



Handbook for Miles for Migraine 5K

Introduction:

We are excited that you are interested in helping us raise awareness and money to support research of headache and migraine disorders by organizing a 5K run. This booklet was designed to help you through the process from start to finish. While it is neither exhaustive in scope nor the only way to do things, it has been written through the lens of our experience with previous Miles for Migraine 5Ks.

Just to give a little background, the original race was organized by Eileen Jones, a nurse from San Francisco. She realized that these could be a fun way to raise money for research, awareness for headache disorders, and to promote healthy behaviors in her community. She held the first race there in 2008. In 2013 people in Philadelphia saw the need to grow this movement. They got a team of 40 people together and entered the Philadelphia Marathon. They designed shirts with MFM logo and consequently won a trophy for the “Largest Team.” This encouraged them to hold their own race in 2014 and since then MFM has expanded to over 25 cities.

Our hope is that this guide can help you to have a fun, safe, and successful race in your community and that you can take as much pride in supporting headache and migraine research as we have.

First Things First:

There are a few topics that you have to decide on early in the process of planning a race: **Date, distance, and location**. Everything else is pretty much dependent on these.

You also will need a race committee (you don't want to do this alone, trust us!) and a budget (races have some up-front expenses – we'll get into these throughout this guide).

Date:

Running occurs year-round, and there is no single answer to the right time to put on a race. It matters where you live – you may not want to have a July date if you live in Phoenix, or a January run in North Dakota (although there are likely races in those areas at that time). Even more importantly, you don't want to pick a date that is already being used by another race in your area, especially if it is one that is well established and popular. Your area may have a regional racing site that has a race calendar. If you don't know of one, contact your local running store and ask them. Also check sites like Active.com, runningintheusa.com, or runnersworld.com. Most races are on Saturday mornings, but you may be able to create interest by doing an evening race on Friday or Saturday, or a Sunday afternoon. Pick a date that gives you sufficient time to organize everything else (we suggest 6 months minimum). We started planning about 9 months early, but we didn't have a handy guide like this one 😊.

Date Options	Pros	Cons

Selected Date:_____ Distance:_____

Most races that attract casual runners are 5Ks. Anything longer can be intimidating to the less committed, but could be an attraction to more serious runners who don't see a 5K as a challenge. If you go beyond about 5 miles, you start having more issues related to medical needs and risk. We recommend that at least for your first race you go with a 5K (adding a non-competitive walk is easy to do and helps to include those who want to be part of the event but are unable to run).

When I asked a very experienced runner what was the most important thing in organizing a race, he told me “accurate distance.” This means you actually have to go out and measure your course, ideally with a meter-wheel. People who are even moderately serious about running 5Ks are often looking to set personal records and don’t want to miss one because your race is 200 meters too long or short.

If you are unable to mark the course yourself, we suggest hiring a local timer.

Location:

As with the date, there is no right answer for this. There are a number of considerations when picking a race location, however.

- Is the location available on the date I picked?
- Is it free or is there a charge? What rules will the owners have in place?
- Will the race be on a trail or on the roads?
- Will it cross roads?
 - If your race involves public roads, you will likely need to talk with the local police about traffic safety, road closures, etc.
- Is there adequate parking at the site?
- Will the start and finish be in the same area?
- Is there space available for sponsors to have display tables?
- RESTROOMS!!! Are there enough restrooms on site or will you need to bring in portable toilets?

Location Options	Pros	Cons

Location Selected: _____

Race Committee:

We recommend at least five people for this. Try to diversify by including young and older people. There is nothing magical about the composition of your committee other than you want it to be people who work well together and have varied skills. For example, a student can help with organizing volunteers and with computer work.

Committee Members:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Budget:

It is helpful to get a sponsorship commitment or two early so you have some working capital and an idea of how much you can spend. Miles for Migraine may be able to provide you with some start-up funds. Some of the upfront expenses include event insurance (\$300-500), permit for event (\$150-\$10,000 depending on location), sign/brochure printing, location rental, awards/medals, swag, race bibs, and advertising. You will also want to have some basic snacks, like water, oranges, and granola bars on race day.

MFM can supply the t-shirts and help design the flyers for advertising. We also have a registration page you can use.

Hopefully a successful race will cover all these expenses and raise significant money through sponsors and race registrations, but some of these things must be covered early.

Insurance:

We require you to buy insurance if you plan to use our branding / logo, shirts, or website. We will get the insurance for you and deduct the cost from your final payout.

Timing:

You want to be able to get accurate times for race finishers, and you want to be able to get them quickly for post-race awards and for publishing results. The two main options are hand timing and chip timing. Chip timing involves a “chip” which is attached to each runner in some fashion (often on the race bib or tied to the shoe) and a sensor and the start and finish lines. This provides immediate timing as it is linked to a computer, but is costlier than hand timing. If your race is going to be large, like greater than a couple hundred runners, you should probably consider chip timing. However, for your first race it is very possible that you will not have such a turnout, and hand timing is adequate. This can still provide quick results turnaround if you have an experienced timer. For either option, we again suggest talking with the local running store or running club for suggestions.

Chip timing requires special equipment and generally costs \$800-\$1500 because you will have to hire a timer who will bring the equipment. They also usually have a microphone and speaker so you can make announcements. Hand timing is much less.

Graphic Design:

Miles for Migraine has a logo which will be made available to you. Depending on your skill level, you may also need help with creation of sponsorship brochures, posters, a website, etc. Whether doing it yourself or with a designer, it is ***important that the Miles for Migraine logo is not altered.***

Sponsors:

Miles for Migraine will be responsible for developing “national” sponsors, such as larger corporations. If you have a relationship with a company which is interested in national level sponsorship, you will need to put them in contact with the MFM team: info@milesformigraine.org

Obtaining local sponsorships is vital to the fundraising success of your race. Race registrations will only cover the actual expenses of the race unless you

are blessed with a very large turnout. Asking for sponsorship can be a daunting and intimidating task. We have included below a number of business categories that commonly are willing to provide sponsorships. Not every sponsor is able to give the same amount, and no amount should be considered too little. Consider creating a tiered system of sponsorship, starting at the top with something like “gold” or “platinum” and working down. Set your bar high and don’t be afraid to ask for large amounts, but don’t be disappointed with smaller amounts. In the first MFM, we had sponsors ranging from \$100 to \$1500. Every sponsor got their logo displayed at the race, with the size and prominence of the display dependent upon the donation size.

You will need a sponsorship brochure which describes the race, the cause (headache and migraine research and awareness), the donation levels, and what each level provides. For example, a silver level sponsorship may allow the sponsor to have a display table at the race, while a bronze level only provides logo display. For example, a local hospital could be your “t-shirt sponsor” for a significant donation and then their logo would be the only one displayed on the race t-shirt in addition to the MFM logo.

Start asking businesses early in the process. Many companies create their budgets, which include charitable giving, at the first of the year so if possible, contact them as close to this time as you can.

When you call a business, ask for the person responsible for marketing. Usually this person will be accustomed to sponsorship requests and can tell you how to proceed. Introduce yourself and the race and let them know that you are calling to see if they could be a sponsor. Offer to send a brochure, either by mail or electronically (via email is preferred as this gives you an easy way to contact them later in follow up). If they agree to be a sponsor, they will need to provide an electronic version of their logo along with their donation.

Businesses to consider:

- Local hospital
- Physical therapists
- Physicians
- Dentists
- Local banks

- Law firms
- Urgent care facilities
- Restaurants*
- Salons/Spas
- Hotels**
- Pharmacies
- Convenience stores***

*Some restaurants will offer to provide coupons or products rather than money. This can be very useful to use to reward your volunteers or to create a gift basket to raffle after the race. If offered food, be sure it is enough to be useful and that you have a means of getting it to the race and keeping it fresh.

**Hotels may be interested in offering a discounted rate for race participants from out of town.

***One local convenience store provided bottled waters for our race as part of their sponsorship.

Registration:

Online registration pages seem to be the most common and convenient way of doing this. We use RaceRoster.com and they were helpful in helping to set up the registration page and included a lot of important information. They do not charge for registration, and instead they charge for donations. It's also good to allow same day registration (about 15% of our participants were same day registrants) because some people want to wait to see what the weather is like or how they are feeling on race day, or just wake up and decide to run a race last minute.

For a 5K race, typical registration fees are around \$20-30. Anything less and you will have trouble covering your expenses, and anything more and you may price yourself out of the market.

Advertising:

For our first race, we wasted some money advertising in places with little return on our investment. For example, I think newspaper advertising is very expensive, and most race runners are younger and therefore less likely to be readers of print news. Watch other races in your area and see how they

market themselves. Is there a local event website that will advertise for free or inexpensively? Does your community have a tourism department that promotes things to do on the weekends? Make sure that any local site dedicated to outdoor activities has your race information.

Road signs can be helpful and not too expensive, but they are time consuming to place and then you have to remember to take them down. If you can find a place to print these for you reasonably and have some obvious places to put them, they may be useful.

Postcards are an easy “leave behind” at local businesses. Often, businesses will allow you to either place one on their counter or sign, or leave a stack of them. Make sure these have the race information including the registration website. We used overnightprints.com who made 1000 postcards for just over \$100.

The two absolute best means of advertising are via word of mouth (just keep telling everyone you know about it) and social media. Create a Facebook event page and then invite all your friends. Continue to share it periodically, and encourage your friends to do so also. If you have a few friends who have an especially large following, be certain to specifically link it to their page. It’s ok to be a little aggressive in putting your race on Facebook or Twitter or any of the other sites. It’s for a great cause.

Volunteers:

You will need a lot of volunteers to help you. You need people to help with pre-race marketing, fundraising, and planning. You will need help organizing your registrations and being certain to have all the race day packets arranged. Most importantly, you will need volunteers on the day of the race, and you will need someone in charge of organizing them, because you are going to be too busy. Below is a list of the types of volunteers you may need, depending on your race.

- Volunteer coordinator – meet with this person early on and go over all the different areas that need covered, then connect anyone who even mentions in passing that might want to help with the coordinator
- Parking directors
- Registration table – 2 for preregistered, 2 for same day registrations

- General direction givers/problem solvers
- Swag distributors
- Snack table management – someone to get the snack to the site and set them up for participants
- Timing helpers
- Clean up (trash collection, table breakdown, etc)
- Course monitors – especially if you have a water station, but also just someone at the turn around spot or anywhere that the course could be confusing
- Award table – setting up awards, helping to hand them out
- Photographer

You can never have too many volunteers. Depending on what their role is, allow them to run the race for free and give them all a t-shirt.

As part of this, ask your local EMS if they would be willing to bring an ambulance and be available during the race if necessary. Be certain to recognize them at the race and thank them publicly for coming.

Awards:

As with many aspects of race planning, there is not a single correct answer regarding awards. We don't divide groups by age- instead we give trophies to top 3 male / female winners. Trophies, plaques, medals, or other awards can be costly. It is not our impression that you need to spend a lot of money on fancy awards, but people do seem to enjoy winning something, even if small. We recommend medals as they are less expensive but still seem significant. This is another area where you can likely get these done locally at any trophy shop, or there are many different online businesses which can provide these.

Swag:

You've seen people wearing race t-shirts. People love to get something as a memento of running a race. T-shirts are by far the most common, and allow for printing of the MFM logo as well as possibly having sponsor logos. There are many online companies that will print these at very reasonable prices. You do get what you pay for, however, so decide early what your swag budget is and try to get the nicest stuff you can. We recommend trying to stick at \$10

or less per runner. If you have a local business who does t-shirt printing and you want to support local businesses, this is an excellent opportunity to do so.

If you are environmentally conscious, consider using SustainU at www.sustainuclimbing.com. They make very nice clothing out of recycled plastic and cotton scrap. They are entirely made in America and are very easy to work with. They are not quite as inexpensive as some other options, but they are reasonable. For our 2016 races we had all the shirts made by this company and shipped to each site. This is likely an option going forward.

Some races do shorts, hoodies, towels, and even socks. Be creative, but make sure you don't turn people off so that they don't want to come back next year.

Be sure to have your give-away organized prior to race day, such as separated by size. And have an accurate list of what people registered for so that you don't run out. Get some extras for people who sign up on the day of the race also, but not so many that you waste a lot of money.

Race Day:

This day is going to be crazy for you. Being prepared will make it much more enjoyable for you and those involved. Refer to our race day checklist for more details, but below are at least some of the things you will need to make sure get taken care of. Get there very early.

- Course markings on the course and easily visible
- Finish line marked
- Signage placed for start/finish
- Bathrooms unlocked and working
- Registration materials ready – registration forms, pens, markers, bags for cash/checks, change available, chairs for volunteers
- Preregistration participant list to be checked off when runners arrive
- Race packets/swag organized
- Locations for sponsor displays set
- Tables set up for awards, snacks, registration
- Bullhorn/speaker for announcements, race starting, awards ceremony
- Ensure timing company arrives and is set up appropriately, and can add in your same day registrants

-Extension cords and surge protector/power strip if timing company needs power

Pre-Race Day Checklist (things to finalize in the last 2 weeks before your race)

- Sponsorship banners printed and delivered
- Trophies/medals purchased
- Confirmation with race location including restrooms, cleanup, etc
- Volunteers organized by job
- Swag ordered and delivered
- Course measured and marked (or at least know where marks go)
- Drinks and snacks purchased
- Collect pens, markers, cash holder, clipboards
- Cash on hand to make change on race day
- Race bibs (numbers) and safety pins obtained

Day Before Race Day Checklist

- Registrations printed including name, gender, age, and t-shirt size
- Enough t-shirts available for pre-registered participants?
- Confirmation email sent to all pre-registered participants with location, time, other needed instructions
- All items from Pre-Race Day Checklist loaded for transport to race location
- Duct Tape available – you can never have too much duct tape
- Bullhorn if needed
- Confirm with Race Timer
- Extension cords (may not be needed, but never wrong to have)

Race Day Checklist

- Shirts/swag loaded
- Registration lists loaded
- Awards loaded
- Drinks/snacks loaded
- Banners/signs loaded
- Pens/markers/cash/duct tape/clipboards loaded
- Mark course
- Smile

- ___ Set up registration table and instruct volunteers on process of check-in
- ___ Put up sponsorship banners and any other signage needed
- ___ Restrooms open?
- ___ Set up tables for drinks/snacks
- ___ Set up tables for awards
- ___ Set up tables for distribution of t-shirts (can be done at registration or after race)
- ___ Announcements to make just before race:
 - Smile
 - Thank sponsors by name
 - Thank participants for coming
 - Remind them of the importance of the cause
 - Give any particular instructions needed regarding the course
 - Remind of awards following completion of race
 - Introduce any dignitaries
- ___ Have fun
- ___ Ensure lots of photographs taken
- ___ Submit race results to local race website, newspapers