

The 4-Week Walk-to-Run Starter Plan

From the couch to your first continuous 20-minute run — the knee-safe way.

Hi, I'm Joby. Most people who "start running" quit in two weeks — not because they're unfit, but because they run too hard, too soon, and their knees and shins rebel. This plan fixes that. We use the **walk-run method**: short jogging intervals with walking breaks, so your heart, joints and tendons adapt *gradually*. Follow it exactly and in 4 weeks you'll run 20 minutes non-stop.

3 rules before you start: (1) Run at a pace where you could still talk — if you're gasping, slow down. (2) Land softly with quick, short steps (aim ~170 steps/min). (3) A dull ache that fades is fine; sharp or one-sided pain means stop and rest a day.

How to use it

- **3 sessions per week** (e.g. Mon / Wed / Sat) with a rest or walk day in between. Never two run days back-to-back in Week 1-2.
- Every session = **5 min brisk walk warm-up** → the intervals below → **5 min walk cool-down**.
- Surface matters early: treadmill, track, or flat grass are kinder than concrete.

The plan

Week	The workout (repeat the bracket)	Total jog time
Week 1	(Jog 1 min / Walk 2 min) × 6	6 min
Week 2	(Jog 2 min / Walk 2 min) × 5	10 min
Week 3	(Jog 3 min / Walk 1.5 min) × 5	15 min
Week 4	Session A: (Jog 5 min / Walk 1 min) × 4 · Session B: (Jog 8 min / Walk 1 min) × 2	up to 20 min

The 3 supporting habits

- **Strength, 2×/week (15 min):** glute bridges, wall sits, calf raises, bird-dogs. Strong glutes & calves are the shock absorbers that protect your knees.
- **Mobility, daily (5 min):** ankle circles, hip openers, gentle hamstring & calf stretch after runs.
- **Recovery:** sleep 7–8 h, hydrate, and take at least one full rest day each week. Adaptation happens on rest days, not just run days.

What next?

Once you can jog 20 minutes easily, you're ready to build toward 5K, then 10K, then a half marathon — but the jump from "can run" to "can race a specific time without injury" is where a personalised plan pays off, especially if you have knee history. That's exactly what I coach.

Want this tailored to your body, schedule and goal? Book a free consultation at trainwithjoby.com.



Prepared by Joby Paul

NASM-USA Certified Personal Trainer & Nutrition Coach · Fitnation Sports Hub

For general guidance only — not medical advice. Consult your doctor before starting, especially with any injury or health condition.