

THE IMPORTANCE OF PACING OPTIMAL PACE STRATEGIES FOR YOUR RACE DISTANCE 5K and 10K

A recent study in the *Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research* demonstrated that in order to optimize 5K performance, runners should start the first mile of a 5K race at paces 3 to 6 percent faster than their goal race pace. When test subjects ran 3 to 6 percent faster the first mile, settled in to goal pace for the middle miles, and kicked the last 800m, their finishing times were, on average, 29 seconds faster than those runners who started slower than, or at, goal race pace.

So the plan at your next 5K should be to blast the first mile as fast as you can and hold on, right? Not so fast. The researchers found that running the first mile more than 6 percent faster than goal race pace considerably reduces performance, so much so that almost all the subjects who started this fast failed to even finish the race.

This scientific data coincides with Noakes, Tucker and Lambert's observations of world-record performances, where they saw the first kilometer run about 3 to 4 percent faster than goal race pace and a strong final kilometer finish.