



# trailrunners

## *Starter CaniCross Plan*

Thank you for choosing the trailrunners 5km starter CaniCross plan. If you can run 5k already but you have a dog which is new to CaniCross - then this plan is for you!

This is a guide on how to teach your dog to CaniCross in a safe way so that their body can gradually adapt to this new form of exercise, whilst avoiding overloading. Every one of us is different and we react to changes and training loads differently, so please use your judgement on how best to use this plan.

This plan has four sessions each week and we advise that you try to spread the training days out with a rest day between the high intensity sessions, so you and your dog have time to recover. Although we all love to run with our dogs, please do not take your dog for a long run if they are just starting out, just like humans it's important they build up their fitness gradually so their bodies can adapt to the training load safely.

The CaniCross sessions are short for a reason as they are designed to build up your dog's strength and fitness and to encourage them to pull into harness. You can incorporate these sessions into your usual daily walk for example, walk for 10 minutes first (allowing your dog to pee and poo), do 2 x 200m CaniCross and then walk for 10 minutes to give your dog a good warm down. If possible only have your dog in harness when they are doing the 'work' intervals so they associate the harness with pulling forward.

The plan is a good guide to safely and gradually build your dog's fitness to CaniCross 5k. However by using this plan you do it at your own risk and we advise that you check with your doctor that it is safe for you to exercise and that your dog is checked over by their veterinarian before participating in any CaniSports for the first time.

## TRAINING TERMS

**Free run** - means running with your dog off lead or without restriction.

These sessions are usually slower paced and are aimed at improving the human's running fitness and conditioning so if it's not possible to run your dog off lead, we suggest you do this session without your dog. This will help to teach your dog that they only pull when in harness. If you build CaniCross up too quickly your dog will not have the levels of fitness needed and will be more likely to run by your side.

[CaniLek training](#) - a great fitness session which you can do with your dog.

This is essentially Fartlek training which is an easy paced run or walk with bursts of faster paced running and strength exercises. "Fartlek" (Swedish for speed (fart) & play (lek) is a well known form of continuous training such as fast walking or running with intermixed changes in speed, incline or terrain to provide a variety of exercise intensities. For example over the course of 30 minutes you might switch up and down between a random mix of walking, sprinting and jogging.

CaniLek (dog-play) uses the same training principles but over the course of 30 minutes you might switch between a random mix of walking with sprinting, strength exercises, jogging and fun activities for your dog. It's best done with your dog off lead so find a safe trail to exercise with them on.

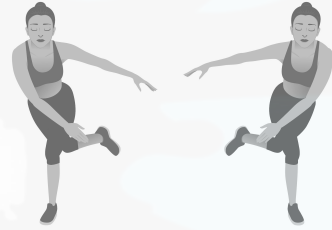
Start your trail with a fast walk for 5-10 minutes to warm up, then increase your pace to an easy jog. Every time your dog stops to sniff something, do strength exercises! When they start to walk again, continue to jog or walk. If you and your dog are feeling energetic, you can mix in some random bursts of fast paced running.

The goal is to keep your heart rate elevated for the whole duration and to vary the intensity of your workout. It's fantastic for developing your aerobic and anaerobic fitness as well as strength, speed and muscular endurance.

The most important goal though, is to have fun! It's an activity for both you and your dog so encourage your dog to explore their surroundings and to walk over different terrains to help improve their proprioception and physical conditioning. Try the exercises below or visit our [Canicross Clinic Hub](https://www.canicross.org.uk) for more ideas on strength exercises you can do during your CaniLek session and to improve your overall running conditioning.



Dips



Skater steps



Lunges



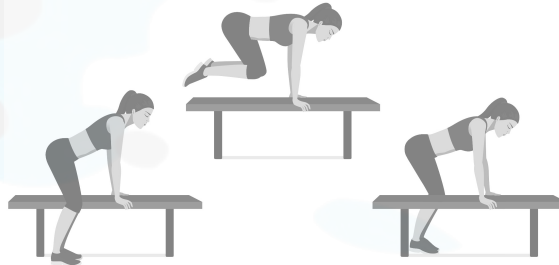
Squat jumps



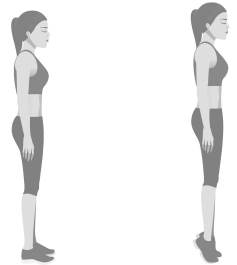
Side lunge



Standing superman



Bunny hops



Calf raises

**IMPORTANT:** Please check with your doctor that it is safe for you to exercise and please get your dog checked over by their veterinarian before participating in any CaniSports for the first time. Your dog must be 18+ months to participate in CaniSports. **Always warm up and cool down you and your dog appropriately.** For guidance please visit our [CaniCross Clinic Hub](#)>

You should never exercise your dog if it is too hot. As a rule of thumb, you can add the temperature (celsius) with the relative humidity to check. For example, 16°C x 88% humidity (16 x 88) = 1408. If this number is over 1000 you should not exercise your dog.

This is just a guide and some dogs are more affected by the heat than others so please use your own judgement on what is best for your dog. Heat exhaustion can be very serious and once your dog has suffered from it, they will be more susceptible to overheating in the future.

	<b>Long run (dogless)</b>	<b>CaniCross</b>	<b>CaniLek</b>	<b>CaniCross</b>
Week 1	Warm up for 5 mins Run at a steady pace for 5k Cool down for 5 mins	Warm up for 10 mins CaniCross 2 x 200m with 1 min rest between intervals Cool down for 10 mins	CaniLek for 30 mins Cool down for 5 mins	Warm up for 10 mins CaniCross 2 x 200m with 1 min rest between intervals Cool down for 10 mins
Week 2	Warm up for 5 mins Run at a steady pace for 5k Cool down for 5 mins	Warm up for 10 mins CaniCross 2 x 400m with 1 min rest between intervals Cool down for 10 mins	CaniLek for 30 mins Cool down for 5 mins	Warm up for 10 mins CaniCross 2 x 400m with 1 min rest between intervals Cool down for 10 mins
Week 3	Warm up for 5 mins Run at a steady pace for 6k Cool down for 5 mins	Warm up for 10 mins CaniCross 1k continuously Cool down for 10 mins	CaniLek for 30 mins Cool down for 5 mins	Warm up for 10 mins CaniCross 1k continuously Cool down for 10 mins

	<b>Long run (dogless)</b>	<b>CaniCross</b>	<b>CaniLek</b>	<b>CaniCross</b>
Week 4	Warm up for 5 mins Run at a steady pace for 6k Cool down for 5 mins	Warm up for 10 mins CaniCross 3 x 500m with 1 min rest between intervals Cool down for 10 mins	CaniLek for 30 mins Cool down for 5 mins	Warm up for 10 mins CaniCross 3 x 500m with 1 min rest between intervals Cool down for 10 mins
Week 5	Warm up for 5 mins Run at a steady pace for 7k Cool down for 5 mins	Warm up for 10 mins CaniCross 2 x 1k with 1 min rest between intervals Cool down for 10 mins	CaniLek for 40 mins Cool down for 5 mins	Warm up for 10 mins CaniCross 2 x 1k with 1 min rest between intervals Cool down for 10 mins
Week 6	Warm up for 5 mins Run at a steady pace for 7k Cool down for 5 mins	Warm up for 10 mins CaniCross 2k continuously Cool down for 10 mins	CaniLek for 40 mins Cool down for 5 mins	Warm up for 10 mins CaniCross 2k continuously Cool down for 10 mins
Week 7	Warm up for 5 mins Run at a steady pace for 8k Cool down for 5 mins	Warm up for 10 mins CaniCross 3 x 1k with 1 min rest between intervals Cool down for 10 mins	CaniLek for 40 mins Cool down for 5 mins	Warm up for 10 mins CaniCross 3 x 1k with 1 min rest between intervals Cool down for 10 mins
Week 8	Warm up for 5 mins Run at a steady pace for 8k Cool down for 5 mins	Warm up for 10 mins 3km continuous Cool down for 10 mins	CaniLek for 40 mins Cool down for 5 mins	Warm up for 10 mins CaniCross 3k continuously Cool down for 10 mins
Week 9	Warm up for 5 mins Run at a steady pace for 9k Cool down for 5 mins	Warm up for 10 mins CaniCross 3 x 1km (1 min rest between) followed by 2 x 500m (30 sec rest between) Cool down for 10 mins	CaniLek for 50 mins Cool down for 5 mins	Warm up for 10 mins CaniCross 3 x 1km (1 min rest between) followed by 2 x 500m (30 sec rest between) Cool down for 10 mins

	Long run (dogless)	CaniCross	CaniLek	CaniCross
Week 10	Warm up for 5 mins Run at a steady pace for 9k Cool down for 5 mins	Warm up for 10 mins CaniCross 4 x 1k with 1 min rest between intervals Cool down for 10 mins	CaniLek for 50 mins Cool down for 5 mins	Warm up for 10 mins CaniCross 2 x 2k with 1 min rest between intervals Cool down for 10 mins
Week 11	Warm up for 5 mins Run at a steady pace for 10k Cool down for 5 mins	Warm up for 10 mins 4k continuously Cool down for 10 mins	CaniLek for 50 mins Cool down for 5 mins	Warm up for 10 mins CaniCross 5 x 1k with 1 min rest between intervals Cool down for 10 mins
Week 12	Warm up for 5 mins Run at a steady pace for 10k Cool down for 5 mins	Warm up for 10 mins CaniCross 2 x 2.5k with 1 min rest between intervals Cool down for 10 mins	CaniLek for 50 mins Cool down for 5 mins	Warm up for 10 mins 5k continuously Cool down for 10 mins

*Congratulations on completing the trailrunners 5k Starter CaniCross plan!*

*We hope you and your furry companion have enjoyed hitting the trails together. For more training tips or to get a bespoke programme for you and your dog so you can keep progressing in the sport, please visit our [CaniCross Clinic Hub](#)>*