

Couch to 5K (3.1 Miles)

By Dave Blackburn

I know a person who likes to say, “If I get the urge to exercise I go sit in the recliner until it passes!” To the contrary, I’ve seen a person train and finish the Reagan Run 5K that started an entire new active lifestyle. You can take your pick as to which method best fits your goals. The Reagan Run began in 2000 with the goal to be a family oriented, health related event to take place during the Dixon Petunia Festival. The event has met and exceeded those modest goals in the previous 17 5K’s. Walkers are also encouraged if you are ready to bypass the recliner, but aren’t ready to break into a trot.

It would be very easy to devise a training program that starts with 15 minutes of walking and slowly builds up to run/walking and eventually running 30 minutes. You could begin the process around the beginning of May, just when the weather gets nice, and have 8 weeks to get ready for that 5K. If you Google “Couch to 5K” you will find a number of programs. One of the easier programs started off as simple as the following: Monday – Rest or walk, Tuesday – 15 minute walk, Wednesday – Rest or walk, Thursday – 15 minute walk, Friday – Rest, Saturday – 1.5 mile walk and Sunday – 30 to 60 minute walk. By Week 7 that program becomes: Monday – Rest or walk, Tuesday – 30 minute walk, Wednesday – Rest or walk, Thursday – 30 minute walk, Friday – Rest, Saturday – 3 mile walk and Sunday – 60 minute walk.

Directions are as simple as not worrying about how fast you walk, or the distance you cover. Begin with about 15 minutes and add 5 minutes a week until you peak with a full hour. If you use a plan that includes running, don't worry about how fast you run; just cover the distance, or approximately the distance suggested, and you should be able to run at a pace that allows you to converse comfortably if you were talking with a fellow runner.

Who knows, the enticing goal of finishing the 3.1 mile event (there is even a wicking shirt included!), being with a group of people who also avoided the lure of that recliner and completing a program that started from humble fitness beginnings may be the combination you need. We hope to see you out on the course on July 1, 2017.