



Runner's High Challenge



CHALLENGE DESCRIPTION:

Welcome to the "Runner's High Challenge"! This challenge aims to bring the joys and natural euphoria of running into your life, also known as the "runner's high." Running has major potential to enhance both your physical and mental well-being. Over the next four weeks, you'll take part in a running challenge that will take you from the comfort of your couch to the finish line of your first 5km.

The "**runner's high**" is a state of euphoria often experienced during or after a run. It's attributed to the release of endorphins, the body's natural mood elevators, which can lead to a feeling of happiness, a reduction in stress, and even a diminished perception of pain.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF RUNNING?

Running is a powerhouse of benefits for both body and mind. Physically, it helps to build strong bones, strengthen muscles, and **improve cardiovascular fitness**. Mentally, it can boost your mood, sharpen your focus, and even enhance sleep quality. By incorporating running into your routine, you're setting the stage for a healthier, happier you.

THE CHALLENGE

If you're new to running, don't let that stop you from pushing yourself out of your comfort zone. The "Runner's High Challenge" is tailored to help beginner runners increase their running stamina with confidence. This challenge focuses on gradual progression, ensuring that you build your distance without the pressure of needing to complete them in a certain time.

Weekly Plan

- **Week 1: Get Moving** - Start with brisk walking, gradually introducing 1-minute jogging intervals.
- **Week 2: Build Stamina** - Increase your jogging intervals to 3 minutes, with walking breaks in between.
- **Week 3: Find Your Pace** - Aim for continuous 5-minute jogs, walking as needed for recovery.
- **Week 4: Final Stretch** - Challenge yourself with longer jogs and shorter walks, culminating in a 5km jog/run.

RUNNER'S HIGH

Here is an example of how you may wish to breakup your runs:

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
10x 2 min walk + 1 min jog	Rest day	45 min walk	Rest day	10x 2 min walk + 1 min jog	Rest day	7x 2 min walk + 2 min jog
Rest day	7x 2 min walk + 2 min jog	Rest day	9x 1 min walk + 2 min jog	Rest day	7x 1 min walk + 3 min jog	Rest day
4x 2 min walk + 5 min jog	Rest day	5x 2 min walk + 5 min jog	Rest day	7x 1 min walk + 5 min jog	Rest day	7x 1 min walk + 5 min jog
Rest day	5+ min jog + walk as needed	Rest day	5+ min jog + walk as needed	Rest day	Aim to run 5km – walk as needed	Rest day

Weekly Plan

For seasoned runners looking to improve their running, a more performance-focused version of the challenge includes zone 2 training to improve endurance and interval sessions to boost speed and strength. Depending on your current level of fitness, look to alternate between zone 2 runs and interval training corresponding to what your running goals are.

Zone 2 training refers to exercising at a moderate intensity where you can talk comfortably but are breathing heavier than at rest. It's typically around 60-70% of your maximum heart rate. This type of training is excellent for building aerobic endurance and improving the body's ability **to use fat as fuel**.

Interval training involves alternating periods of high-intensity exercise with low-intensity recovery periods. It's highly effective for improving cardiovascular fitness, increasing speed, and burning calories. Incorporating interval training 1-2 times a week can significantly enhance your running performance and speed.

CHALLENGE COMPLETE!

As you cross the finish line of the "Runner's High Challenge," you'll not only have achieved a significant milestone but also cultivated a habit that can lead to a lifetime of health benefits. Remember, this challenge is just the beginning of your running journey!



Congratulations on completing the **Runner's High** Challenge

The journey of wellness is ongoing, and each step, no matter how small, is a victory to be celebrated. Keep pushing forward, embracing each day as an opportunity to live your best life.

