

## Couch to 5k Workout Calendar

**Week 1**

**Day: 11/1**

**Exercises:**

5 minute warm-up.

Stretch.

1 minute run,  
then 1.5 minute walk.  
(Repeat 5 times)

*Notes:*

jane facetimes me crying—her breaths too big to chew. face full of phone-glow.

at every dress shop she went to today, the sales-women asked if she's planning to lose some weight before the wedding. i promise her we aren't going to be *that couple*.

for the past year or so, jane has been seeing a food therapist to talk about her "relationship" with eating. why she's been hiding bags of mcdonald's and burger king under the seats in our car. how she's gained nearly thirty pounds since we moved to pittsburgh.

she asks me to sit in on a session. to talk about my worry—her health, how my grandma had diabetes—how it killed her.

## Couch to 5k Workout Calendar

**Week 1**

**Day: 11/3**

**Exercises:**

5 minute warm-up.

Stretch.

1.5 minute run,  
then 2 minute walk.  
(Repeat 4 times)

*Notes:*

at first, anthony's voice is a belly full of rice and beans, a hot shower, fresh sheets—a timbre i haven't heard in a while.

he tells me how the rehab he's at has a gym, music room, movie night, and he can still smoke cigarettes.

his first assignment is to write his life story, to track how he lost control—

*your disease a dog too strong to be walked  
your hand between its teeth,  
fingers tumbling down  
its gullet, you're being  
eaten—leash  
and all.*

## Couch to 5k Workout Calendar

**Week 1**

**Day: 11/5**

**Exercises:**

5 minute warm-up.

Stretch.

3 minute run,  
then 2 minute walk,  
(Repeat 3 times)

Cooldown.

*Notes:* the tests come back:

- shrinking lump
- pneumonia gone
- chemo starts next week

we're bad—break shape, kill  
a gallon of pumpkin ice-cream.

grandpa starts toddling around without his walker—a feat mom and i watch with cautious eyes, grandma's waterford winking at us from the windowbox.

"i know i should probably be more positive, but i'm nervous it's just the steroids," i whisper to mom unloading groceries in the pantry. her fingers pink, rubbed raw from cleaning. "once he runs out, he's right back to the chair..." her face falls to the tile (which needs a good scrubbing) "i'm sorry you're my child," she says, her grip tight around a bottle of maple syrup, "i'm anxious, too."

## Couch to 5k Workout Calendar

**Week 2**

**Day: 11/8**

**Exercises:**

5 minute warm-up.

Stretch.

3 minute run,  
then 2 minute jog,  
then 1 minute walk  
(Repeat 3 times)

Cooldown.

*Notes:*

it wasn't all bad—I loved jabber-jawing at waffle house, skinny dipping at dawn. faces flushed, a dugout dressed in blunt-guts. those golden moments i lock away. it's like nick said: "every addict has one—a little box, metaphorical or actual—hidden away." my vault teeming with treasures.

but i can't talk like that—not with anthony, not yet.

his therapist wants him to let of his ego. he's "too happy" to be in rehab. they don't like when clients say they *were* an addict. they say addiction is chronic, forever, a disease.

without insurance, your disease costs \$12,000 a month.

## Couch to 5k Workout Calendar

**Week 2**

**Day: 11/9**

**Exercises:**

5 minute warm-up.

Stretch.

5 minute run,  
then 3 minute jog,  
then 2 minute walk  
(Repeat 2 times)

Cooldown.

*Notes:*

steam rises off the ice pack around my knee and i pinch my belly just above the belt. grandpa and i are watching sportscenter when an apple watch commercial comes on.

everyone is smiling, skinny, donned in lululemon. from off camera, a voice (stupidly) wonders if a watch in the future will ever be able to track your heart rate—*it already does that!* says a woman swinging a tennis racket.

with each hope for a more fit future—smugness, like a fog, descends on the faces of people hiking, running, walking in space—*it already does that!*

i hate-like the post-workout pics from jane's cousins in south dakota who we call ken and barbie behind their (chiseled) backs.

i hate their #lululemonappreciation  
i hate their matching apple watch bands  
i hate that when i say *health*, i really mean *weight*

## Couch to 5k Workout Calendar

**Week 2**

**Day: 11/10**

**Exercises:**

10 minute warm-up.

Stretch.

5 minute run,  
then 2 minute walk,  
then 1.5 minute jog,  
then 1 minute sprint.

*(Repeat to failure)*

*Notes:*

i turn up the vibration on the bluetooth sex toy app, a smile curling in my cheeks.

“you like that, baby?” i whisper into the phone, slowly stroking myself—“turn up mine...”

a few silent seconds go by, i glance at the screen. jane’s putting her shirt back on—

“i just don’t feel sexy” she says, her face firm, toy vibrating on the bed beside her—

## Couch to 5k Workout Calendar

### **Week 2**

**Day:** 11 / 12

### **Exercises:**

10 minute warm-up.

Stretch.

3 minute run,  
then 2 minute walk,  
then 1 minute jog,  
then 30 second jumping jacks.  
*(Repeat. Repeat)*

Reclining Butterfly Cooldown.

### *Notes:*

when i'm on all fours, drenched in sweat, begging for mecy—i'm usually scrubbing the grout like grandma taught me. knees sponging blood into the tile.

grandpa's watching humphrey bogart (his favorite).  
their voices slide into the space between screen and skin—

*i got faith in god, president roosevelt, and  
the brooklyn dodgers—and the orders not important!*

the special edition world series hat i bought (the minute they went on sale) arrive a week after the rays lose game seven—

“guess we'll have to get you a dodger's shirt”  
i shout from underneath the kitchen table,  
a bucket of bleach beside me.

i wonder if it will arrive in time.

## Couch to 5k Workout Calendar

### **Week 2**

**Day:** 11 / 13

### **Exercises:**

10 minute warm-up.

Dynamic stretches 2 & 3  
(see *How to Improve Guide pdf*).

Mountain Climbers  
(60 seconds)

2 minute sprint,  
then 1 minute walk,  
then 2 minute jog,  
(Repeat 3 times)

Reclining Butterfly Cooldown.

### *Notes:*

mom stands in-front of the sink with grandpa's plate of pancakes. she takes a slow, savory bite. even from the living room, i can smell their flabby bodies moist with maple syrup.

"these things are addicting!" she says, sneaking a final nibble before scraping what's left into the garbage. "i should stop, i don't want to be bad."

i jump on the oppurtunity to remind her there's no such thing as "good" or "bad" food—if she wants it, she should eat it. "i know," she says, bashfully, "but i don't want to be 300 pounds either. i don't want to end up like grandma."

i slip an ice pack on my knee, ankle, and elbow. pop a few moroe ibuprofen. adjust the soft, breathable nylon sport band in midnight blue on the apple watch around my wrist.

## Couch to 5k Workout Calendar

### **Week 3**

**Day:** 11 / 15

#### **Exercises:**

10 minute warm-up.

Dynamic stretches 2, 3, 6  
(see *How to Improve Guide pdf*).

10 minute run,  
then 2 minute walk,  
then 1 minute leap frogs,  
rest 1 minute.  
(Repeat 2 times)

Reclining Butterfly  
then Spider Lunge.  
(Again. Again)

#### *Notes:*

i silence the call, make sure not to send it straight to voicemail so anthony doesn't know i'm ignoring him.

*you and will make it look so easy*, he said last night. the timbre of defeat still echoing in my head.

- i can't listen to him bitch about his roommate
- i can't repeat the pithy slogans
- i won't pause this game of fortnite
  
- i want to tell him to suck it up
- i want to remind him about ray and jake and...
- i want to forgive him

## Couch to 5k Workout Calendar

### **Week 3**

**Day:** 11/16

### **Exercises:**

10 minute warm-up.

Dynamic stretches 1, 4, 7, 9, 13

10 minute run,  
then 2 minute sprint,  
then 1 minute Ladder Frogs,  
then 1 minute rest,  
then Reclining Butterfly,  
then Spider Lunge,  
then Head press

*(Repeat to failure)*

### *Notes:*

grandpa's coughing harder than usual through the baby monitor. afraid i'm hearing his final breaths, i race down the hall in nothing but boxers—my pace quick, the tile cold.

"what happened here?" he grumbles—his legs a pair of toothpicks stuck in the mouth of his sheets.

you're dying (i think) as i place the oximeter on his index finger—it's in the 70s—which is bad...like go get your mother bad.

i can hear her workout video through the door—"and one and two and breathe and lift and breath and lift"—as i slowly open the door, mom cranks her head around, sweat beading her body.

2 hours later, she calls and says grandpa is being admitted to the hospital with a collapsed lung. "it looks like he'll be here through thanksgiving," she sighs—