



FROM CHAIR TO ANYWHERE

Programme Handbook



Welcome

We are delighted to welcome you to this programme which aims to support you to achieve your personal activity goal. Maybe you want to be able to run 5k and participate in your local parkrun, or maybe you want to run a continuous mile. However, it may not be about distance, maybe you want to be active three times a week and feel healthier as a result. We have the means of supporting a wide range of goals and we are delighted you have chosen to let us help you.

What is it?

This is a 12-week programme for people who want to start or get back into running. It involves attending sessions at your local Fitmums and Friends Club where trained Run Leaders will support you.



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www.fitmums.org.uk

How does it work?

Every Fitmums and Friends Club has a structure that allows for participants to choose their own starting point and most importantly progress at a rate that is appropriate for them. This is possible through the variety of distances available at Clubs. It is possible to choose from a new to running group (for complete beginners) and then from distances of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 or 6 miles. You choose your starting point and then progress until you feel confident at the distance. Moving up to the next distance is possible because of the support systems used within sessions to enable people with different paces to run together without anyone fearing being left behind or finding the pace too slow.

One of the things that makes a great difference is running with company. If you have ever tried running on your own, you may have experienced a period of initial enthusiasm, which can soon wane as the effort becomes more challenging. By deciding to join this programme which has extensive support systems – your chances of achieving your goal are much improved.

This programme involves weekly support at your local Club but to make the best possible progress it is vital that you try and incorporate two more runs into your week. You may feel motivated to do this by yourself, or maybe you could arrange to meet up with friends (those you meet on this programme), or maybe visit another Fitmums and Friends local Club to have the benefit of support from Leaders and other participants.

Your local Club is organised completely by volunteers, who turn out each week to facilitate a range of different run distances (and some also have walk offers too). To support this programme, a number of Leaders have volunteered to become Chair to Anywhere Champions. This means they have attended training to learn about this programme, and what support they can offer to help participants. We are delighted to be able to offer this programme thanks to the generosity of volunteers who want to support more people to enjoy being active. You will meet your Chair to Anywhere Champion when you visit your club.



Programme format

INFORMATION SESSION

This session will introduce you to the programme, explaining what support is available and what commitment is needed by you to ensure the best results. The session is facilitated by trained Fitmums and Friends Coaches. You may also meet some of the Chair to Anywhere Champions who will be supporting you in runs at your local Club. The session will also explain the Chair to Anywhere Diary which you will be encouraged to fill in so that you can monitor your progress. This session may be a face-to-face meeting or via Zoom.

WEEK 1 - BASELINE RUN/WALK

At your first session it is likely you will join the “new to running” group where you will be encouraged to just relax and have a go doing a mix of running and walking if needed but with support. If your starting point means you want to join any of the other distances, then you can. This includes the fitness walking group at Clubs where this is available. This first session will help determine which is the most appropriate group for you. If you find you are more capable than you realised then you and your Champion can chat about which group might be best for you.

WEEK 2 - WEEKLY RUNS BEGIN

For the next 11 weeks you will be encouraged to attend weekly but don't worry if you can't attend one week. We understand this may not be possible, life is busy. This is what makes this so personalised – you won't miss out if you miss a week, you pick up again when you next can attend. To help progress it will be important to keep up the independent runs in between. If you would be interested in being linked to a buddy to run with outside your weekly Club session, then just let your Champion know. They may be able to match you with someone of a similar standard to do your independent runs.

CHECK IN AND CHAT

Your Chair to Anywhere Champion will check in with you specifically at weeks 1, 4 and 8. They can help you review your progress, identify any issues, offer tips and support, or maybe get further advice from one of our Coaches. You will need your Chair to Anywhere Diary for the check in and chat.

Programme format

WEEK 12 - CELEBRATIONS

Hopefully by Week 12 you will be celebrating reaching your goal.

You may even set yourself an end of programme challenge, maybe with other people you meet at Fitmums and Friends. You could aim to attend your local parkrun, or even aim to move up to the next distance group together.

Whatever you do, you can rely on the support of your Fitmums and Friends Club and volunteer Leaders to help you as much as they can. Remember if you don't quite reach your goal, it does not matter, the systems and support at Clubs are intended to help people progress at their own pace so please do not worry if you need a little longer to reach your target.

What might help me?

PACE YOURSELF

Try not to set off too fast. This can affect your breathing rate and make you feel quite uncomfortable. Try and start steady – you can always pick up the pace but better to feel in control of your breathing.

POSTURE

Be aware of your body position – try and keep shoulders down and back, head up. As you tire you tend to collapse forward in the upper body and this can restrict breathing. Have a little check throughout your run and reset posture if you find it has changed.

USE YOUR ARMS

Arms are very useful and it's a good idea to get used to using them. Make sure they move from the shoulder, not just from the elbow. A 90 degree bend in the arm – making sure they swing forwards and backwards, rather than across the body.



What might help me?

BE CONSISTENT

Regular running will help you progress. Don't worry how long it takes you and do not compare to others. If you ensure you do your 3 runs per week you will, over time become stronger and fitter. Your body has to learn how to cope with new movement patterns which will work different muscles, and to get used to having a raised heart rate and breathing rate. Your body will get used to this but it needs time and it is quite normal for people to progress at different rates as we are all unique and individual. So be kind to yourself. This system means it doesn't matter how long you stay in any of the distance groups.

FAQ

HOW LONG AM I ALLOWED TO STAY IN THE "NEW TO RUNNING GROUP"?

You can stay in any of the distance groups for as long as you need. If your goal is to be able to run 1 mile and this is enough for you, then you never need to move up. The idea of the structure is that it can support people to progress through the distances if they wish – or stay at whichever distance they prefer.

HOW MUCH IS THIS PROGRAMME?

The introductory session and your first three runs with your local club are FREE. If, after this, you want to continue with the programme, then annual membership is £36 (if you join April-September) or £26 (if you join October-December). The membership year runs to 31 March, hence a reduced payment if joining in the second half of the year. If you need financial support to pay for membership, please ask us about the Mike Barlow Memorial Fund which might be able to help.

WHAT IF I CAN'T COME EVERY WEEK?

It doesn't matter. This programme is individual to you. You do your 12 weeks as and when you can.

FAQ

I FEEL VERY ANXIOUS ABOUT JOINING, WHAT CAN I DO?

You just need to let us know. We have a variety of options to help anyone feeling nervous. These range from meeting you outside of a venue so you don't need to walk in alone, or meeting up in a café for chat first to see if what we offer might help. Just contact inthepink@fitmums.org.uk

I AM WORRIED THAT MY PACE MAY BE TOO SLOW COMPARED TO OTHERS IN THE GROUP?

We understand this is a concern but genuinely it does not matter. Our passion is to support people to become active and it doesn't matter the starting point. Our systems allow for this. You will see how the shepherding system works when you come along and Leaders will always give reassurance that going at your own pace is important. Pace will improve providing you follow the programme and run regularly.

WILL THE SAME LEADER SUPPORT ME THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAMME?

You will always have the same Champion at the Club you attend to support you through this programme. They will meet you at the first baseline session, and be the person who checks in with you at each of the check-in points. After week 1, they will not necessarily be the Leader of your distance group. All Clubs operate a volunteer Leader system where rotation takes place to lead the various different distances. This means you will also meet and be supported by other Leaders from the Club you attend.

WHAT KIT WILL I NEED?

You will need a pair of trainers, and comfortable flexible clothing. For ladies, a sports bra is essential. Layers are best, you are likely to get very warm and so easily-removable layers are helpful. During autumn/winter, some sort of high-vis is needed (often available on loan at Clubs until you can get your own). The Mike Barlow Memorial Fund might also be able to support the purchase of kit if needed.

