5 TIPS TO RUN A FASTER 5K

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INTRODUCTION

The 5k. The **gold standard for distance running events.** 3.1 miles jam packed with excitement, pain, exhilaration and agony.

A true challenge of the mind and spirit, this race demands athletes push themselves to the limit all the way to the finish line. Unlike the marathon, the 5k doesn't give you much time to relax, or allow space for mistakes. **As soon as that gun goes off, it's a fight to the very end.**

Athletes around the world train like maniacs each and every day in order to shave a few more seconds off their best time.

Of course, the number of factors involved is nearly immeasurable. If I were to detail every single thing an athlete could do to run a faster 5k, then this guide would be many more pages and take up a lot more space on your hard drive.

Instead, I've opted for a concise and digestible document to offer some basic guidance, or at the very least, provide reaffirmation for the reader if they're already on the right track (or road...or trail.)

With that, please enjoy the following list of **"5 Tips to Run A Faster 5k."**

TIP 1: INCREASE YOUR TRAINING VOLUME

When it comes to distance running, **aerobic endurance is the name of the game.** Generations ago, runners used to train by showing up to the track, stretching (maybe), running a few sprints, then going home. However, once the crazy idea of running more became more popular, records in distance events began to drastically drop.

Thankfully, we now know what athletes of the past didn't, and we finally understand that **a major key to running faster in races is simply to run more.**

Now, of course this doesn't mean that you should make a drastic jump to 100 miles per week if you're currently running 20, or anything like that.

But if you find yourself in a rut, **a little more mileage might be that ingredient you need** to make the jump from your current PR to the one you've got your sights set on.

There's many different opinions on how much the "correct" amount of mileage to add is, and the truth is, well, there isn't one!

It's all going to depend on the individual, how they respond to the change, as well as where they are at in their racing season.

However, I generally wouldn't advise adding more than 1 more mile per day than you're already running, and **always give your body a few weeks to adapt to that new training load.**

TIP 2: COMMIT TO MORE SLEEP

Fitness influencers and social media gurus love to glorify “the grind.” It’s become somewhat of a status symbol to brag about how hard you work, how much you sacrifice for your goals, and especially how little sleep you get.

“You can survive off 4 hours of sleep” is an actual quote I’ve heard from a “hustle culture” influencer… Yeah you can, but barely!

And it will absolutely wreck your training.

If you’re REALLY committed to the grind, **then you have to treat sleep as part of it.**

The way adaptation a.k.a. getting faster/fitter works, is that we break our body down a little bit and allow it to recover. Once our body recovers, our new baseline is a higher level of fitness.

That breakdown happens during our workouts, the recovery happens when we sleep.

If you take that part out of the equation, then you will not get the result that you are after. At least, not the best possible result.

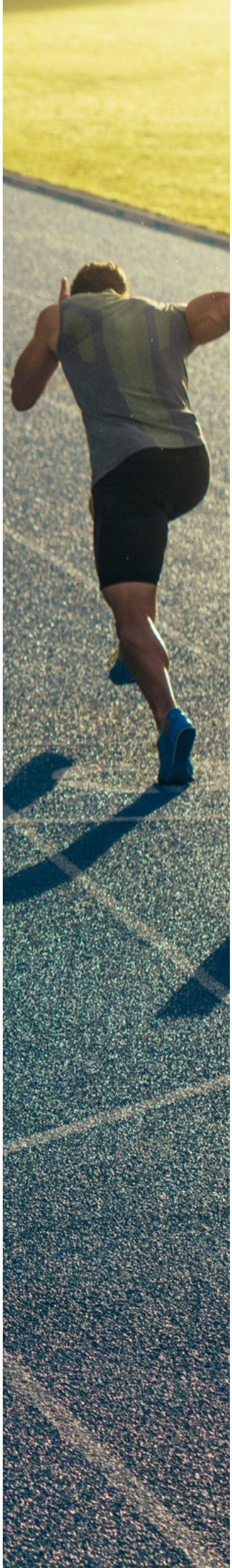
When we’re snoozing, our pituitary gland **releases growth hormone and this hormone is instrumental in helping the body repair itself**. This is the same hormone that some athletes take illegally in order to get an extra performance boost. They’d save themselves the trouble if they just got more sleep!

TIP 2: COMMIT TO MORE SLEEP (CONT.)

If you're skeptical, then I challenge you to add just 30 minutes to your total sleep time for a few weeks, and take note of how much better you feel on your runs.

If you're someone who struggles with getting to sleep, **do your best to make it as easy as possible for yourself.** Buy blackout curtains, get earplugs if you need to, keep the room a comfortable temperature, and try to avoid electronics as you start winding down for bed.

Sleep is one of the the **most important, but most underrated** parts of becoming a faster runner.



TIP 3: GET COMFORTABLE RUNNING FAST

Okay, let's see.

You've bumped up the mileage, and every night you're sleeping like Snow White after eating the poison apple. Now what?

It might be a good idea to start practicing race pace, along with a variety of other paces.

You've probably heard the term "run slow to run fast." While that is absolutely true in certain contexts, athletes have to be careful with how they allow that phrase to influence their training overall.

Allow me to propose another catchphrase: "If all you do is run slow, all you'll do is run slow." Clever right? Well, maybe not.

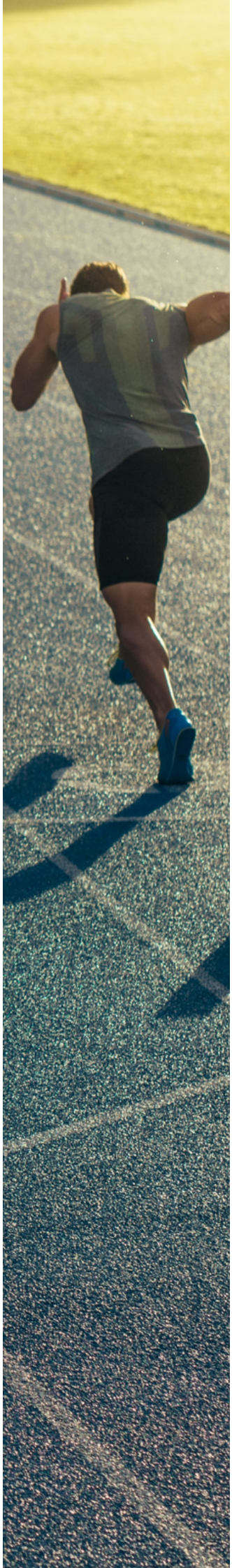
Regardless, what I'm saying is this:

If you want to race fast, you have to practice running fast too!

Don't get me wrong, easy running is extremely important to building a strong aerobic system.

However, there's a reason why championship ultra-marathoners aren't simultaneously 5k record holders.

Specificity matters.



TIP 3: GET COMFORTABLE RUNNING FAST (CONT.)

When training to run your fastest 5k, you will need to work **a variety of paces into your training, even if the majority of those miles are easy.**

You should have some workouts that are slightly slower than 5k pace, some that are slightly faster, and some that are dead on.

Some examples might be 1000 meter repeats at 5k effort, 400m repeats at 1500m-3000m effort, or a 20 minute run at your lactate threshold pace.

Even things like 100m strides at a fast pace a few times a week can help with becoming comfortable at intense paces.

Work with your coach to figure out what the best combo is for you.

I want to reiterate that not all of the running you do has to be fast. In fact, most of it won't be.

But unless you work faster running into your training, at least to some degree, then you won't reach the level of fitness you could have otherwise!

TIP 4: SET ACHIEVABLE GOALS

"Shoot for the moon, even if you miss, you'll land among the stars."

That's the old saying, right?

But what if you wanted to get to the moon? Or at least close?

Nevermind the fact that the closest star to the moon, *Proxima Centauri*, is a little over 4.2 lightyears away from it.

That's like telling a basketball player ***"Aim for the hoop, but even if you air ball, at least you'll hit someone in the crowd."***

What I'm getting at with this convoluted series of analogies, is that **not every goal has to be so gigantic** that falling short is a huge accomplishment in and of itself.

It's okay to have small goals. In fact, **it may serve you better to have a series of small goal**s and focus on those, rather than one giant goal that you're always fixated on.

Let's put it in the context of running.

If you have a 5k PR of 18 minutes, and you have a season goal of sub 17 minutes. This is what we'd call an **"outcome goal"**, which is just what it sounds like, **a goal fixated on a particular outcome**.

TIP 4: SET ACHIEVABLE GOALS (CONT.)

"These aren't necessarily bad, but a major issue with only having outcome goals, is that **there are only 2 possibilities. You either succeed, or you fail.**

If you're 3/4 of the way through your season, and you're still running 17:50s, you might find that your confidence, excitement and enthusiasm surrounding that sub 17 goal may dwindle.

"Process Goals" are goals focused on **taking the right steps to get to that desired outcome**. Oftentimes, runners that set process goals do so without even having major outcome goals, and still perform well.

Some examples of process goals might be, "Completing every workout on my schedule this month", "Getting 8 hours of sleep every weekday" or "Run this workout a little faster than last time."

These goals **allow us to have something achievable to accomplish each and every day**. Success breeds success, so frequently achieving these goals can **create a snowball effect** which leads us to perform even better overall.

TIP 5: CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUCCESS

"Martial arts pioneer and movie legend **Bruce Lee** once said ***"To hell with circumstances, I make my own opportunities."***

This is the mindset that we need to have if we want to perform our best on race day (and in life.)

Far too many runners convince themselves that everything needs to be perfect, or exactly according to plan to have their best performances, when really, that's often just a matter of perception.

Sure, there are things out of our control that can affect our performances, but they're just that; out of our control.

But we do have the ability to control how we react and respond to different situations.

When I say "create opportunities for success" I mean **actively seek situations and make decisions that will put you in a position to do you best**.

You can do this **during training, during racing, and even in the planning of your season.**

This might mean putting a handful of races on your schedule where you know the competition will be good, so you can be pushed to run faster.

It could mean every time you pass a runner mid race, you immediately set your sights on the next one, keeping you engaged and competitive.

TIP 5: CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUCCESS (CONT.)

It could even mean deciding to make changes to your planned workout if there's something out of your control that will greatly affect the quality of the workout.

The biggest takeaway from this tip is this: **You are the one in charge of how fast you run.** It's the decisions you make, in the moment and over time, that will determine your success in this sport.

Each and every day, **you have a choice to increase or decrease your odds of getting faster.**

Choose wisely and **create your own opportunities!**

CONCLUSION

Thank you for reading **“5 Tips to Run A Faster 5k”!**

I hope that it has provided you with some valuable advice and information to get you set in the right direction for higher performance.

The main goal of Goode Athletics is to **help athletes grow and be better**, regardless of their starting point and providing resources like these are just one of the many ways we can achieve that.

Another way that we help athletes is to **work one on one as their coach.**

If you’ve been searching for a running coach that will **support you, challenge you** and **help you to find greatness within yourself**, then you’ve come to the right place.

Check out the contact information below to **get in touch.**

Thank you again for reading and keep on running!

Sincerely,
Coach Chris Goode

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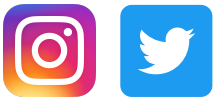

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