



How I prepped for my first 5K

By Kristin Cardillo RDN, CDN

Running is no joke. I have never, and I mean ever, enjoyed running. I was a dancer, therefore, I was used to spitting out 3 minutes of high intense energy and then crashing right after. Every minute I ran after 3 minutes while training, was the hardest thing I have ever pushed my body to do. Weightlifting and using my own body weight to build muscle was always easier for me! Here I am though, about to run my first 5K.



How did I get here? (even though I hate / hated running)

- **I made myself make THE time.** I promised myself - post college - and post the 1500 hour dietetic internship - exams and job hunting, that I would find time for myself again to work out. I grew up pretty active. I danced competitively and was in love with going to school and then going to go exercise at dance for 3+ hours every day. When college came that love was forced to stop. Sure, I tried going to the gym but I had to work part-time and I had to devote my time to learning science at a mastery level. I took about 5-6 years off doing true workouts. Fast forward – last year I landed a job I could find myself integrating a workout schedule into. I only get to the gym 3x a week but 3x a week for 17 months was how I built up endurance to run straight for the first time ever. ON a side note – I don't always do cardio either. Our workouts switch up but on the days we do cardio we do it for 30 minutes. Typically, I trained running at a rate of 4.8 – 6.0 for 10 minute intervals totally 30 minutes.

- **I had a friend who pushed me.** The first time I ran 10 minutes straight my face GLOWED with a smile. I thought back to myself and said how the HECK did I just do that. The first time was on a Monday night after a full day of working 2 jobs (started 6 am that morning). It was 7:30 pm and it was a gloomy disgusting day. Literally, I went home after work at 6:30 pm and closed my eyes on my recliner. **How did I get up to go?** [Insert my fitness coach, accountability partner, ambitious, focused, disciplined friend here] Aka – My good friend Jessica. She has had even bigger goals than I have had over the last year and as she pushed herself, she ALWAYS pushed me. I swear I am lazy without her. I was ridiculously exhausted. She gave me no choice but to show up. She is so disciplined it scares me, I knew I wasn't getting out of this one. 7:00 pm came; she was home and out the door we went. I showed up ready to just "walk my cardio for 10 minutes" but instead I put on my playlist and just went.



- **I figured out a way to quiet my mind.** I convinced myself after every 2-3 minute song I listened to that I had just started running (again). While running I took a deep breath again after the song stopped and said "ok let's go" (literally probably said this out loud). The OTHER tactic I use was I would zone out. I think about situations that literally make me escape the present moment. Sometimes it is dramatic, but most times I catch myself choreographing a dance to the song that came on (I told you I was a dancer..). Running for me is all about the music and I envy those who don't even need it!

Ok personal story is over – Scroll down to see the actual nutrition tactics I used to train to run a 5K & a SAMPLE MEAL PLAN!

#1 Hydration - If you think you can run or train while peeing dark yellow all day you are nuts. Your body needs fluids for energy and in order to achieve that maximal energy you need to start hydrating from a FEW days before. The day before I train to run or complete an actual run, I am drinking 64 ounces of my water (I add lemon slices for flavor). On the nights I come home after a long day of back to back patients and poor hydration, I always drink at least 10 ounces about 20 minutes before the gym. Aim to consume 16 to 20 ounces of fluids 2 to 3 hours before the race. You will know you're hydrated if your urine is pale yellow!

#2 No Carb Loading - Carb loading is when you increase your carbohydrate intake for long runs like half and full marathons. A 5K, which is only 3 miles, is not that strenuous enough to require carb loading. The practice of carb loading (increasing your intake of carbohydrate-heavy foods while cutting back on protein and fat in the days before a race) is geared for events of 90 minutes or longer. Instead before a race or training at night, I would follow my **30/30** rule. Which is taking 30 grams of carbs more than 30 minutes before.

Note– not all carbs are created equal, therefore, you won't catch me eating buckwheat, fiber one or bran cereal right before a run.

ONLY 30 or more minutes before your race should you take in 30 grams of simple carbs specifically FRUIT. Fruit has fiber but not a tremendous amount. IT is optimal!

Example – 30 grapes, 1 large apple, 1 – 2 cups of berries, pineapple and mango (1 cup diced), 4 ounces no sugar added dried fruit.. etc.

Pro tip – if you can eat about 45 minutes to 1 hour before a race or training, then pair your 30 grams of carbohydrates with approx. 10 grams of protein to steady your blood

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sugars out. By doing this you will MAINTAIN energy longer! Example – 20 grapes + 1 cheese stick or 1 large apple with 2 tb peanut butter.

#3 – Meals broken down

Carbohydrates should be broken up throughout the day and consumed every 2-3 hours. Consume 3-5 grams / kg of body weight for the day of carbs. As for protein, consume 1.2 -1.5 grams / kg of body weight for the day.

Example: If you weigh 125 pounds, then in kilograms you weigh 56.8 kg (divide 125 lbs / 2.2 = 56.8 kg)

Protein needs – Multiply. Take your KG weight (56.8) and multiply it by 1.2 and again by 1.5 to get a range of protein in grams you should eat for the day.

$56.8 \text{ kg} \times 1.2 = 68 \text{ grams of protein}$

$56.8 \text{ kg} \times 1.5 = 88 \text{ grams of protein}$

Carbohydrates needs – Multiply. Take your KG weight (56.8) and multiply it by 2.5 and again by 3.5 to get a range of protein in grams you should eat for the day.

$56.8 \text{ kg} \times 2.5 = 142 \text{ grams of carbs}$

$56.8 \text{ kg} \times 3.5 = 198 \text{ grams of protein}$

Yes, that looks like a lot of carbs, BUT yes, it is good to eat carbs in general the day of your race and training! This will help you achieve your goals by ensuring your nutrition and energy is being optimized. Most of the carbs should come from whole grains and fibrous carbs up until 1 hour before your race.

4 - Recover, don't wait to eat.

Within 30–45 minutes of finishing have a meal consisting of carbs and some protein. This when your muscles are responsive to nutrition and will use nutrients to rebuild and repair your actual muscles. Causing less soreness and less chance of injury. Long runs will deplete glycogen stores so consuming carb rich meal / snack will maximize recovery.

Aim for 20-25 grams of protein paired with 30 grams of carbs for your recovery meal. Omega 3 rich foods or supplement to help with inflammation. Don't forget your fluids or electrolytes for rehydration.

This can be as **simple** as coconut water (no sugar added) + 1 scoop protein powder and 1 cup of fruit. Other examples can be tuna + avocado on 2 slices of bread, 2 eggs on 2

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slices toast with vegetables, yogurt with granola and berries or 2tb peanut butter and jelly. Chocolate milk is a great science-based option for recovery as well.

5 – Use fruits and vegetables to your advantage

Fruits and vegetables have key phytonutrients and antioxidants that can help reduce inflammation in your muscles and joints. *Tart cherries have been studied and shown to significantly reduce muscle soreness in the 24 hours after exercise.* A tart cheery protein shake can make a huge, positive impact in reducing soreness after long runs. Don't feel like eating dinner? Try this instead. It has become a staple in my recovery plan.

PROTEIN CHERRY RECOVERY SMOOTHIE

PREP TIME -5 mins

COOK TIME - 1 min

Serves: 1-2

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup of nut based milk (almond, coconut etc.)
- 1/2 cup (2 ounces) low fat Greek yogurt (recommend flavored oikos triple zero brand)
- 1/2 cup canned tart cherries in **water**, undrained OR 1 cup tart cherry juice – CHILLED
- 2 tablespoons cocoa powder or cocoa nibs
- 1 scoop low carbohydrate protein powder (chocolate might taste best with this)



INSTRUCTIONS

1. Put all ingredients in a blender and blend until smooth. Add ice if desired

MENU

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|-----------------------------|--|
| Breakfast | 2 Multigrain English muffins with ½ Avocado and 2 Eggs |
| Snack | Oikos Triple Zero Greek yogurt + 1 cup of Berries mixed |
| Lunch | 1 Turkey Burger with 1 Whole Wheat Sandwich Thin + 1 cup of quinoa salad (olives, cucumbers, fresh herbs, mozzarella, Italian dressing) |
| 1 HR before training | 1-2 rice cakes topped with a 2 tb of peanut butter, ½ sliced banana |
| 30 minutes post | 4-5 ounces salmon fillet + 1 cup cooked brown rice / chickpea pasta |