

RUCHI GURNANI · NUTRITIONIST

21 days to a 5am run



How I moved my run from 6am to 5am and kept it. Three weeks, one change a week, what to eat before and after, and how to fix your sleep so the alarm stops hurting.

Swipe 👉

RUCHI GURNANI

Read this first

Nothing else in my day changed. Not the distance, not the shoes, not the diet. Only the hour. And the hour only stuck because I moved it slowly and protected it.

Week 1 moves the alarm. Week 2 moves the run. Week 3 locks it in. If 5am is not your hour, the same three weeks work for 6am or 7am. The same time every day matters more than the time itself.

THE ONE RULE

Same wake time, seven days a week. Not the perfect time. The same time. Your body stops fighting you once it knows what is coming.

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WEEK 1 · MOVE THE ALARM

DAY 1 TO 3 Alarm 15 minutes earlier than today. Nothing else. Get up, drink water, stand in daylight or at a bright window for five minutes.

DAY 4 TO 6 Another 15 minutes earlier. Keep the water and the light.

DAY 7 Another 15. You are now 45 minutes earlier than a week ago and you have not run yet. That is the point.

BED Every time the alarm moves 15 minutes earlier, bed moves 15 minutes earlier. Miss this and week 2 fails.

WHY SLOW

A one-hour jump on day one feels heroic and dies by Thursday. Fifteen minutes is small enough that your body does not notice.

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WEEK 1 · FIX THE NIGHT

- LAST CHAI** By 3 pm. Caffeine stays in the body for hours and quietly steals the early sleep you now need.
- DINNER** Done three hours before bed. Light: dal, sabzi, one roti or a small bowl of rice. A heavy late dinner keeps you awake and heavy in the morning.
- PHONE** Charging outside the bedroom from tonight. The scroll at 11 pm is the real reason 5am hurts.
- ROOM** Dark and a little cool. Curtains shut, fan on.

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WEEK 2 · THE FIRST RUNS

MORNING Alarm 15 minutes earlier again, then hold. Shoes and clothes laid out the night before, next to the bed.

DAY 8 TO 10 Walk out the door within ten minutes of waking. A brisk 20-minute walk. Do not run yet.

DAY 11 TO 14 Walk 5 minutes, jog 2, walk 3. Repeat twice. Twenty minutes total. Slow enough to talk.

WEEKEND Same wake time. Same walk. Sleeping in on Sunday resets the clock and Monday hurts again.

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WEEK 2 · EAT BEFORE AND AFTER

BEFORE Nothing, or half a banana if you feel dizzy. A short, easy run on an empty stomach uses more fat for fuel than the same run after breakfast. Warm water first, always.

NEVER Do not run fasted if you are diabetic, on sugar medicines, pregnant, or if you feel faint. Eat first, run later. Ask your doctor.

WITHIN 1 HOUR Breakfast with protein: two eggs, or moong chilla, or curd with fruit and nuts, or a paneer bhurji. Protein is what repairs the legs.

WATER Two glasses in the first hour. Chai after the water, not instead of it.

THE TRAP

A big sugary breakfast because you ran. The run took 200 to 300 calories. One aloo paratha with butter gives it all back.

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WEEK 3 · LOCK IT IN

DAY 15 TO 21

Hold the wake time. Run 3 minutes, walk 2, five rounds. Add one minute of running every two days if it feels easy.

LIGHT

Face the sunrise for the last five minutes. Morning light is what sets your body clock, so bed at 10 starts to happen on its own.

TRACK

One tick on the calendar each morning. Not distance, not speed. Just the tick. Twenty-one ticks and it is a habit.

MISSED A DAY

Nothing lost. Never miss two in a row. That is the only rule.

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IF 5AM FEELS IMPOSSIBLE

PICK YOUR HOUR

Morning or evening, the weight loss is the same. What matters is the hour you will never skip. For a mother with school runs, that may be 5:30. For a night-shift worker, 4 pm.

SMALL KIDS

Run before they wake, or push the pram. A 20-minute walk with the pram counts fully.

LATE NIGHTS

If bed cannot move before midnight, 5am is not your hour yet. Start with 6:30 and move it later.

WINTER

Dark at 5. Well-lit road, bright top, or the terrace. Or shift to 6 for the season and keep the same time.

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WHAT NOT TO DO

NEW SHOES

Do not start with a hard new pair. Old, broken-in shoes for the first three weeks.

TOO FAST

If you cannot speak a sentence, slow down. Week 3 speed is walking-plus.

KNEES

Pain that is sharp or lasts after the run is a stop sign. Walk for a week, then try again. Pain that is only stiffness is normal in week 1.

PRE-WORKOUT

No powders, no energy drinks, no black coffee on an empty stomach for a 20-minute jog. Water is enough.

FOR LIFE

Same time every day. Water, then light, then out the door. Protein breakfast after. Three habits, no cost.

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The run is one part. Your plan is the rest.



I write that plan for you. Your reports, your routine, what you actually eat. Three plans of ten days each, so it changes as you change.

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