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## OVERLOAD PRINCIPLE

**Q: HI SARAH! WHAT SHOULD I DO AFTER I FINISH THE NOVICE LEARN TO RUN CLINIC? BY THE END I WILL BE RUNNING A FULL 30 MINUTES. DO I INCREASE IN INCREMENTS OF 5 MINUTES EVERY WEEK OR TWO, OR JUST A LITTLE EACH TIME I GO OUT? I PLAN ON DOING A 10K NEXT. THANKS, REGARDS JOANNE**

**A: Great question Joanne! First of all, congratulations on completing the Learn to Run program! After 10 weeks of progressive run:walking you now have a great base to build your running career upon! I often receive questions about progressing beyond a beginner or novice running program and there are some guidelines to follow when doing so.**

Becoming a runner takes patience. Resolutions tend to be loaded with intensity and firecracker power, but learning to harness that energy is the key to success. Following a progressive run:walk program is the safest and most effective way to incorporate running into your life and ensure you stick with it over the long term. I have heard way too many tales of new (and very enthusiastic!) runners who go hard and then go home injured and defeated.

Passion is only one part of the running equation and you must introduce any new activity slowly and consistently to reach your fitness goals. The body responds to gradual increases in activity (frequency, intensity and time) – which in exercise phys. circles is known as the “Overload Principle”. Yes, another one of my 'rules to live by' when training.

In order to improve our fitness (including all aspects- strength, speed, power, flexibility, stamina, balance etc) we must provide our body with MORE than it is already used to. That is, we must OVERLOAD the systems (muscular, cardiovascular etc) which causes the body to rebuild stronger in an effort to adapt to the new workload. But how much overload do we need? This is the delicate balance we call training.

Too much overload (or too much too soon) will break down the body beyond it's ability to cope resulting in fatigue or worse- INJURY.

Too little overload, however, will not get us to our goal on time.

The answer is in small, progressively higher doses on a weekly basis. Every body has different needs, of course, but there is a safe rule that you can follow when planning your own running program: The 10% rule. Simply put, you increase your weekly volume (total training time) by no more than 10% each week.

Looking at your specific question regarding running endurance- you would need to build upon your current 30 minute endurance. Let's say you are running 30 minutes (5K at a 6min km pace) 3 days per week and you want to build up to running endurance to 60 minutes (10K). I would pick 1-2 runs per week to build your endurance up to 45 minutes

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and then continue to build 1 of these runs up to 60 minutes in order to prepare specifically for the race. Start by adding 5 minutes to your long run each week. This is a very safe increase and your body should respond well to the overload.

Depending on your specific goals for the 10K race you may also include race pace repeats, over-distance training & hill training leading up to the event. There are plenty of great 10K programs available online, in books and in clinic programs.

\*A word on recovery: No program is complete without scheduled recovery weeks and rest days. Every few weeks you will need to decrease your training volume slightly (by 25-50%) to give your body a chance to play catch up: rebuild, re-synthesize, and regenerate tissues and systems. Depending on your training program you should plan in a recovery week every 3-6 weeks and you will come back stronger and healthier to your training.

Happy Training!  
Sarah.

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