

## Race Strategy for Your First 5K

### Consider your goal:

- Your goal for your the first race event is to do the distance – comfortably! Consider it a benchmark time from which you can watch yourself improve with consistent, progressive training.
- Find your “comfortable push” pace. This would be the pace you can sustain for the entire distance. This is hard to discover as a beginning racer.
- There is nothing wrong with being “competitive”! But a smart competitor controls her competitive urges and paces evenly in a race. Other less-smart participants will “come back to you” as they slow down (due to going too fast or being “too competitive” for your body’s training level). It’s a tough lesson to learn!
- Pay attention to your body! If you feel your breathing increasing uncomfortably, you need to drop your pace back to be comfortable.

### Pacing properly:

- Run your first mile very *comfortably*! This is hard to do! You probably are excited/nervous and adrenaline is flowing. This frequently results in a faster pace than you are used to.
- Use the mile marks to help you monitor your pace. Most races have a sign at each mile. If you have a chromo watch or app (like a stopwatch function), you can check your pace as you go. Ideally, each mile should be run at about the same pace.
- Try to walk/run “*negative splits*”! This means that you would walk or run each mile a little faster than the previous mile. Example: An example would be to go 13-minutes at Mile 1; 12:45 at Mile 2; 12:30 at Mile 3. That would be a 12:45 pace and an example of very smart running!
- You can still do your First Strides NMB weekly workout: Mentors will still blow their whistles after 1 minute (for Easy/Recovery) and 7 minutes for (Comfortable Push/Pickup). Or set your own timer.
- Don’t let your competitive urge get the best of you! If you start out too fast for the pace you have been training at, you will probably find your pace will slow as the race continues. This is not as good a feeling as finishing strong!

### Competition:

- Being “competitive” is not a dirty word! It’s good to let that emotion push you to become better and better at anything. But, respect the physiology of how your body works. If you push harder than you’re trained to do, your body builds up Lactic Acid which slows your performance.
- Pushing yourself through controlled intervals is how you train your body to go faster or farther. Remember the **Training Principle: Stress + Rest = Improvement!**
- You will build on this base, if you continue to walk/run consistently and progressively. You have years of “improvement” ahead of you ... and THAT’S FUN!!!

### Finish Line:

- Never kick until you can see the Finish Line! 50 yards can be a long way for a “kick”. Be sure you judge the distance!
- Keep moving after your finish. Do not stop abruptly! Cool down for several minutes before standing still.

You are trained for this. Good luck! Have fun with it!