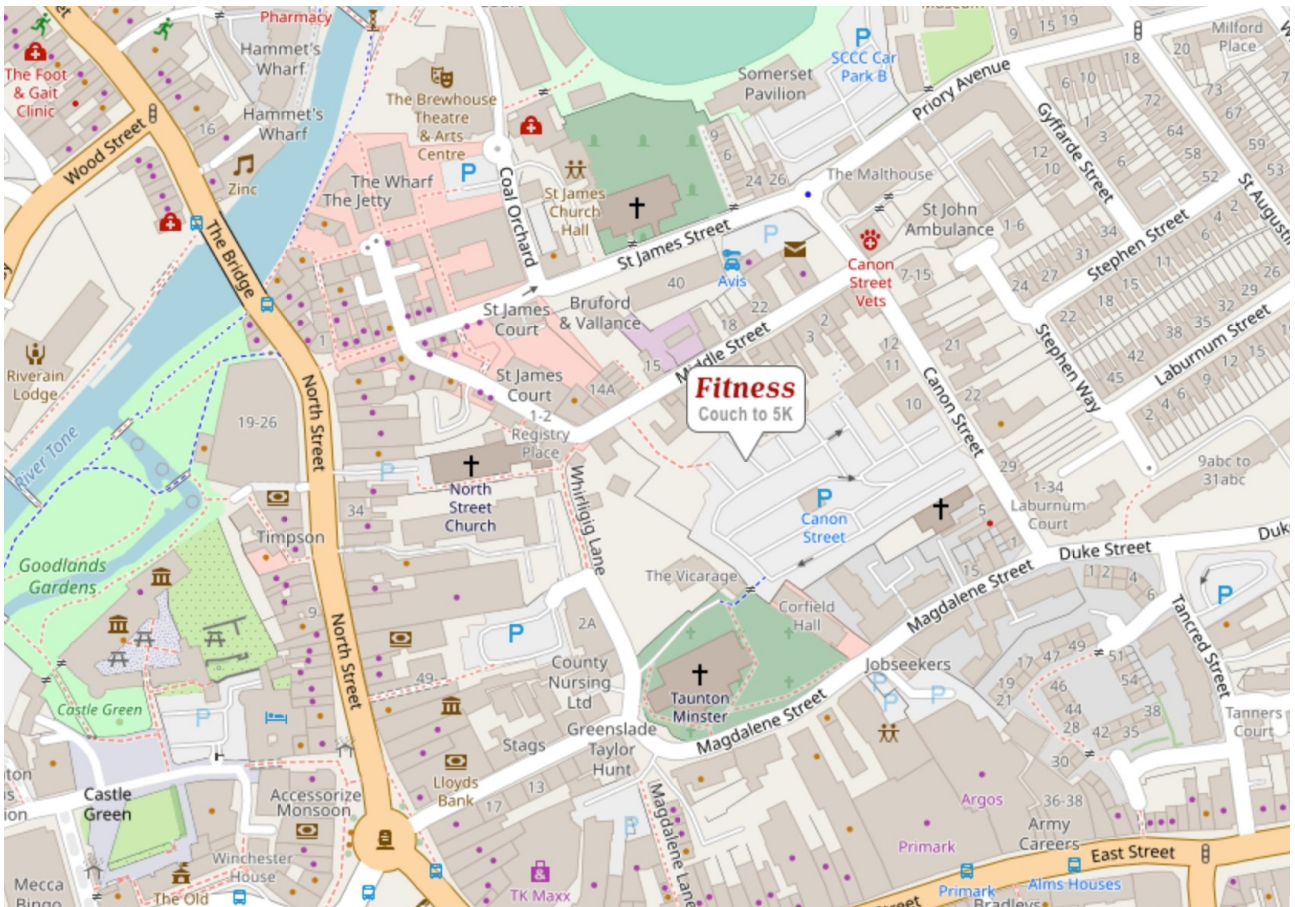




C25K Leaders Guidelines

Dated: February 2023

Assembly Point



Taunton Fitness Club takes pride in the development of beginners (couchers). These are people who just want to run for fun, lose a bit of weight, or improve their health and well-being, often on their GP's advice.

Our team have been fully involved in introducing beginners to running. Even so, the couch to 5K programme still throws up a few surprises.

Couchers come with a unique set of concerns, ideas, weight & health problems, poor mental health, inadequate cardiovascular systems and not so perfect physiques for running. However, although our C25K programme takes a steady & straightforward approach. Issues do present themselves, and you should be prepared to be empathetic to those less able than you.

Fewer dropped out the last programme due to our leaders' kind attention and their runners' particular problems. The percentage that graduated improved yet again and is a good measure of our success.

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

These are the common issues:-

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 TFC beginners running 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 or erratic breathing, resulting in inadequate oxygenation and running rhythm - increases heart rate.

Breathing – IMPORTANT: Incorrect breathing is the single biggest problem we encounter. The techniques are taught to all 'Couchers' in their first session. A diagram of the 4 steps technique is included in the beginners' guide. However, some do not listen or read, can't master the technique, or cannot breathe correctly through poor fitness or asthma. In the early sessions, it may be necessary to give some "1 to 1" on the breathing technique at the end of each session.

Niggles & Injuries: It is vital that all leaders sing from the same hymn sheet - deal in facts, not hearsay or 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, please discuss the problem at the end of the session. We can then determine whether we can help with advice.

Safety & Discipline: In the beginners' guide to running, couchers are advised that they must quickly follow their leader's instructions. They must obey whistle commands at all times for their own safety. Whistles should always be used to indicate basic commands and to overcome traffic and ambient noise. Please familiarise yourself with the whistle commands (Page 4). As couchers may move from group to group during the programme, all leaders must use the same commands. Please remember the couchers are not used to running with a group and must have confidence in their leader, especially when crossing roads.

*All leaders **MUST** carry first aid bum bags and if they are not leading the next week, return them at the end of their session. (When we have the funds)*

IMPORTANT: Anyone returning to base due to injury must be accompanied back to base by another group member. 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' assemble in Castle Green, where some basic rules and breathing techniques will be outlined. Usually, after the initial run around, we determine their pace and then split them into similar ability groups.

Each group will be given a name (or a colour) and allocated a leader for the Tuesday sessions outlined in the programme. Each leader's responsibility is to arrange a group change for those who progress too quickly or too slowly. We aim to make this programme as comfortable as possible and remove the guilt element that slower runners nearly always feel.

Weekly Sessions: – can you please follow the programme for each week and session. If you feel your group is progressing nicely – add a little extra if you wish.

Medals and Certificates: These will be awarded to all graduates – it may be encouraging to mention this from time to time throughout the programme.

Cost: The C25K programme is free of charge but it will help to encourage couchers to order club t-shirts. This will help fund future programmes and helps to promote the club.

Website: <https://taunton-fitness.uk>

FaceBook: <https://facebook.com/groups/tauntonfitnessclub>

Email: admin@taunton-fitness.uk **Tel:** 07956039666

IMPORTANT

Couch to 5K Rules

Group Leaders are responsible for your safety please obey all leaders verbal commands as **quickly as possible**, particularly when crossing roads. Don't worry about being the slowest – no-one gets left behind

These commands or calls are typically:-

- **"KEEP LEFT"** – this is the normal rule when approaching oncoming walkers or cyclists. They too, will most likely hear the command and keep to their left (your right).
- **"CAR"** or **"BIKE"** – keep to the left in single file - 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
- All runners must wear 'HiVis' vests or jackets during winter nights

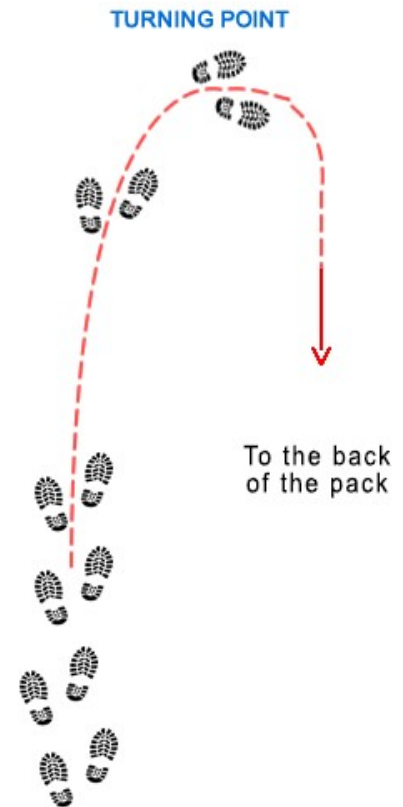


Whistle Rules For Your Groups Safety

Every leader should use the same commands:-

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

GROUP LOOPING PROCEDURE



Upon hearing a short blast of the leaders whistle or the command **"LOOP"**, the front runner should turn to the RIGHT and run on the left to the back of the pack behind the slowest runners. Other able runners follow using **THE SAME TURNING POINT**. Slower runners should "keep to their left" allowing space for the returning runners on their right.

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