Training Plan for a 5K Open Water Race

Welcome! This training plan is for anyone looking to **build swim endurance and complete a 5-kilometer open water race nonstop.** We know that not everyone has a coach on deck or a club nearby, so we created this training plan to keep you focused and progressing toward your goal.

Here are the details:

- The plan is broken down into six weeks, with 24 total workouts.
- Specific days of the week are not identified, which lets you keep your schedule flexible.
- It is written for short course yards but can be modified for other courses.
- Equipment is not required, but is identified for each workout if you would like to use it.
- The entire plan is printer-friendly, and each workout is a single page.
- The plan builds toward the 5K distance so that by the end of six weeks you can swim a bit farther than the 5K distance nonstop.
- Dryland exercises are a critical component of training for strengthening your core for longer-distance swimming. Make sure to incorporate time and multiple sets in your warm-ups and cool-downs.

Training Plan for a 5K Open Water Race

WEEK	*WORKOUT*	*SWIM SETS*	*SWIM TRACKER*
1 of 6	**Swim #1 of 24** Equipment: fins	*4x 50 free, 100 free, 150 free (:20 rest)	1,200
		2x 25 Tarzan drill (keep head up, looking forward)	50
		2x 25 six-kick switch (head down, rotate hips)	50
		**4x 500 free (endurance pace); descend each 100 and each 400; 1:00 rest after each 400	2,000
		2x 100 fast kick (fins optional)	200
		4x 25 underwater kick/swim with fins (:20 rest after each 25)	100
		TOTAL	**3,600 yards**

*Focus on breathing out with face in the water.

**On the 500-yard endurance pace swims, focus on long glides and smooth pulls through the water. Don't breathe in or out of the turns off the wall. Keep your head still, kick, and rotate your body using your core muscles. Track your progress each time you complete a long, continuous swim. This will help you improve each swim as you build up to the 5K swim.

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WEEK	*WORKOUT*	*SWIM SETS*	*SWIM TRACKER*
1 of 6	**Swim #2 of 24** Equipment: snorkel, fins, kickboard, ankle strap, pull buoy, paddles	600 free (smooth) with :20 rest *6x 100 choice with :20 rest 4x 600 with :30 rest: 2x: 1, pull 4x 150 with :25 rest; use combination of snorkel, pull buoy, ankle strap if you have them; descend 1–4; 2, swim 6x 100 with 85% effort and :15 rest; these 100s are executed at an upper aerobic effort, and higher stress; try to sustain the same swim time on each 100: this is a challenge.	600 600 2,400
		TOTAL	**3,600 yards**

*The 100 is broken into 50 kick/50 swim; use a snorkel, fins, kickboard if you have them. Progress effort every two, starting with a gentle effort on the first 2x 100 and gradually getting faster every 2x 100.

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WEEK	*WORKOUT*	*SWIM SETS*	*SWIM TRACKER*
1 of 6	**Swim #3 of 24** **Equipment:** snorkel, pull buoy, paddles, ankle strap	500 free, easy, with :30 rest *800 pull on 12:00: increase effort for each 100 from 65 to 70 to 75 to 80 to 85 to 90 to 95 to 100% by the last 100. 600 yards with :20 rest after each 50: 12x 50 of :30 vertical kicking, followed by 50 swim, maintaining that good posture practiced in the vertical kick 4x 400 free: 2x: **pull: 4x 100 with :25 rest; descend 1–4 ***Swim free: 4x 100 with 85% effort and :15 rest	500 800 600 1,600
		TOTAL	**3,500 yards**

*The first 100 is at 65% effort, then the next 100 is 70%, then 75%, 80%, 85%, 90%, 95%, and 100% effort on the last 100.
**Use combination of snorkel, pull buoy, ankle strap if you have them.
***These 100s are executed at an upper aerobic effort, and higher stress; try to sustain the same swim time on each 100. This is a challenge.

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WEEK	*WORKOUT*	*SWIM SETS*	*SWIM TRACKER*
1 of 6	**Swim #4 of 24** Equipment: snorkel, fins, kickboard	500 free, easy, on 8:00	500
		*10x 100 free with :20 rest	1,000
		12x 75 with :15 rest: four rounds of fly/back, back/breast, breast/free by 25.	900
		6x 50 drill with :10 rest: 1, Tarzan drill; 2, Six-kick switch; 3, catch-up; 4, right arm only with left at your side; 5, left arm only with right at your side; fist drill	300
		**Swim 800 yards without stopping	800
		TOTAL	**3,500 yards**

*50 kick/50 swim. Descend every two 100s. Use a combination of snorkel, fins, and kickboard if you have them.
**On the 800-yard swim, focus on your freestyle technique. Keep your head still, kick, and rotate your body using your core muscles. Track your progress each time you complete a long, continuous swim. This will help you improve each swim as you build up to the 5K swim.

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WEEK	*WORKOUT*	*SWIM SETS*	*SWIM TRACKER*
2 of 6	**Swim #5 of 24:** Equipment: fins, kickboard, pull buoy, paddles	10x 100 free with :30 rest: 2x: swim, kick, individual medley, pull, swim by 100 (SKIPS)	1,000
		12x 50 kick with fins and :30 rest; build each 50	600
		2x**:** 2x 50 free with :20 rest, build 1–2; 2x 100 drill (25 of each drill) with :30 rest: 1, catch-up; 2, three right arm, three left arm; 3, six-kick switch; 4, catch-up	600
		6x 100 free with :30 rest; focus on gliding and distance per stroke	600
		*Swim 1000 yards without stopping	1,000
		TOTAL	**3,800 yards**

*On the 1,000-yard swim, focus on your freestyle technique. Keep your head still, kick, and rotate your body using your core muscles. Track your progress each time you complete a long, continuous swim. This will help you improve each swim as you build up to the 5K swim.

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WEEK	*WORKOUT*	*SWIM SETS*	*SWIM TRACKER*
2 of 6	**Swim #6 of 24**		
	Equipment: snorkel, fins, kickboard	600 free, easy, with :30 rest	600
		*400 free with :15 rest, descend in each interval 350 free with :15 rest, descend in each interval 300 free with :15 rest, descend in each interval 250 free with :15 rest, descend in each interval 200 free with :15 rest, descend in each interval 50 free	1,800
		8x 50 swim using snorkel and fins, with :10 rest: 25 kick/25 swim; descend every two 50s	400
		**Swim 1,200 yards without stopping	1,200
		TOTAL	**4,000 yards**

*As the distance decreases from the 400 toward the 50, effort increases incrementally with each distance reduction, ending toward 85% effort by the last 50. The first 25 and the last 25 of each distance is kicking on your back, arms extended above head, stretched out as much as possible, making a very taut frame.
**On the 1,200-yard swim, focus on your freestyle technique. Keep your head still, kick, and rotate your body using your core muscles. Track your progress each time you complete a long, continuous swim. This will help you improve each swim as you build up to the 5K swim.

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WEEK	*WORKOUT*	*SWIM SETS*	*SWIM TRACKER*
2 of 6	**Swim #7 of 24** Equipment: pull buoy, fins	8x 100 free with :30 rest; descend 1–4, 5–8	800
		6x 200 free with :30 rest; build each 200	1,200
		8x 50 drill with :30 rest: six-kick switch down, scull back for all 50s, with strong kicking and strong hip rotation on switch	400
		*Swim 1,400 yards without stopping	1,400
		TOTAL	**3,800 yards**

*On the 1,400-yard swim, focus on your freestyle technique. Keep your head still, kick, and rotate your body using your core muscles. Track your progress each time you complete a long, continuous swim. This will help you improve each swim as you build up to the 5K swim.

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WEEK	*WORKOUT*	*SWIM SETS*	*SWIM TRACKER*
2 of 6	**Swim #8 of 24**		
	Equipment: fins, pull buoy, paddles	5x 100 free with :30 rest; 2x swim, kick, individual medley, pull, swim by 100 (SKIPS)	1,000
		300 free with :15 rest; first 100 moderate build, second 100 smooth and long, third 100 strong	300
		4x 100 free with :10 rest; race pace for distance event and hold steady for all four 100s; rest after each 100	400
		6x 50 with :10 rest; 1–3 smooth arms and strong legs, 4–6 fast	300
		4x 100 with :10 rest; bilateral breathing every three, five, seven, nine strokes by 25s	400
		*Swim 1,600 yards without stopping	1,600
		TOTAL	**4,000 yards**

*On the 1,600-yard swim, focus on your freestyle technique. Keep your head still, kick, and rotate your body using your core muscles. Track your progress each time you complete a long, continuous swim. This will help you improve each swim as you build up to the 5K swim.

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WEEK	*WORKOUT*	*SWIM SETS*	*SWIM TRACKER*
3 of 6	**Swim #9 of 24**		
	Equipment: fins	6x 150 free, easy, with :30 rest; build	900
		6x 100 drill with :10 rest: 25 kick/25 drill/50 free distance per stroke, descend: 1, catch-up; 2, fist; 3, sinking ship; 4, Tarzan; 5, scull; 6, six-kick switch	600
		10x 100 free on 2:00; hold your fastest time and note average time; rest :30	1.000
		*Swim 1,800 yards without stopping	1,800
		TOTAL	**4,300 yards**

*On the 1,800-yard swim, focus on your freestyle technique. Keep your head still, kick, and rotate your body using your core muscles. Track your progress each time you complete a long, continuous swim. This will help you improve each swim as you build up to the 5K swim.

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WEEK	*WORKOUT*	*SWIM SETS*	*SWIM TRACKER*
3 of 6	**Swim #10 of 24** Equipment: pull buoy, paddles, fins	6x 150 free pull with :10 rest; distance per stroke	900
		12x 50 free on 1:00; try to hold fastest possible time, with :30 rest between each	600
		6x 100 free easy pull with :10 rest; alternate breathing every third and every five strokes	600
		12x 25 free on :30–:40; hold fastest possible time (fins optional)	300
		*Swim 2,000 yards without stopping	2,000
		TOTAL	**4,400 yards**

*On the 2,000-yard swim, focus on your freestyle technique. Keep your head still, kick, and rotate your body using your core muscles. Track your progress each time you complete a long, continuous swim. This will help you improve each swim as you build up to the 5K swim.

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WEEK	*WORKOUT*	*SWIM SETS*	*SWIM TRACKER*
3 of 6	**Swim #11 of 24**		
	Equipment: fins	600 free easy on 9:00–10:00	600
		6x 50 with :10 rest; six-kick switch	300
		500 free moderate on 7:00–8:00	400
		4x 50 free with :10 rest; build to fast	200
		400 free pull on 5:30–6:30; strong pace	400
		6x 50 free with :10 rest; build to fast	300
		300 free on 4:30, with fins	300
		4x 50 with :10 rest; build to fast	200
		*Swim 2,200 yards without stopping	2,200
		TOTAL	**4,900 yards**

*On the 2,200-yard swim, focus on your freestyle technique. Keep your head still, kick, and rotate your body using your core muscles. Track your progress each time you complete a long, continuous swim. This will help you improve each swim as you build up to the 5K swim.

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WEEK	*WORKOUT*	*SWIM SETS*	*SWIM TRACKER*
3 of 6	**Swim #12 of 24**		
	Equipment: none	400 free easy on 6:00–7:00	400
		4x 75 with :10 rest: kick/drill/swim by 25s; drills 1–2, *Singapore; 3–4, single arm	300
		8x 50 with :10 rest; 4x smooth/fast, fast/smooth	400
		**12x 100 on 2:00; hold pace on each 100	1,200
		4x 75 drill with :10 rest: 25 of each: 1, alligator eyes; 2, Tarzan; 3, rolling sight drill; 4, alligator eyes	300
		***Swim 2,400 yards without stopping	2,400
		TOTAL	**5,000 yards**

*Singapore: Target the high elbow catch; increase body awareness in the water; improve body-line and hand position.
**Every fourth 100 easy. Aim for :15 rest on each 2:00 interval, except for easy 100s.
***On the 2,400-yard swim, focus on your freestyle technique. Keep your head still, kick, and rotate your body using your core muscles. Track your progress each time you complete a long, continuous swim. This will help you improve each swim as you build up to the 5K swim.

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WEEK	*WORKOUT*	*SWIM SETS*	*SWIM TRACKER*
4 of 6	**Swim #13 of 24**	8x 150 swim with :15 rest; odds pull, evens free	1,200
	Equipment: kickboard, paddles, pull buoy	3x 100 fast flutter kick with :15 rest	300
		4x 100 free with :15 rest	400
		3x 100 free with :10 rest	300
		2x 100 free with :10 rest	200
		100 free with ;10 rest	100
		*Swim 2,600 yards without stopping	2,600
		TOTAL	**5,100 yards**

*On the 2,600-yard swim, focus on your freestyle technique. Keep your head still, kick, and rotate your body using your core muscles. Track your progress each time you complete a long, continuous swim. This will help you improve each swim as you build up to the 5K swim.

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WEEK	*WORKOUT*	*SWIM SETS*	*SWIM TRACKER*
4 of 6	**Swim #14 of 24**	500 free	500
	Equipment: paddles, pull buoy, fins	300: 4x 75 25 kick/25 drill/25 swim; drill: 1, catch-up; 2, Tarzan; 3, scull; 4, fist	300
		8x 50 with fins: odds, 25 Frankenstein/25 underwater free; evens, 25 tombstone/25 underwater free	400
		4x 125 swim: odds, 100 race/25 recovery; evens, 25 race with :05 rest/100 pull	500
		*6x 100 swim fartleks with :10 rest	600
		**Swim 2,800 yards without stopping	2,800
		TOTAL	**5,100 yards**

*Swim fartleks: First 25: four fast strokes, four smooth; second 25: six fast strokes, six smooth; third 25: eight fast strokes, eight smooth; last 25: 10 fast, 10 smooth.
**On the 2,800-yard swim, focus on your freestyle technique. Keep your head still, kick, and rotate your body using your core muscles. Track your progress each time you complete a long, continuous swim. This will help you improve each swim as you build up to the 5K swim.

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WEEK	*WORKOUT*	*SWIM SETS*	*SWIM TRACKER*
4 of 6	**Swim #15 of 24**		
	Equipment: fins, kickboard	600 free on 9:00; breathe three, five, seven, nine strokes by 50s	600
		4x 75 with :15 rest: kick/drill/swim by 25; drills: 1, catch-up; 2, Tarzan; 3, fist; 4, high elbows	300
		200 drill: 50 shark (board between your legs)/50 kick	200
		6x 50 with :10 rest: 25 fast/25 easy	300
		8x 50 with :10 rest; kick with arms in front for first 12.5 yards, then free to the wall with overkick and build back last 25 with overkick	400
		4x 100 swim individual medley	400
		*Swim 3,000 without stopping	3,000
		TOTAL	**5,200**

*On the 3,000-yard swim, focus on your freestyle technique. Keep your head still, kick, and rotate your body using your core muscles. Track your progress each time you complete a long, continuous swim. This will help you improve each swim as you build up to the 5K swim.

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WEEK	*WORKOUT*	*SWIM SETS*	*SWIM TRACKER*
4 of 6	**Swim #16 of 24** Equipment: paddles, pull buoy, kickboard	2x 300 pull on 3:45	600
		5x 100 pull on 1:30: 50 free/50 choice	500
		Repeat x2 (rest :05 for all):	
		4x 50 fist drill on 1:10	400
		2x 25 on :30; build to 50% effort	100
		200 free/nonfree by 100	200
		2x 100 free, just make it: build to 90% effort on 1:50	200
		4x 50, just make it: dolphin kick on :55–1:00	200
		*Swim 3,300 without stopping	3,300
		TOTAL	**5,500**

*On the 3,300-yard swim, focus on your freestyle technique. Keep your head still, kick, and rotate your body using your core muscles. Track your progress each time you complete a long, continuous swim. This will help you improve each swim as you build up to the 5K swim.

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WEEK	*WORKOUT*	*SWIM SETS*	*SWIM TRACKER*
5 of 6	**Swim #17 of 24**		
	Equipment: fins, pull buoy, paddles	5x 100 free with :30 rest: swim, kick, individual medley, pull, swim by 100 (SKIPS)	500
		400 free moderate on 6:00–7:00	400
		2x 75 free with :15 rest; build to fast	150
		300 pull on 4:30–5:00; strong pace	300
		4x 75 free with :15 rest; build to fast	300
		200 free with fins on 3:00	200
		6x 75 free with :15 rest; build to fast	450
		*Swim 3,600 yards without stopping	3,600
		TOTAL	**5,900 yards**

*On the 3,600-yard swim, focus on your freestyle technique. Keep your head still, kick, and rotate your body using your core muscles. Track your progress each time you complete a long, continuous swim. This will help you improve each swim as you build up to the 5K swim.

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WEEK	*WORKOUT*	*SWIM SETS*	*SWIM TRACKER*
5 of 6	**Swim #18 of 24**		
	Equipment: fins, board	4x 200 free with :15 rest; descend 1–4	800
		100 fly kick	100
		3x 100 free with :10 rest; descend 1–3	300
		6x 75 with fins on 1:15: drill/swim/drill	450
		6x 75 with fins on 1:20: underwater kick/swim/dolphin back	450
		*Swim 3,900 yards without stopping	3,900
		TOTAL	**6,000 yards**

*On the 3,900-yard swim, focus on your freestyle technique. Keep your head still, kick, and rotate your body using your core muscles. Track your progress each time you complete a long, continuous swim. This will help you improve each swim as you build up to the 5K swim.

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WEEK	*WORKOUT*	*SWIM SETS*	*SWIM TRACKER*
5 of 6	**Swim #19 of 24**		
	Equipment: fins	500 free easy on 8:00–9:00	500
		4x 200 on 3:00: odds, bilateral breathing every three, five strokes by 100s; evens, breathing three/seven strokes by 50s	800
		2:00 rest	
		3x 300 on 4:00 with fins: odds, distance per stroke; evens, kick half underwater on each wall	900
		*Swim 4,200 yards without stopping	4,200
		TOTAL	**6,400 yards**

*On the 4,200-yard swim, focus on your freestyle technique. Keep your head still, kick, and rotate your body using your core muscles. Track your progress each time you complete a long, continuous swim. This will help you improve each swim as you build up to the 5K swim.

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WEEK	*WORKOUT*	*SWIM SETS*	*SWIM TRACKER*
5 of 6	**Swim #20 of 24**		
	Equipment: fins, board	400 free on 7:00: 200 free/200 nonfree	400
		300 kick with fins on 4:30	300
		6x 50 free on 1:00; descend 1–3, 4–6	300
		300 kick on 5:00; no fins	300
		8x 50 free with fins on :35; descend 1–4, 5–8	400
		12x 25 sprint on :30	300
		*Swim 4,500 yards without stopping	4,500
		TOTAL	**6,500**

*With the 4,500-yard swim, you have now almost reached your goal for a 5K distance. Continue to focus on your freestyle technique. Keep your head still, kick, and rotate your body using your core muscles. The remaining workouts will reach and surpass the distance beyond 5K to help you continue your mental and physical preparation for the 5K open water race.

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WEEK	*WORKOUT*	*SWIM SETS*	*SWIM TRACKER*
6 of 6	**Swim #21 of 24** Equipment: fins	3x 200 free with :20 rest; descend 1–3	600
		3x 200 individual medley with :20 rest	600
		4x 25 underwater kick on :45	100
		4x 25 underwater with arms on :40	100
		4x 25 on :30: half underwater overkick + breakout/easy	100
		3x 200 free on :30 rest; descend 1–3	600
		*Swim 4,800 yards without stopping	4,800
		TOTAL	**6,900 yards**

*With the 4,800-yard swim, you have now almost reached your goal for a 5K distance. Continue to focus on your freestyle technique. Keep your head still, kick, and rotate your body using your core muscles. The remaining workouts will reach and surpass the distance beyond 5K to help you continue your mental and physical preparation for the 5K open water race.

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WEEK	*WORKOUT*	*SWIM SETS*	*SWIM TRACKER*
6 of 6	**Swim #22 of 24** Equipment: fins, kickboard	400 free with :30 rest; descend each 100	400
		300 stroke with 30 rest; pick one nonfree stroke	300
		200 kick with fins and :20 rest	200
		4x 100 individual medley on 1:45; may drill fly; descend 1–4	400
		8x 50 on 1:10: odds, 25 underwater/25 easy; evens, 25 Tarzan/25 sprint	400
		8x 25 free on :30, build; descend 1–4, 5–8	200
		*Swim 5,100 yards without stopping	5,100
		TOTAL	**7,000 yards**

*With the 5,100-yard swim, you have now almost reached your goal for a 5K distance. Continue to focus on your freestyle technique. Keep your head still, kick, and rotate your body using your core muscles. The remaining workouts will reach and surpass the distance beyond 5K to help you continue your mental and physical preparation for the 5K open water race.

Training Plan for a 5K Open Water Race

WEEK	*WORKOUT*	*SWIM SETS*	*SWIM TRACKER*
6 of 6	**Swim #23 of 24**		
	Equipment: none	6x 75 on 1:10: kick/drill/swim by 25	450
		6x 25 on :30: odds, drill; evens, stroke	150
		3x 500 with :30 rest; breathe three-five-seven-five-three strokes by 100s	1,500
		*Swim 5,400 yards without stopping	5,400
		TOTAL	**7,500 yards**

*With the 5,400-yard swim, you have now reached your goal for a 5K distance. Continue to focus on your freestyle technique. Keep your head still, kick, and rotate your body using your core muscles. The following and final workout will increase the distance beyond the 5K distance to help you continue your mental and physical preparation for the 5k open water race.

Training Plan for a 5K Open Water Race

WEEK	*WORKOUT*	*SWIM SETS*	*SWIM TRACKER*
6 of 6	**Swim #24 of 24**		
	Equipment: none	3x 400 with :30 rest; 1, free; 2, back; 3, kick	1,200
		8x 50 free on 1:00; focus on speed bursts	400
		4x 100 free; 1–2 negative split with 60% effort; 3–4, distance per stroke	400
		*Swim 6,000 yards without stopping	6,000
		TOTAL	**8,000 yards**

*With the 6,000-yard swim, you have now surpassed your goal for a 5K distance. Continue to focus on your freestyle technique. Keep your head still, kick, and rotate your body using your core muscles.

Congrats! You have completed your Training Plan for a 5K Open Water Race. If you're looking for your next goal, visit our Training Plans page.