

Focused on a 5K:
Getting Ready for Race Day

So you've been training well for the past several weeks and now the 5K is just a few days away. At this point in training you should feel comfortable with covering 3.1 miles in an activity session whether you plan to walk or run. If not, don't worry. Remember you shouldn't be worried about how quickly you finish the race. The main goal is to complete it. You've already accomplished a lot through training. Be proud of yourself and face the race with confidence!

There are a few things you'll want to revisit and keep in check as the big day approaches.

- **Gear up** – Make sure that the clothing and shoes you plan to wear on race day are familiar and comfortable. This isn't the time to buy a new pair of shoes or a new fitness outfit. You might end up with an uncomfortable fit or blisters with any apparel you haven't worn during a workout at least a few times before.
- **Check the course** – This might be information you gathered before registering for the 5K, but do some research on what the race course will be like. Are there hills or rough terrain? Will there be water stations along the way? This will help prepare you for what to expect on the day of the race. You might need to adjust your pace if you know you'll need to make it up a big hill at the end. You might also consider carrying a water bottle with you if there are no water stations along the route or right after the race.
- **Drink up** – Chances are you are following proper water intake for your activity if you have been training well. The few days up to the event become increasingly important, especially if the weather is hot or humid. Be sure you get eight 8-ounce glasses of water every day. Most races occur in the morning and often there isn't enough time to drink large amounts of water before getting to the course. Getting in all your water requirements the day before will help to ensure you're hydrated. Be sure to drink the recommended 2 cups before you participate in the event.
- **Eat right** – It is time to get your eating habits in check if you've gotten a little off track through the course of your training. You'll want your body to have all the fuel it needs to do well and finish the race. There is no need to do full carbohydrate loading for an event like a 5K, but it doesn't hurt to add a few healthy carbohydrates to your diet the days leading up to the event. Maybe have oatmeal for breakfast and add in some brown rice or whole wheat pasta with lunch or dinner. Also, get in your fruits and vegetables. Aside from their nutrients, their high water content can help with hydration. Choose lean protein, healthy fats and low-fat dairy. Also, if your race is in the morning, try to get up early enough to have a balanced snack about two hours before the event starts so you aren't exercising on an empty stomach which can leave you feeling tired and sluggish.



- **Sleep well** – Prepare to get a good night's rest the evening before the event. The sleep will help you to feel refreshed and ready to face the race. Skimping on sleep can make you feel tired during the race. Sometimes, especially if this is your first race, nerves may take over. It is completely normal to feel nervous or worried about what to expect. Even veteran racers get these feelings. Just identify something that might relax you before going to sleep and plan to take part in that activity. It might be settling down with a book, or quiet meditation or stretching to soft music.
- **Warm up and cool down** – Treat the 5K event like any other physical activity session. Take time to walk around and warm your body up before the race begins. When you are finished with the race continue to walk around and let the body gradually return to a resting rate.
- **Have fun!** – Participating in race events can be a fun and exciting challenge. Take advantage of the great feeling of being part of an event where all those involved value fitness and health. Be proud of your accomplishments and enjoy yourself!

On your mark, get set, GO!!!



Sources:

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