How To Run A Faster 5k: My Top 12 Tips

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[00:00:00] Daren: Gateway drugs are defined as a drug, which supposedly leads the user onto more addictive or dangerous drugs. I believe the 5k race serves a similar role in the running world, acting as the gateway to longer, more intense challenges like the 10k, half marathon, marathon, iron distance triathlons, and ultra marathons, but how does one improve their 5k time?
[00:00:22] Daren: Are you really racing the distance at your highest potential? How much do you need to suffer? And what does it take to race a 5k? At your peak effort and intelligence, stick around, don't worry, because I'm going to answer all those questions and more by giving you my top 12, 12 tips on racing the 5k that I've learned from my experience, research, and talking with all of the experts on the 5k.
[00:00:45] Daren: This episode, content piece, the 1 percent better runner, all so that you can run and live your best one step at a time. Let's get into it. What you will learn, how to structure your training for success by mastering the 80 20 rule. Use a well organized training plan that is 80 percent easy and 20 percent hard.
[00:01:05] Daren: The benefits of strength and conditioning and nutrition tips for optimal performance. All right, let's get into the full episode and the 12 ways of how you can run. Your best 5k number one structure your training into periods and blocks while a 5k is fast. It's not a sprint It's anywhere from 75 to 90 percent aerobic

aerobic means using oxygen and fat for fuel That means lots of slow and easy running Mike tree said more about that here on the episode where he coached me to run A 1647 on a 5K that I did a few years ago,
[00:01:38] Mike Trees: I would give you a six week block of a three K session for speed, uh, and a 5K session.
[00:01:47] Mike Trees: Uh, and then a 10 K session for stamina. Uh, and I would vary, you know, and I would probably push you the limit. I might even in the six week block, depending on how you respond, because you are a good aerobic. If I can get your anaerobic engine really ticked up, I might even put a bit of 1, 500 meter work in there, uh, 3, 000 meters and 5, 000 stuff and really focus on the short end and play to your strengths.
[00:02:07] Mike Trees: You said you came from 800, so play to your 8, 1, 500 strengths to get the 5k. Whereas, you know, you, you get a marathon runner. I think, well, they've got this big aerobic engine. Let's just maximize the a hundred mile weeks that the 10 K sessions, the five K and aerobic capacity. But I, I think there's, there's two ways of 000 and you're, you're, you're borderline that you could push in a little bit more speed work and really get out and get used to running some, some K's in, you know, Three, three, 10 K's and going quicker than race pace.
[00:02:38] Mike Trees: So when you get the start line, you're getting through the first two couple of days thinking, well, this is easy. You're sitting there and you're, you're waiting for the last two K when it kicks in, but you can cope with a lack.
[00:02:50] Daren: Number two, use the 80, 20 rule. Each week run 80 percent of your runs easy and 20 percent hard.
[00:02:57] Daren: Here's Mike trees with more on that.
[00:02:59] Mike Trees (2): We need three aerobic runs. I've made it very simple. Uh, people understand a longer run to develop the aerobic system to capacity 60 to 90 minutes. You've got to get over 60 minutes, but if you're getting over 90, that's more sort of half marathon, marathon training area.
[00:03:18] Mike Trees (2): And I think you'll knock the speed away. So somewhere sitting between 60 to 90 minutes is a nice. Pace, a nice time to run for. Then, you need a short recovery run. 30 minutes, I reckon. And I've, over the years, I've found that most people can do a nice 30 minutes recovery run. Over that, you're not really recovering.
[00:03:43] Mike Trees (2): And you've got to remember what you're going out for. People get carried away, and they go, Oh, I've done 30, that feels good. I can do 45, I can do 60, 65. And they, they get carried away. Just think what the purpose is. It's a recovery run, Go out and just enjoy your 30 minutes easy running. Uh, And then one more run is a, it's what I call an easy run, an aerobic run, uh, an aerobic pace of about 45 minutes.

[00:04:08] Daren: Number three, vary your speed work. Here's Mike trees again, and he gave me so much valuable information and a specific six week training plan that helped me run a super speedy five. Okay,
[00:04:19] Mike Trees: so what you've got is you've got the threshold work for lactic where we work around the threshold, but you've got the lactic tolerance.
[00:04:27] Mike Trees: So towards the end, the last kilometer of 5k, it doesn't matter how much lactic you build up if you can cope with it. And there's some phenomenal stories of, you know, people like Sebastian Coe that could hold, I think it was 17, 18 millimoles. Of, of lactic, you know, per milliliter of, of per liter of blood in his body.
[00:04:45] Mike Trees: Whereas most people, you know, you, you struggle at four. So that's where the threshold is considered. The four millimole level is, is a technical people use. They get past four and they can't really run much. But if you can cope with its absolute tolerance, not the threshold, but the tolerance as well, that's where you can maximize it.
[00:05:02] Mike Trees: So that tolerance. Might even get you something like 15, 20 seconds in the last one kilometer if you can cope with it. That's huge over 5k. So I would say that what you're doing is essentially right. But I would give you a six week block at the end where we tweak it and work to your strengths. Uh, and it might take a couple of blocks to work out exactly what that is.
[00:05:22] Mike Trees: Is it 1500 work? Is it 3000 meter work? Uh, but I would give you something quicker and you're on the borderline at your age. I could cope with three hard sessions a week. So, uh, plus the long run. Oh yeah, you're the one when I don't come to the other session. That's an easy, that's, that's, that's separate.
[00:05:40] Daren: Number four, strength and conditioning. It has different names, strength, training, resistance, training, lifting weights, improving mobility, and doing uphill sprints all build your body to handle the demands of a faster 5k. Here's Sam. Physiotherapist and founder of 10 weeks to strength running app and what she thinks about strength training and runners.
[00:05:59] Sam 10W2S: Uh, so strength training, if you are a distance runner is one of the most important things you can do for your training to minimize injury risk. It builds the capacity of your muscles, your tendons, and your bones to tolerate all the weekly kilometers miles you're putting through it. And it can also improve performance.
[00:06:17] Sam 10W2S: So make sure you fit it in. And also strength loss is primarily due to disuse, not aging. So you have to keep it up. It's often I find actually with the, um, older runners or older people, I should say, they often stop strength training because they get one niggle in their knee and they think, okay, it's not safe for me to be doing this stuff.

[00:06:36] Sam 10W2S: I'm going to stop because my knee hurts. And that's where things deteriorate. So it is so important as a lifelong activity to continue your strength training as we get older.
[00:06:47] Daren: Number five, nutrition and diet. Try to eat the right. Foods and right amounts for your training at the right time. This is personal to everybody.
[00:06:55] Daren: So talk with a specialist if you can. Here is my dietician, Jordan Cain on that.
[00:07:02] Jordan - Dietician: When we're talking about fat loss, we don't need to cut carbs. Like it's a thing, like you can, but we need to cut calories. And I'm not saying calorie counts either. Like I'm saying, like what we need to do is get you into calorie deficit.
[00:07:14] Jordan - Dietician: And it doesn't really matter what you eat. I would say yes, in terms of whole foods, like slow carb diets, plus those whole grains and plus fruit and stuff is what I would recommend, ideally. Keep the carbs in there, drop in the calories, drop the portions, drop the portions, drop like maybe one little meal in the day or one snack or whatever it is.
[00:07:33] Jordan - Dietician: As long as you're feeling fueled and as long as you're feeling like you are never training's going well and you're not like, Sponking at the end of training within the day. That is an ideal situation for fat loss and to maintain the balance.
[00:07:47] Daren: All right. A quick break because I know 5k as soon as possible.
[00:07:52] Daren: And to make it easier for you to just go out and do that, I created a free six week improve your 5k training plan, which is based around the whole 1 percent better runner consistency framework. Think a run training plan and personal therapist mixed together, be smart and use the QR code on the screen right here.
[00:08:09] Daren: Link below in the video description or podcast show notes to get your copy of it right now. Bonus, you'll automatically sign up for our 1 percent better newsletter, which is not like other running newsletters because we don't do quick motivational hacks. Instead, every week ish, you'll get tools and tactics to transform you through small step by step daily habit improvements, all to help you train, race, and live exponentially better in your running life.
[00:08:35] Daren: Let's get back into it number six cross training running is hard on your body Look to cross train to build aerobic base without overtaxing yourself Here's Mike trees thought on all that get on the bike and cycle
[00:08:49] Mike Trees (2): go swimming The the stationary bike in the gym. You've got the cost train out of these days.
[00:08:55] Mike Trees (2): You've got the rowing machine You don't just have to swim uh, and cycle for the aerobic exercise, but you can do more aerobic exercise. The only way to run quicker is to run fast, but you can actually get the benefits of

what we call cross training by making yourself stronger, developing the aerobic system, doing other sports.
[00:09:17] Mike Trees (2): So I'm, I'm all for doing other sports that are less stressful on the body, such as swimming and cycling. Uh, to supplement the running and develop the aerobic system, but in order to run fast, you've got to do one run a week that's fast. And it sounds simple, but a lot of people avoid it. They, they think, ah, Mike says do easy training.
[00:09:36] Mike Trees (2): So they'll, they'll run a week or maybe six weeks of easy running. And then miraculously think, I'm going to go. The crisis could be this on race day. It doesn't happen.
[00:09:47] Daren: Number seven, run a monthly time trial, do a monthly one mile or three slash five K race, or even time trial to get your body firing on all cylinders.
[00:09:55] Daren: Here's Mike trees on that. Get out and do
[00:09:58] Mike Trees (2): a papa run it. 5K. You know, specificity, it's one of those words, you sounds easy. Backne day, the loss of specificity. You've gotta actually do what you do. So if you go out once a week and run a a, a solid 5K, you'll get used to the pain of a 5K and how to run a 5K.
[00:10:13] Mike Trees (2): So, uh, and it's a great distance to develop your VO two max, your aerobic capacities.
[00:10:20] Daren: Number 8, dial in your recovery. Work plus rest equals training. Prioritize sleep, rest, and recovery like you do your own training. It's all a part of it. Here's my hot take on why recovery is so important. I think the game of, you know, fitness and, and health and life is is actually more about who can recover well enough after stressing themselves completely to then come back, you know, at a hundred, 101 percent and then do it again and then do it again.
[00:10:47] Daren: Yeah. And it's, it's actually a game of, of recovery. Um, rather than being, you know, 50 percent because you demolish yourself from, you know, either working too late or smashing yourself from training or racing too much and then not being able to recover and not being able to do the workout to its fullest potential or.
[00:11:05] Daren: To its, to its extent, the workout, like put, you know, performing and actually executing the intervals you need to. If you need to do 10 intervals at three minutes, uh, if you only get to six because your legs are tired from the workout from three days ago, then you're not going to get anything out of that workout.
[00:11:19] Daren: Absolutely. So recovery is key.
[00:11:21] Sam 10W2S: Yeah.
[00:11:22] Daren: Yeah. A hundred percent. Number nine, mental reframing, running my fastest 5k time to running my best 5k. Here I am with a conversation I had with Remy B. Real, who's the sometimes co host of 1 percent Better Runner. And I just go a bit more in depth into the whole mentality around why you should shift your mindset around.

[00:11:45] Daren: Around the race and not go for that static time. All right. So I, after talking to marathon, Marcus, I ended up rephrasing my whole, I was like, yo, I'm gonna run my fastest 5k. Right. He started talking about his stuff and he was like, I'm trying to run my best marathon. What I took from that was if you just focus on whatever you have that day and you, that's your spectrum, you know, that's your bar, that's your, uh, you know, bad to good.
[00:12:11] Daren: So if it's raining, it's And it's cold and it's windy. You're not going to probably run your best time, but you could run, sorry, your fastest time, but you could run your best time that day. So life happens. As you say, you're constantly, it's a rollercoaster up and down. Why not think about it as running my best.
[00:12:25] Daren: And you know, the time might be, you know, my best time right now, 1647. So that might be my best ever. Uh, it might be 1559. It might be 1630, who knows, but I'm going to definitely make sure that I do the best I can. With what I have. So if I'm injured, I'm going to try to be my best, you know, that injury period, or if I'm tired, feeling good.
[00:12:44] Daren: And it's, it's a, it's a more open way to frame training and, and life and racing. And it gives you a bit more slack when again, it's windy and cold and raining and you decide to step up to that marathon. And you know, your kid was sick or you know, whatever happened. It's like, yo, just do your best out there.
[00:13:02] Daren: And if doing, doing half of it is your best, then you did your best. And that's obviously super subjective. It's not a, you know, I got to go on the flip side. It's not permission to, to just do half ass work, you know, like, cause that's, you know, I'd say most, you still gotta push, you still gotta push. Number 10, follow the 1 percent Better Runners Virtuous Cycle while avoiding the 1 percent Better Runners Vicious Cycle.
[00:13:25] Daren: This is a fun visual. That I put together for you to remember that if you do one thing, it's a domino effect for another. And that leads to great things slowly start anywhere, but let's start with running more. This is a visual that I have if you're watching it, obviously, but if you're listening, please check the show notes or check the actual website and you could check this out or watch the video if you're listening, because there's a lot of visuals that really can help you.
[00:13:49] Daren: You can start anywhere on this framework, but let's start with running more. You can then strength train more. You feel amazing. You get faster, you're injury free, you're a healthy runner, that continues forever. The opposite can also happen in the vicious cycle. You run less, you don't strength train, you feel like poop, you get slower, you get injured, sick, burned out, and that cycle continues.
[00:14:12] Daren: This is why consistency is key. Super generic, but it's so true. Number 11 physical do a race prediction time test. What is it? This is workout one. So there's variations. The first one do 3 by 1600 meters. Pick a pace slash effort

that you think you could run in your upcoming 5k and then walk recover 90 seconds.
[00:14:38] Daren: Workout number two. Six by one kilometer or 0. 61 miles for metrically allergic Americans. Pick a slightly faster pace slash effort that you can run for in your upcoming five K and recover with a 60 second walk. Why you should do it. The five K is kind of fast, but not too fast. Pacing is everything. Start out too fast and you blow up, start out too slow and you won't have enough time to make up for it.
[00:15:02] Daren: For your turtle pace from the beginning. So you need to learn what the right pace is. And this workout will help, you know, if your selected pace or time is too fast or too slow, huge warning, you need to have a solid base of easy running six to eight weeks out before this with some interval and tempo speed work that you've done in a few weeks leading up to this.
[00:15:20] Daren: When should you do this anywhere from nine to 12 days before your main race? I've found to be adequate and your body gets the adaptations from this workout. Now that you have these 11 tips or steps, you could easily take those and run with it right now. You can go do whatever you want, but that is where most 5k guides will end at 1 percent better runner.
[00:15:42] Daren: We do the slow growth transition all the way through. We want to see you through. Here's how you can actually implement these previous steps. 11 tip steps to transform yourself. For those that are listening, it's best to see the video or check out the show notes for the link on how to actually do this.
[00:16:01] Daren: Additional tips, incorporate 50 meter strides on easy days to maintain leg speed. Sunset your strength training in the last two to three weeks from your race to avoid fatigue from the weight room. You don't want to remove it all. So if you were lifting two days a week, you can go down to one week. If you're lifting for 45 minutes with three sets per exercise, do two sets and maybe even drop the weight down a tiny bit.
[00:16:25] Daren: Ensure proper warm up and cool down for all the workouts. Crucial. I know it doesn't feel like it, but your body will be so happy later. Listen to your body and adjust intensity as needed to avoid injury. In the last six weeks before your 5k race, focus on speed work and stamina. Do short, fast intervals on Tuesday.
[00:16:44] Daren: This is just, uh, a sample. Longer intervals on Thursday and a race paced 5k or 3k or 1 mile on Saturday. Keep long runs easy at 60 to 90 minutes on Sunday. Include strides on the easy days, even at the end of long runs. Drop strength training again to avoid fatigue just a little bit and listen to your body and stay injury free.
[00:17:06] Daren: Final thoughts. And those are our 12 tips to get your 5k times faster and possibly allow you a lifetime of chasing bigger highs and longer, more epic race adventures. What did I miss? What have you used from here? Let me

know in the comments below or email me, talk at D late creates. com or hit me on Instagram in the DMS.
[00:17:26] Daren: Thanks for rocking with us. Train smart, race easy. If you want to learn more about this topic, we went into further detail. You should go and check that out right here.