



General Return to Run Progression

This program is designed to provide a gradual, structured return to running following injury or an extended period away from running. The run/walk progression allows the body to progressively adapt to the demands of running while monitoring pain, soreness, and overall tolerance. Progression should be individualized based on symptoms and response to each session.

This program is not intended for athletes recovering from a bone stress injury (BSI). Returning to running following a BSI requires a more individualized progression based on injury location, severity, healing status, and medical clearance.

Levels

Level	Run	Walk	Repeat	Approx. Time
1	2 min	1 min	x7	21 min
2	3 min	1 min	x6	24 min
3	4 min	1 min	x5	25 min
4	5 min	1 min	x5	30 min
5	5 min	1 min	x6	36 min
6	10 min	1 min	x3	33 min
7	15 min	1 min	x2	32 min
8	20 min	1 min	10 min	31 min
9	30 min			30 min

Criteria to Begin

- Must be able to walk for 30 minutes without pain or increase in symptoms.
- No pain with daily activities.
- Must be able to hop on affected limb (if applicable) for 30 seconds without pain.
- Must be cleared by physician.

Instructions

- Warm up: 5-10 minutes of brisk walking + dynamic warm up.
- Intensity: Easy/conversational pace, approximately RPE 3-4/10.
- Frequency: Run on non-consecutive days. For someone coming back from a more significant layoff/injury, 2-3 days between the first several sessions is reasonable.
- Progression: 2 successful sessions at each level are required before progressing.
 - Do not progress more than 2 levels/week
- Once the athlete tolerates 30 continuous minutes, transition into a normal running/training program.

Pain/Soreness Guidelines

- Green light: Mild symptoms that remain stable, don't alter running mechanics, and return to baseline by the next day → complete the session and repeat/progress as appropriate.
- Yellow light: Soreness during warm-up that resolves, or soreness the next morning → do not progress; repeat the same level after appropriate recovery.
- Red light: Symptoms progressively increase during the run, disappear and then return/worsen, cause limping or altered mechanics, or remain elevated >24hrs → stop, take extended recovery, regress a level, and/or reassess with doctor or therapist.



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