

TAUNTON

RUNNING CLUB



Leaders Guidelines

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Taunton Running Club has always taken pride in the development of beginners (Couchers), people that just want to run for fun, to lose a bit of weight or improve their health and wellbeing, often on the advice of their GP.

I have been fully involved in the introduction of beginners to running since the club's conception 5 years ago. Even so, and with over 62 years running experience, it still surprises me that people join our beginners or C25K programmes and come along with a unique set of questions, ideas, weight & health problems, poor mental health, poor cardiovascular systems and not so perfect physiques for running.

However, although our C25K programme takes a straightforward approach, issues do present themselves and you should be prepared to be empathetic to those less able.

I might add that less dropped out the last programme due to the kind attention of our leaders to runners particular problems. Our graduation rate increased from 64% to 72% - I'd like to beat that this time around.

Some of the issues are easy to spot, but many people live with problems that show no symptoms:-

- **Overweight** – this often manifests itself in sore calves, knees or hips – the first sign of pain stop them running – This and breathing problems is the biggest reason for dropping out.
- **Poor Diet** – many get through the day by having sugar-based 'highs' (doughnuts, chocolate etc..) and run out of energy at the end of the day – Familiarise yourself with the Running for Beginners guide
- **Diabetes 2** – Blood sugar levels can be all over the place, and they soon run out of energy
- **Anaemia** – Poor red blood cell count lowers the ability to carry oxygenated blood to the muscle tissue – You can safely recommend vitamin + Iron pills if someone looks very pale
- **Asthma** – poor breathing, resulting in inadequate oxygenation and running rhythm - increases heart rate

Breathing: Incorrect breathing is the single biggest problem we have

encountered. The techniques are taught to all 'Couchers' in their first session and are now included in the beginners' tips (Including diagram). However, there are those that do not listen, can't master the technique or are unable to breathe correctly through poor fitness or asthma. In the early sessions, there may be time to give some 'one to one' on breathing technique – if not ask them to see me after the session for 5 minutes.

Niggle & Injuries: It is so *important that all leaders are singing from the same hymn sheet* - deal in facts, not opinions – the main thing is not to let niggles get worse – in the early run/walk sessions, this is quickly dealt with as they can be asked to walk. If a 'Coucher' gets injured or has a niggle, lets discuss the problem at the end of the session to determine whether we can help with advice.

All leaders **MUST** carry first aid bum bags and if they are not leading the next week, return them to me at the end of their session.

IMPORTANT: Anyone returning to base due to injury must be accompanied back to base by another member of the group. This should not present a big problem as the furthest any group will run is a 3-mile loop.

Session Routes: During the lighter months – the public parks are ideal for the C25K sessions – Vivary – Victoria – Longrun/ Roughmoor

First Session: – All 'Couchers' to Castle Green where some basic rules and breathing techniques will be outlined – After the primary run around we can determine their pace and then split into them into groups. Each of our groups will be given a name (a colour) and allocated a leader for the Tuesday sessions outlined in the programme. It will be the leaders responsibility to arrange a group change for those that progress too quickly or too slowly – we aim to make this programme as comfortable as possible and also remove the guilt element that slower runners feel.

Weekly Sessions: – can you please follow the programme for your week and session

Couch to 5K Rules

For your safety please obey all leaders verbal commands as quickly as possible, particularly when crossing roads.

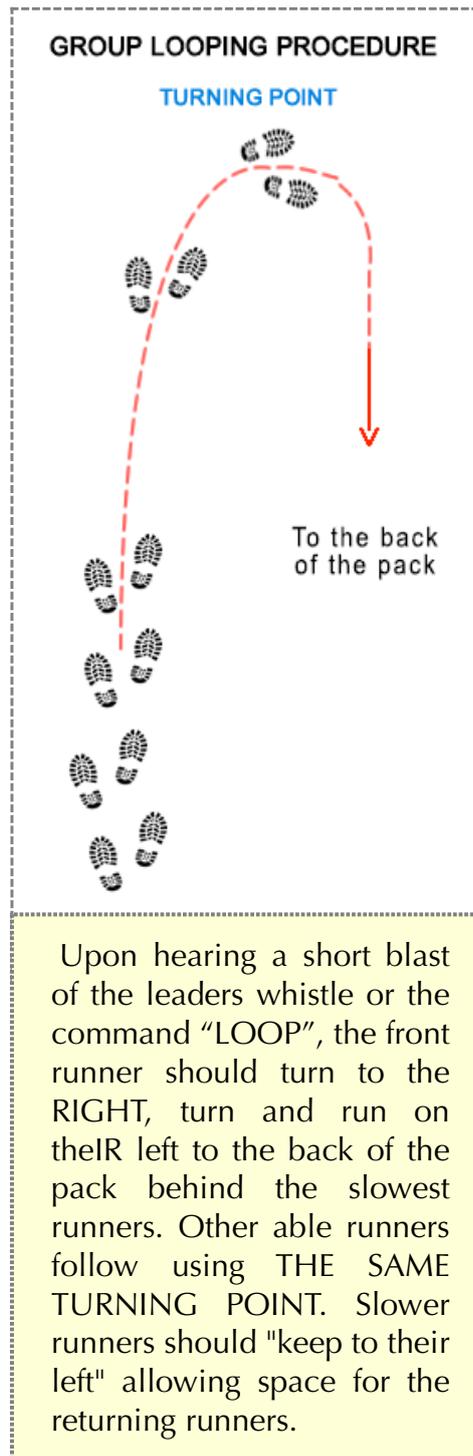
These commands or calls are typically:-

- "**KEEP LEFT**" – this is the normal rule when approaching oncoming walkers or cyclists – they will most likely also hear the command and keep to their left.
- "**CAR**" or "**BIKE**" – keep to the left - used when running on the road when there is no footpath
- "**WAIT**" or "**STAY**" – Front runners to wait at the top of a hill, the next junction or crossing

Whistle Rules

Each leader has a whistle and here are the commands:-

- Long blast "**FREEZE**" stay exactly where you are – there is a safety issue.
- 2 short blasts – Front runners loop to the back of the pack.
- 1 short blast – change from walk / march to jog / run and vice versa
- 3 short blasts – Same as the **WAIT & STAY** command above



Thank you for volunteering – if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask – the 'couches' are in your hands.