

Probably the workout type that's the least defined, "fartlek" comes from a Swedish word meaning "speed play". Basically, it's adding accelerations or surges into a normal run.

First, if you're doing a fartlek, you should start your run with at least 10 minutes of regular easy running. Don't just jump straight into an acceleration. You can have your accelerations all in the middle, and finish with easy running, or push them further back and have them at the last portion.

The surges should be done at 5K race pace, or close to it. During the recovery period, you're back to an easy conversational pace.

Obviously you'll want a watch for this. If you don't have one, you can use arbitrary distances (two telephone poles at a faster pace, one telephone pole easy, etc.)

**Basic Example (in a 30 minute run)**

10 minutes easy

5 sets of (1 min hard, 1 min easy) = 10 minutes for that segment

10 minutes easy

OR

20 minutes easy

5 sets of (1 min hard, 1 min easy) = 10 minutes for that segment

Now, in these two examples you had 5 minutes total of hard running. You can start to gradually increase the amount of hard running by either adding more sets or increase how long you surge/accelerate in each set.

**Basic Example #2 (8 minutes of harder running, still in a 30 minute run)**

10 minutes easy

8 sets of 1 min hard, 1 min easy (16 minutes total for that segment)

4 minutes easy

OR

10 minutes easy

4 sets of 2 min hard, 1 min easy (12 minutes total for this segment)

8 minutes easy

\*The latter example might feel more difficult, because you have a 2:1 ratio of hard:easy during your fartlek portion. I'd avoid going much longer than 2 minutes for each hard part. If you want to make it more challenging, you can just add more sets.