if it is just a short, casual run around the block, is the number one factor leading to success.
- **Don't fear stepping out of your comfort zone.** Successful runners get comfortable with being uncomfortable. The more you do it, the less frightening it becomes.
- **Ask for help.** Whether you feel overwhelmed, or just need advice on fueling, hydration, or gear, just ask. The Steeplechasers are an eclectic bunch, from brand new runners, to runners with lots of experience, to professionals with doctoral degrees in relevant fields.

Somewhere in there, someone can answer your question. We will help you find that someone.

- **Support the runners around you.** Even just a “good job” or doubling back to run in with another runner can go a long way. That person you support today may well be the person tomorrow that tells you “good job” when you need to hear it most.
- **Remember we are each in a different place in our fitness journey.** Be inspired by other runners, but don’t compare yourself to them. Regardless of when or why you start, how fast you are, or how far you can go, **WE ARE ALL RUNNERS.**

**FREDERICK STEEPLECHASERS RUNNING CLUB MISSION:**

*To promote running for fitness, friendship, and athletic development, in support of our members and the Frederick community.*