



NOW & GEN

# Health Challenge

YOUR 8-WEEK TRAINING PLAN TO RUNNING A 5K

## WEEK ONE

- DAY 1** Cardio
- DAY 2** Strength
- DAY 3** Cardio
- DAY 4** Recovery
- DAY 5** Strength
- DAY 6** Cardio
- DAY 7** Recovery & Reward

## WEEK TWO

- DAY 1** Cardio
- DAY 2** Strength
- DAY 3** Cardio
- DAY 4** Recovery
- DAY 5** Strength
- DAY 6** Cardio
- DAY 7** Recovery & Reward

## WEEK THREE

- DAY 1** Cardio
- DAY 2** Strength
- DAY 3** Cardio
- DAY 4** Recovery
- DAY 5** Strength
- DAY 6** Cardio
- DAY 7** Recovery & Reward

## CARDIO

Rather than running one steady pace, this routine relies on a lot of interval training, or short bursts of high-intensity exercise. Research shows this is a great way to up your endurance, speed and overall health—and I find that mixing things up keeps me from getting bored on my runs. You'll notice the acronym "RPE" in the training plan. This stands for "rate of perceived exertion," which is a fancy exercise term for estimating how hard you feel your body is working during your runs on a scale of 1 to 10. So, for example, a warm up at 4 RPE would be a brisk walk or a slow jog, and running hard at a 9 or 10 would feel most difficult. However, the best workout is the one you'll actually do, so don't force this if you hate running! You can still participate in the N&G Challenge by simply swapping in the cardio exercise or class you do enjoy on each of the cardio days.

## STRENGTH

Strong back and abdominal muscles are key to helping you keep good form through your runs so you're less likely to get injured. These muscles are also essential to helping us do everyday things—like lifting a squirmy 20-pound toddler or schlepping grocery bags in from the car. Aim to complete two core strengthening training workouts each week, such as yoga or Pilates. I'll also be posting some of my favorite core strengthening moves over the next several weeks if you need more ideas!

## RECOVERY

You do not have to workout everyday! Recovery days are an important part of training, giving your body time to rest and repair and keeping you from developing injuries. It's also easy to burn out if you do too much too quickly, so I find that giving yourself permission to take a day off is crucial to sticking with it physically and mentally. On these days, I like to sleep in guilt-free or find ways to help aid in my body's recovery with things like cryotherapy, a sports massage, or a sweat session in an infrared sauna to soothe sore muscles.

## REWARD

Remember to give yourself props on your progress—no matter how little it seems. Once a week, buy yourself flowers, soak in a hot bath, try a new face mask, treat yourself to a manicure or pedicure, download new workout music or pick up new pair of sneakers—whatever feels indulgent—to celebrate all your hard work.