

2026 ASICS Credit Union Cherry Blossom 5K Beginner Training Program

Coach Yasmin



WEEK 1 (02/02 – 02/08)

Overview: The Credit Union Cherry Blossom is pleased to bring you this 5K Beginner Training Program, thanks to the support of ASICS, Gatorade and Potomac River Running. Are you a first-time 5K participant wanting to go from walking to running for this year's Cherry Blossom 5K? Then Coach Yasmin's 5K Beginner Training Program is the program for you! Follow this program if you've taken a break from running, have never run more than 1 or 2 consecutive miles before, or if you're active in other sports like cycling, rowing or basketball, but haven't done much running. You'll spend 10 weeks using a walk-run approach to go from short intervals to running a strong and steady 5K on race day. This method has been used successfully by thousands of past participants.

Every participant should have medical clearance before starting the training program. Non-runners should follow the program as closely as possible to get the best results. If you've run in the past, you should still follow the time guidelines, but you may want to take fewer walking breaks.

Join Our Facebook Group

Share your training experience - join our Facebook group at:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/CUCBVT5K>

Questions for the Coach?

If you have questions as you follow this plan, just email Coach Yasmin at

5kcoach@cherryblossom.org.

Monday (02/02)

Workout: Key Workout #1:

Goal: 20 minute key workout. Walk for 4 minutes and then ease into a slow jog for 1 minute. Do this 4 times.

Tip: Today is your first key workout. This plan begins with 3 key workouts a week and progresses to four. The rest of the days are either rest,

walking or cross training. It's OK to listen to your body and move your key workouts around to fit your schedule, but try to keep them evenly spaced throughout the week. And it's always better to do less than to do nothing at all.

Tuesday (02/03)

Workout: 20 minute Cross Training (optional)

Tip: Cross training is any non-running activity that gets your heart pumping. Think brisk walking, swimming or biking, e.g. Try to choose something you already normally do and enjoy. (Ex.: if you do not normally lift weights, now is not the time to start lifting heavy.)

Wednesday (02/04)

Workout: Key Workout #2:

Goal: 20 minute key workout. Walk for 4 minutes then ease into a slow jog for 1 minute. Do this 4 times.

Tip: Always begin walking to warm up your legs. The jogging portion should be at a conversational effort - that means if you couldn't talk to a friend while doing it, you're going too fast! Consider active stretches before each workout - that means leg swings, high knees, and some jogging in place to get blood flowing to cold muscles. Visit YouTube for pre-run warmup suggestions.

Thursday (02/05)

REST

Tip: Rest days are important to let your body recover. If you are used to other kinds of intense aerobic activities like HIIT classes or kickboxing, you may want to consider cutting back temporarily during this training program. Consider instead taking a Yoga class on your rest day.

Friday (02/06)

Workout: 20-25 minute brisk walk

Tip: Find a specialty running shoe store to get properly fitted for a pair of shoes. Experts at [Potomac River Running](#) can help you find a pair that's right for you. They have the latest running shoes and apparel, including ASICS, our official shoe and apparel sponsor. Do not try to

train in cross trainers or an old pair of running shoes. The wrong shoes can lead to injury.

Saturday (02/07)

Workout: Key Workout #3:

Goal: 25 minute key workout. Walk for 4 minutes, then jog/run for 1 minute. Do this 5 times. Recommend picking up the pace slightly.

Tip: If you don't already have one, consider using a sports watch and/or an app to track your training. Visit [Potomac River Running](#), our official retail partner, to find a sports watch.

Sunday (02/08)

REST

Workout: The first week is probably the hardest. Between settling into a new routine and sore muscles, you may feel like you are not improving. Be patient. Running will get easier over time. Sore muscles are good, pain is not.

WEEK 2 (02/09 – 02/15)

Overview: 1 week down! Pat yourself on the back! You might be feeling a little sore from last week's training; that's okay! As you progress, the key workouts should start to feel easier.

Monday (02/09)

Workout: Key Workout #1:

Goal: 25 minute key workout. Walk for 3 minutes then jog/run for 2 minutes. Do this 5 times.

Tip: Week 2 has you increasing your jogging/running time and decreasing the duration of walking breaks. As you jog/run, maintain a conversational pace. You'll get faster naturally over the program - don't force yourself to speed up before your body is ready!

Tuesday (02/10)

Workout: 20 minute Cross Training (optional)

Tip: Cross training is optional depending on how your body is feeling, but it has been shown to help your body adapt to running (and makes the training process more fun!)

Wednesday (02/11)

Workout: Key Workout #2:

Goal: 25 minute key workout. Walk for 3 minutes then jog/run for 2 minutes. Do this 5 times.

Tip: Wear appropriate layers of clothing if running in cold weather. Runners lose a lot of heat through their head and hands, so be sure to wear a hat and gloves. You can find the latest running clothes, including outstanding apparel from [ASICS](#), our official shoe and apparel sponsor at [Potomac River Running](#), our official retail partner.

Thursday (02/12)

REST

Tip: Be purposeful about your rest. You can use this day to do some extra light stretching and foam rolling. These things will help your running come together.

Friday (02/13)

Workout: 20-25 minute Brisk Walk

Tip: As you walk, start picking up your pace. The goal is to prepare yourself to go from a walk to a jog/run as the training progresses.

Saturday (02/14)

Workout: Key Workout #3:

Goal: 30 minute key workout. Walk for 3 minutes then jog/run for 2 minutes. Do this 6 times.

Sunday (02/15)

REST

Tip: Think about self-care and getting ready for the week ahead on your rest days. Plan your times for your workouts, take care of your shoes and feet, and reflect on what went well in your training this week.

WEEK 3 (02/16 – 02/22)

Overview: In week 3 you will continue to increase your total running time while decreasing your walking. Returning runners may want to end the walking breaks altogether.

Monday (02/16)

Workout: Key Workout #1:

Goal: 30 minute key workout. Walk for 2 minutes then jog/run for 3 minutes. Do this 6 times.

Tip: If you've gotten off track with the program or are finding the intervals difficult, don't be afraid to adjust to your current level of fitness. The most important thing is that you keep showing up!

Tuesday (02/17)

Workout: 25 minute Cross Training (optional)

Tip: Cross training increases a bit here – still optional, but you may consider adding it in if you haven't already.

Wednesday (02/18)

Workout: Key Workout #2:

Goal: 30 minute key workout. Walk for 2 minutes then jog/run for 3 minutes. Do this 6 times.

Tip: You should be able to hold a conversation as you run. If you are out of breath, consider slowing down.

Thursday (02/19)

REST

Tip: Days off are very important to let your body recover from the hard efforts. You should use the rest day to do moderate upper body weights or attend a yoga class.

Friday (02/20)

Workout: 20-25 minute Brisk Walk

Tip: Walking is a great way to prepare your body for the final key workout of the week, as well as a great stress reliever. Track your pace to make it feel more like a workout!

Saturday (02/21)

Workout: Key Workout #3:

Goal: 30-35 minute key workout. Walk for 2 minutes then jog/run for 3 minutes. Do this 6-7 times.

Tip: If you're feeling confident, you can progressively pick up the pace here!

Sunday (02/22)

REST

Tip: You may need more sleep as your body adapts to running. Pay attention to your rest and keep hydrated!

WEEK 4 (02/23 – 03/01)

OVERVIEW: In week 4 you will continue to increase your total running time while decreasing your walking. This is the magic of the walk-run approach — soon you will be running non-stop!

Monday (02/23)

Workout: Key Workout #1:

Goal: 30 minute key workout: Walk for 1 minute then jog/run for 4 minutes. Do this 6 times.

Tip: You should start getting used to only having very short walking breaks. You can skip the walking breaks if you feel you do not need them, but if you start getting out of breath, slow down.

Tuesday (02/24)

Workout: 25 minute Cross Training

Wednesday (02/25)

Workout: Key Workout #2:

Goal: 30 minute key workout: Walk for 1 minute then jog/run for 4 minutes. Do this 6 times.

Tip: You should be able to hold a conversation as you run. If you are out of breath, consider slowing down.

Thursday (02/26)

REST

Tip: If you want to stretch on your rest day, before you do, go for a brisk walk to warm up your muscles. Warm muscles stretch better than cold ones!

Friday (02/27)

Workout: 30 minute Brisk Walk

Saturday (02/28)

Workout: Key Workout #3:

Goal: 35 minute workout: Walk for 1 minute then jog/run for 4 minutes. Do this 7 times.

Tip: Staying hydrated during training is very important. Consider training with the same drink that will be served on race day by drinking [Gatorade](#), the official sports fuel provider of the Credit Union Cherry Blossom 5K.

Sunday (03/01)

REST

WEEK 5 (03/02 – 03/08)

OVERVIEW: You're halfway there! This week you'll have your first jog/run with no walking breaks. If you start to feel out of breath, slow down a little bit but try not to walk.

Monday (03/02)

Workout: Key Workout #1:

Goal: 35 minute key workout: Walk for 1 minute then jog/run for 4 minutes. Do this 7 times.

Tip: Keep focused on your goal of running confidently. Don't worry about speed, just focus on even form and remaining light on your feet. You can reduce the walking breaks if you feel like you can.

Tuesday (03/03)

Workout: 30 minute Cross Training

Wednesday (03/04)

Workout: Key Workout #2:

Goal: Jog/run for 15 minutes

Tip: Your first full run, congrats! Make sure to maintain conversational pace and check in with how you feel afterwards.

Thursday (03/05)

REST

Tip: Remember to spend some time stretching, doing light upper body weights and/or Yoga/Pilates.

Friday (03/06)

Workout: 30 minute Brisk Walk

Saturday (03/07)

Workout: Key Workout #3:

Goal: 35 minute key workout: Walk for 1 minute then jog/run for 4 minutes. Do this 7 times.

Tip: If you're able to take a shorter walk break, you can reduce the amount of time walking.

Sunday (03/08)

REST

Tip: Make sure you are making good sleep a priority. It will assist you in the recovery process.

WEEK 6 (03/09 – 03/15)

OVERVIEW: This is the last week of walk/run key workouts. As you begin to run more, remember to take your time, ease your way into it and listen to your body.

Monday (03/09)

Workout: Key Workout #1:

Goal: 33 - 36 minute key workout: Walk for 30 seconds - 1 minute then run for 5 minutes. Do this 6 times.

Tip: Try reducing the amount of time walking and begin picking up the pace to a run.

Tuesday (03/10)

Workout: 30 minute Cross Training

Wednesday (03/11)

Workout: Key Workout #2:

Goal: 15 minutes of easy running.

Tip: Transition from a jog to a run while maintaining conversational pace. Try to run continuously without stopping, but if you need a break, that's okay.

Thursday (03/12)

REST

Friday (03/13)

Workout: Key Workout #3:

Goal: 26 - 28 minute key workout: Walk for 30 seconds - 1 minute then run for 6 minutes. Do this 4 times.

Saturday (03/14)

Workout: Key Workout #4:

Goal: 20 minutes of easy running.

Tip: Another milestone run! Try to run continuously without stopping. Slow down if needed, but aim to keep moving with confidence and trust in your body.

Sunday (03/15)

REST

Tip: Make sure you make sleep a priority. It will assist you in the recovery process.

WEEK 7 (03/16 – 03/22)

OVERVIEW: This is your first week of non-stop running — congrats runner! Keep your runs easy by staying at conversational pace. If you start to feel out of breath, slow down a little bit but try not to walk.

Monday (03/16)

Workout: Key Workout #1:

Goal: 15 minutes of easy running.

Tip: Try to run continuously without stopping. It's usually most tempting to walk when you're running too fast, so just slow down if needed.

Tuesday (03/17)

Workout: 30 minute Cross Training

Wednesday (03/18)

Workout: Key Workout #2:

Goal: 20 minutes of easy running.

Tip: Try to run continuously without stopping. Slow down if needed.

Thursday (03/19)

REST

Friday (03/20)

Workout: 15 minute key workout:

Goal: 15 minutes of easy running.

Saturday (03/21)

Workout: Key Workout #3:

Goal: 25 minutes of easy running.

Tip: You are less than a month away from the race. You are now in the final stages of training. This is a great time to start developing an inner conversation in your mind about what your race goals are, how you'll motivate yourself if it gets hard, and what you're looking forward to on race day!

Sunday (03/22)

REST

Tip: You have a few weeks to go. Your body should start to feel more comfortable as you run more.

WEEK 8 (03/23 – 03/29)

OVERVIEW: In week 8, the duration of your runs will increase. These longer runs are important for increasing aerobic capacity. You'll also practice your race day routine this week. It's advisable not to try anything new (e.g. foods, clothes, shoes) on race day.

Monday (03/23)

Workout: Key Workout #1:

Goal: 20 minutes of easy running.

Tip: Make this run easy. You will be running for longer periods of time this week.

Tuesday (03/24)

Workout: 30 minute Cross Training

Wednesday (03/25)

Workout: Key Workout #2:

Goal: 25 minutes of easy running.

Tip: As your body adjusts to running, you might feel ready to pick up the pace. Slowly increase your pace in the middle of this run (after the first 10 minutes) and see how you feel. Try to maintain this pace for the next 5-10 minutes, then return to an easy pace in the last 5 minutes. If this effort feels difficult, slow down and return to an easy, conversational pace.

Thursday (03/26)

REST

Tip: Prioritize getting 6-8 hours of sleep, if not more, stretching and staying hydrated with a sports drink such as [Gatorade](#), the official sports fuel provider of the Credit Union Cherry Blossom race.

Friday (03/27)

Workout: Key Workout #3

Goal: 20 minutes of easy running.

Tip: You can try increasing the pace again in the middle of this run. The idea is to start easy, increase the pace for a few minutes in the middle of the run, then finish at an easy pace. Listen to your body over any recommendation given on a training plan.

Saturday (03/28)

Workout: Key Workout #4:

Goal: 30 minutes of easy running.

Tip: Practice your race day routine. Eat what you plan to eat the morning of the race and wear the clothes and shoes you plan to use on race day.

Sunday (03/29)

REST

Tip: Prioritize getting 6-8 hours of sleep, if not more, stretching and staying hydrated.

WEEK 9 (03/30 – 04/05)

OVERVIEW: In week 9 you will complete your longest run before the race. If you are able to finish the long runs, this should lead to a successful race day.

Monday (03/30)

Workout: Key Workout #1:

Goal: 25 minutes of easy running.

Tip: Keep your easy effort at conversational pace. If you are still tired from Saturday's long run, take an extra day off and stretch or shorten today's run.

Tuesday (03/31)

Workout: 25 minute Cross Training

Wednesday (04/01)

Workout: 30 minute key workout:

Goal: 30 minutes of easy running.

Tip: This is your last hard week of running. You are almost there!

Thursday (04/02)

REST

Tip: Prioritize getting 6-8 hours of sleep, if not more, stretching and staying hydrated.

Friday (04/03)

Workout: Key Workout #3:

Goal: 20 minutes of easy running.

Tip: Tomorrow's run will be the longest in this training plan. Take it easy on your run today.

Saturday (04/04)

Workout: Key Workout #4:

Goal: 40 minutes of easy running.

Tip: This is your last long run before the race. Keep in mind you do not need to complete a 3.1 mile training run in order to successfully finish the race. Trust your body and training and enjoy this run! Share your thoughts on how the run went on [the Credit Union Cherry Blossom 5K Walk-Run Beginner Program Facebook page](#).

Sunday (04/05)

REST

Tip: Be purposeful about your rest. You can use this day for extra stretching and foam rolling.

WEEK 10 (04/06 – 04/12)

OVERVIEW: It's race week! Take pride in the work you did to get here. Cut back on your training, hydrate, and get plenty of rest to prepare for the big day. Resist the urge to run hard or make up runs you may have missed. The hard work is done; your goal now is to get to the start line healthy.

Monday (04/06)

Workout: Key Workout #1

Goal: 20 minutes of easy running.

Tip: If you are still tired from Saturday's long run, take an extra day off and stretch or shorten today's run.

Tuesday (04/07)

REST

Tip: Check the forecast for Saturday. Think about what you'll need to wear to prepare for the weather.

Wednesday (04/08)

Workout: Key Workout #2

Goal: 15 minutes of easy running.

Thursday (04/09)

REST

Tip: Be purposeful about your rest. You can use this day to get in some light stretching and foam rolling.

Friday (04/10)

REST DAY (Or optional easy 1.5 mile walk/jog)

Tip: Shake off the nerves. Hydrate, sleep early, carb load. Consider picking up your packet on Friday, April 10, 2026, 1:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. (Bib pick-up closes at 7:45 p.m.) at the [Health and Fitness Expo](#) presented by Wegmans (National Building Museum). If you can't make the Friday Expo, you can also pick up your 5K packet from 7:00-8:45 a.m. the morning of the race at the 5K staging area on Army-Navy Dr. at S. Fern St. in Arlington, VA. Visit our [Getting to the Race page](#) for maps and details on transportation options to the 5K race start in Arlington, VA.

Saturday (04/11)

RACE DAY

Tip: Arrive at least an hour prior to the race to leave time for warming up, getting settled in at the starting line, and navigating any congestion on the way to the race site. Closely follow the announcements regarding the appropriate time to assemble at the starting line. [Line up in your pre-assigned corral at the start](#). Good luck and feel confident about the work you've done to get here! Once finished, cool down by going for a walk. Stretch and rehydrate.

Sunday (04/12)

REST

Tip: If this is your very first 5K, congrats! And same goes if this is your first race after a break or your first time crossing a finish line. You should be very proud! It's easy to want to keep going, but recovery after a race is important! Take the next day or two to allow your muscles to recover. Reflect on your training and make notes for future races on what went well and what you can improve. Go for a walk to get over the soreness. Share your race day pictures on [the Credit Union Cherry Blossom 5K Walk-Run Beginner Program Facebook page](#). Email any feedback to Yasmin at 5kcoach@cherryblossom.org. Thank you for trusting me to guide you on this journey!