



8-WEEK 5K BLOCK · BRIEFING

WEEK 1 — THE RESET

Recalibrate the paces. Reawaken the speed. Set the foundation.

ATHLETE

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DATES

28 Jul – 3 Aug

GOAL

Sub-20:00 5K

FROM

21:37 PB

VOLUME

~35 km · 4 runs

THE MISSION — WHAT WE'RE CHASING & WHY

Eight weeks to take your 5K from 21:37 to under 20:00 — without giving back a single kilo of muscle. That's roughly a 4:19/km PB down to sub-4:00/km. Big jump, but the data says it's live.

Here's the diagnosis: you already own a huge aerobic engine — marathon, 70.3, Olympic tri. Your 6K easy run sat at 129 bpm, barely two-thirds of max. Translation: aerobic fitness is NOT the thing holding you back. The sub-20 gap lives in two places — your top-end aerobic power ($\dot{V}O_{2\max}$) and your running economy at fast pace. Both are magnified at 6'4" and 100 kg, because every km at goal pace costs a big frame more oxygen than it costs a lightweight club runner.

So we don't waste these weeks piling on junk mileage. The plan: raise the ceiling ($\dot{V}O_2$ intervals), lift the floor (threshold), make sub-4:00/km cheaper (economy work + your lifting), then sharpen and taper onto one day. Four runs, four lifts, every session with a job.

WHY WEEK 1 IS DELIBERATELY CONTROLLED

You're coming off a triathlon block, so Week 1 is a reintroduction, not a smash-fest. Its three jobs: (1) wake up the fast-twitch fibres and neuromuscular speed that go quiet in long-course tri training, (2) lock in your training paces so every later session lands in the right zone, and (3) build the weekly rhythm — quality runs fresh, lifts timed so they don't blunt them. Nail these and Weeks 3–4 (the hard development block) have a foundation to bite into. Go too hard now and you just arrive at the real work already frayed.



THIS WEEK'S FOUR RUNS

RUN 1 • KEY SESSION

VO2 MAX INTERVALS

THE SESSION

15 min easy w/u 5 × 3 min hard, 2:30 min jog between 10 min easy c/d.

TARGET ~4:08/km reps

WHY

The ceiling-raiser. 3-min efforts pin you at maximal oxygen uptake — the single biggest lever on top-end 5K speed. Run controlled: the last rep should match the first.

RUN 2 • QUALITY

THRESHOLD TEMPO

THE SESSION

12 min easy w/u 20 min continuous @ tempo 8 min easy c/d.

TARGET ~4:35/km

WHY

Lifts the floor under your 5K — raises the pace you can hold before lactate climbs. 'Comfortably hard': you could speak a few words, not a sentence.

RUN 3 • AEROBIC + SPEED

EASY + STRIDES

THE SESSION

6 km easy, then 6 × 20 sec strides (relaxed, fast, full recovery walk-back).

TARGET 5:35–5:55/km • ≤145 bpm

WHY

Recovery that still sharpens. Strides are free economy — quick, light turnover teaches the legs to cycle fast without fatigue. Keep the run truly easy; its job is to deliver you fresh to Run 1.

RUN 4 • AEROBIC BASE

LONG RUN

THE SESSION

12 km relaxed, steady effort start to finish. Flat is fine.

TARGET 5:15–5:45/km

WHY

Maintains the engine you've already built — no need to grow it, just keep it. Stays easy so it supports the quality days rather than competing with them.

SLOTting YOUR 4 LIFTS AROUND IT — KEEP THE INTERFERENCE LOW

MON	Easy + strides (Run 3) • pair a lift here if needed
TUE	VO2 intervals (Run 1) — legs fresh, no heavy legs today
WED	Upper-body / lighter lift
THU	Threshold tempo (Run 2)
FRI	Heavy lower-body lift — keep ≥6–8 h clear of any hard run
SAT	Long run (Run 4)
SUN	Rest / recovery • or a lift

Rule of thumb: never run VO2 or threshold within 8 h of squats or deadlifts — economy dips for up to 8 h after heavy legs.



YOUR WEEK 1 PACE CARD

ZONE	PACE	FEEL
EASY / RECOVERY	5:35–5:55/km	Conversational · cap ~145 bpm
LONG RUN	5:15–5:45/km	Steady, controlled
THRESHOLD	~4:35/km	Comfortably hard, ~1 hr effort
VO2 REPS	~4:08/km	Current 3K race effort
STRIDES	mile effort	Relaxed-fast, 15–20 sec
GOAL PACE (ref)	3:57/km	Sub-20 target — not run yet

THE SCIENCE BEHIND IT (SHORT VERSION)

VO2 INTERVALS

Billat showed vVO2max reps + tempo + easy raised velocity at VO2max ~3% and running economy ~6% in four weeks. 3-min-style reps are the classic stimulus.

STRENGTH = SPEED

High-load lifting and plyometrics measurably improve running economy (Blagrove 2018; Eihara 2022). Your 4 lifts are a performance tool, not just muscle insurance.

THRESHOLD

Extends the pace you can hold before lactate accumulates — it raises the whole platform your 5K sits on.

TAPER PREVIEW

Weeks 3–4 load hard on purpose; Week 8 cuts volume 40–60% while intensity holds (Bosquet meta) to peak you on race day.

PROTECT THE MUSCLE — THE NON-NEGOTIABLES

- Do NOT run a calorie deficit. Muscle is lost to under-fuelling, not to running. Eat at maintenance or a slight surplus — chase the clock, not the scale.
- Protein 160–200 g/day (1.6–2.0 g/kg), spread across 4–5 feeds of ~40 g, with ~40 g after lifting.
- Keep all 4 lifts. Bias heavy compound lower body + a little jump/plyo work — that's what holds muscle AND improves economy.
- Separate heavy legs from quality runs by ≥6–8 h. Easy days truly easy — protects both the key sessions and your joints at bodyweight.

WEEK 1 DONE RIGHT

- ☐ 4 runs + 4 lifts completed, sessions kept apart
- ☐ VO2 reps controlled — last rep as strong as the first
- ☐ Easy + long runs kept genuinely easy ($\leq$ ~145 bpm)
- ☐ Hit 160–200 g protein every day
- ☐ Logged pace + HR for every run (bring the numbers to review)