

# Return to running programme

## What is a return to running programme and why do I need it?

This allows you to gradually re-introduce running and impact. This can help give your body time to adjust to changing demands in a guided way, reducing the risk of injury when returning to, or starting, running as a sport.

## When am I ready to start a return to running programme?

You should have achieved objective measures that indicate your tissues are strong enough to progress through this programme, your Physiotherapist will guide you through this.

Generally, evidence shows that you should be able to walk for 30 minutes and get through your day-to-day demands with no symptoms, or a low level of symptoms, depending on your injury.

## What is the structure of a return to running programme?

This will depend on your running and injury history, though below is a general guide. Your Physiotherapist may give you slightly different instructions or encourage you to follow a couch to 5k programme.

Repeat two to three times per week with 24 hours rest between runs.

- Week 1: Jog 1 minute/walk 1 min for total 30 minutes
- Week 2: Jog 2 minutes/walk 1 min for total 30 minutes
- Week 3: Jog 4 minutes/walk 1 min for total 30 minutes
- Week 4: Jog 9 minutes/walk 1 min for total 30 minutes
- Week 5: Jog 15 minutes/walk 1 minute
- Week 6: Jog 30 minutes continuously
- Week 7 onwards: You're ready to develop the duration and intensity of your running. We do not recommend increasing the duration or intensity of your sessions by more than 10% per week. For example, if you successfully run for 30 minutes one week, you should run for 33 minutes the next week.

## Monitoring discomfort throughout your programme

It can be normal to experience some aches and pains when increasing your running intensity or duration.

Please see the below guide to help determine appropriate action. If you're unsure, ask your physiotherapist for help.

### Acceptable (progress training)

- General muscle soreness after a run/walk session
- Slight muscle or joint discomfort after workout or next day that resolves within 24 hours
- Slight stiffness at beginning of run/walk that dissipates after first 10 minutes

### Unacceptable (reduce training)

- Pain that lasts for >48 hours after a run/walk session
- Pain that is evident at the beginning of a run/walk then becomes worse as you continue
- Persistent swelling or signs of inflammation in a joint (e.g. knee, ankle)
- Sharp pain



## General tips to consider throughout your programme

- To allow sufficient recovery time, have a rest day between runs.
- Only increase your running time or distance by 10% each week. Don't increase both in the same week.
- You may find doing other forms of cardiovascular exercise useful while gradually increasing your running. Examples of this include swimming, cycling and rowing.
- It's important that you continue your strength and conditioning work at least two times a week to supplement your running. This can improve your running performance and reduce risk of further injury. It is recommended to not do a strengthening session and run on the same day to avoid fatigue or injury.

### When to seek help

If you feel these exercises are making your symptoms worse, take a break. You can also speak to your GP for further help. This doesn't mean it's anything too serious. It may be that you need some extra help to deal with the symptoms, and you may be referred to a physiotherapist.

 [berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/physiotherapy](https://berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/physiotherapy)