

Ep #4: How to Pace & Breathe for Your Best Run



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With Your Host

Jill Angie

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Welcome to *The Not Your Average Runner Podcast*. If you're a woman who is midlife and plus sized and you want to start running but don't know how, or if it's even possible, you're in the right place. Using proven strategies and real-life experience, certified running and life coach Jill Angie shares how you can learn to run in the body you have right now.

Hey there, beautiful. You are listening to episode four of the Not Your Average Runner podcast. I'm Jill and in this episode, I'm going to talk to you about how to pace yourself and breathe while you're running. I'm also going to answer a listener question about running shoes, and then I'm going to tell you all about the underwear that I'm completely obsessed with this week.

So whether you're a brand-new runner or an experienced pro, or maybe you're even just contemplating doing it because all your friends are doing it, you are in the right place.

Now, before we get started, I really need to update something from the last episode, because I completely butchered the last name of a really famous long-distance runner. His name is Meb, and his last name is pronounced Keflezighi. I had to look it up on YouTube. There's a little video of him pronouncing his name for people because it does not sound at all like it's spelled. In my opinion it's actually a beautiful name and listening to him pronounce it is delightful. You totally need to look him up. We'll have a link to him in the show notes. Yeah, so Meb Keflezighi, that's his name.

Alright, so the first thing I want to highlight today is we actually have our very first Ask the Curvy Coach question from Michelle. And thank you so much, Michelle, for writing. I'm going to send you a Not Your Average Runner car magnet in the mail as a thank you.

So Michelle writes, "Hey, I would love to know which running shoes are the best ones. I just did my first week for runs with your jumpstart program and

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I've been running in a pair of old Sketchers that I found in my closet. I know I need proper running shoes, but when I go to a running store I'm overwhelmed by all the choices and I don't want to spend money on bad shoes. And I also feel a little bit uncomfortable because everybody there looks like a size six and that's not what my body looks like, so I'm afraid that they might ignore me or tell me to leave." I'm just laughing because, Michelle, this is constantly a question that I get from people and you're not alone.

She goes on to say, "I've been trying to research shoes, but there's so much conflicting information and I want to set myself up for success." Okay, first of all, Michelle, I want to congratulate you on finishing your first week of running. You've done the very hardest part; starting. And as far as the best shoes go, I get this question all the time.

The thing is, there really is no best shoe overall; there's just the best one for you. Everyone's feet are different. We all have different biomechanics on top of that; from our feet to our knees to our hips to our core. We all run slightly differently, so the best shoe for you isn't necessarily the best shoe for somebody else.

So the best shoe for you is, first of all, one that fits properly, and one that works with your foot structure, your running mechanics, your weekly mileage, your body weight; among other things. There's actually a lot that goes into it.

So I think the most reliable place to get running shoes is actually to go to a specialty store; like a running specialty store like Fleet Feet or Road Runner Sports – we have a lot of those on the East Coast. And then a lot of communities have just specialty locally owned running stores as well. So I would go to one of those.

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Walk in, talk to the store associate about your running history and explain to them that you're brand new and tell them what your goals are. Maybe it's to run three times a week, maybe you're training for a 5K. whatever it is that you want to work towards, tell them what that is. They'll measure your feet, they'll watch how you run on the treadmill and then they'll make some recommendations for shoes based on what they see. After that you can try on all the shoes, you can run in the shoes on the treadmill and then decide which ones feel the best to you; which ones you like.

And a reputable store will actually allow you to run in those shoes at home and outside for maybe 30 days and then still return them if they don't work out. So that's kind of the number one best option. And here's what I found too, that a lot of folks have a little bit of fear. A lot of plus size women – I guess I should be more clear about that – have a little bit of fear about going to a specialty running store because they think, “Oh I don't fit in or I'm not the right size.” Whatever reasons you have about feeling uncomfortable there, I've never gone to a running store and have anyone give me a funny look or refuse to serve me or basically say, “You don't belong here.” Your money is as good as anybody else's, and honestly, people who are runners are the ones that work in running stores, and runners want everybody to run.

I've never met a runner that said to me, “You should probably stop doing that. You're too overweight.” So I promise, go to the running store. It will be a good test of your self-esteem to just walk right up to an associate and say, “Hey, I'm a new runner. I need some help. What can you do for me?”

Now, if you don't have access to a running store, the next best option is a site called RoadRunnerSports.com. Now, this is an internet based running shoe store. They actually have brick and mortar stores; I live right next door to one, which is awesome. But they started on the internet and that's really where they excel.

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So they have this thing called the She Finder, which is going to help you understand your feet and your running style and your preferences. They'll ask you a bunch of questions; and then based on your answers, the site will make recommendations for a few different types of shoes. Shipping is free – always free. The return policy is very generous. It's always at least 60 days and you can return the shoes even if you've gone running in them. Their prices are always also very reasonable and I've had great luck dealing with them.

They also have a VIP program where if you pay a small annual fee, you get additional discounts. So if you don't have a local running store near you, I would go and check RoadRunnerSports.com and start there.

Okay, if you want to get your question answered on the podcast on Ask The Curvy Coach, all you have to do is email me at podcast@NotYourAverageRunner.com. I'm going to pick one question each week to read and answer, and you can ask me anything. If I pick your question to answer on the show, I'm also going to send you a Not Your Average Runner care magnet; so, yay for that.

Alright, now it's time for us to get into the main topic for this week, which is pacing and breathing. Now, often when somebody starts running, they actually feel like their heart is going to beat right out of their chest, or they're so out of breath it seems like something is wrong. It can be really scary, honestly. Because when you see people running in commercials or you see pictures of them in magazines, they make it look super easy. Nobody ever looks like they're all sweaty and winded or anything; they just look like models – which, by the way, they are and that's why it looks easy. There is nothing wrong if your heart is breathing faster or if you're breathing more heavily, and there's a really simple explanation for it and there's a really simple fix for it.

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So first of all, running takes a lot more effort than walking. You're used to walking. It feels easy. You've been doing it your whole life. Your heart and lungs and muscles are super adapted to that they barely have to put in any effort to go for a walk. So that's kind of your baseline. And now when you run, your body has to circulate more blood to bring oxygen and nutrients to your muscles so that they can do the extra work of running. Which means your heart has to pump faster and your lungs need to work a lot harder to get that extra oxygen in. That means your heart rate goes up and you start breathing more heavily. That's as simple as it is. It's just a reflection of the additional effort and work that you're putting into moving forward between running and walking. And it's completely and utterly normal.

In fact, if you started running and your heart rate didn't go up and your respiration didn't increase, I'd be like, "Are you an android because that's not normal?" So for a first time though, it can be a little scary, especially if you're not somebody that's been doing a lot of cardio. And here's another thing that's really common for first timers is that they think they need to run as fast as possible. They think running is sprinting. They're actually two different things and running as fast as possible raises your respiration and your heart rate even more. And then it kind of gets to that tipping point where your body can't keep up and it means you can't go very far and your heart and lungs are just like "You have to stop." And that's when you get that feeling of your heart pounding out of your chest or not being able to catch your breath.

So that's literally why it happens. And so now that you kind of understand that it's sort of a normal thing whenever you start running that your heart rate and your respiration will go up, how to fix it is that we adjust our speed.

So you're going to start by running a lot slower than you think you need to run. Each time you go for a run and give your body a little more challenge, it will respond by getting stronger. The body is truly magical that way. But you can't overwhelm it by just sprinting right out of the gate, right. You can't

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do it long enough so that your body can adapt. So we start by keeping it a bit slower. Your running when you're a beginner should be just a bit faster than a walk.

So what I want for you to feel is that your heart is beating a little bit faster, your breathing is increased, but we keep our pace at a place where you can still carry on a short conversation with somebody. So for example, if you can only gasp out one word answers when you're running, you're probably going too fast. But if you can recite the Gettysburg Address, you probably need to step it up a little bit. So we want to be in that sweet spot. When you're running, you should never feel like you just can't catch your breath, and if you ever do feel that way, I want you to slow yourself down.

So another way to look at it is to use something called the rate of perceived exertion, or the RPE scale. And basically, this is – different people do it different ways. I like to use a scale of zero to ten, where zero is sleeping and ten is being chased by a bear. Okay, so those are the two opposing ends. And when you're running, as a beginner you should aim to be in the range of like four to six, sort of there in the middle. So faster than a brisk walk but running slower than you would be to catch a bus.

So it might actually take you a few workouts and a few runs to get that dialed in for yourself, and that's completely okay and normal. You're just going to think of each run like a practice session. Right now, you're a beginner; everyone starts somewhere. Whatever your speed is when you're running, it doesn't matter. Stay consistent. Keep yourself in that four to six range on the RPE scale and over time your pace and distance that you can go at that same effort level will change.

So, a month from now you'll still be running keeping your effort level at a four to six, but your body is going to allow you to run faster at that effort level, or go farther, or maybe even both. So the goal here is not for running

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to feel easier but for you to get stronger and be able to do more with that same level of effort. Does that make sense?

So you want to challenge yourself a little bit, but not so much that you're going to pass out. And then learn what that sweet spot is for you so that you're constantly consistently operating at that level and watching your body get stronger.

Okay, so that's the pacing piece; and that kind of ties in with the breathing piece as well. It's all sort of two sides of the same coin. So a lot of running experts will tell you that breathing through your nose, or at least in through your nose and out through your mouth is the best way to breathe when you're running. I think that's a very advanced technique, and even then, it really doesn't work for everyone.

So I'm just going to give you permission right now, breathe in and out through your mouth if you want to or need to. I mean, especially when you're first getting started, you need as much air coming into your lungs as possible. And sometimes, especially if you have a small nose, like I do, you just can't get as much air into your lungs breathing through your nose as you need. So I'm giving you permission, ignore anybody that tells you that nose breathing is the best way to do it and just breathe in and out through your mouth if that is what feels good to you.

And as far as, you know, how fast you should be breathing, again, like think about how much you can speak during a run. And if your breathing allows you to give very short answers in a conversation, that's probably great. If you can barely squeak out a one-word answer to a question, you're running too fast. And if you can recite the Gettysburg Address or sing an entire Beyoncé song, you are probably going too slow.

The other thing I want to tell you about – this is actually less related to pacing and breathing and more about – there will be people in your life that

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are going to want to tell you what to do. And you might be somebody like me, that gets really red in the face when you run. I always do. And I've had people at the gym come up to me and say, "Excuse me, are you okay?" Because like I'd just finished a really hard run on the treadmill, I'm sitting down stretching, my face is red, I'm dripping sweat. It just makes me laugh because some people just get red. And I've seen people that were super fit get really red in the face too. Like I think it's genetic.

But what's happening is the blood in your face is going to the capillaries, to the surface of the skin, to help with heat transfer. And we lose a lot of heat through our heads – which by the way is why your mom always told you to wear a hat in the winter – but the cheeks and the forehead and the neck are a really efficient way for your body to release heat, because there's a lot of capillaries. So that's why your face gets red. It doesn't mean anything has gone horribly wrong. If you're dizzy, lightheaded, or if you feel like your heart's pounding out of your chest, definitely sit down, take some water, assess the situation. But for the most part, if you're just tired and breathing heavily from exertion, a red face just means that you have more blood rushing to your face and more heat exchange going on.

Okay, so that's kind of our main topic. And what I want to challenge you with this week – keep running like you've been doing, but play around on your running intervals with different effort levels and sort of learn what they feel like for you. What does a three feel like? What does a five? What does a seven? And then practice finding your sweet spot in the middle. And then start watching, consistently, as over the months, if you keep sticking with constantly running at that sweet spot of effort, does your amount of pace or your distance – the amount of work that you can do at that effort level will go up over time.

Alright, this week, I am obsessed with underwear. And I'm always on the hunt for good running undies; or some people call them rundies. Good running undies are super important because if your underwear does not fit

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right, if it rides up, if it chafes, whatever, running is seriously not going to be fun.

So a sports bra is super important, but underwear is probably a close second. It's right up there, in my mind, with socks. So the best ones are mostly synthetic with very few or no seams. And I used to run in Moving Comfort underwear. They had the best running underwear, and then they discontinued them. Then I switched to Lane Bryant; I love those, then they discontinued them. And so on the very enthusiastic recommendation of Melissa, who's one of the run your best life members, I tried out Duluth Trading.

And they have a few different varieties. I chose the Armachillo ones because I thought the name was funny, and also because it said they're supposed to keep you cool when you're running. Also, on top of that, the fabric was really nice and it came in a really pretty raspberry color.

Oh my god, I love them. They are super soft, totally stayed put when I worked out and above all there was no chafing; so, yay for Duluth Trading underwear. They did not shrink after washing, and I actually put them in the drier, which normally I don't put my undies in the drier, except for the cotton ones, because I prefer to just – all the synthetic stuff, like I don't want to wear it out prematurely by putting it in the drier. So I always just like let them hang on a rack. But I put these in the drier because I wanted to see what they were going to do. They didn't shrink. And then the next time I wore them, I did put them on my hanging rack and they dried super fast.

I cannot recommend them enough to you. Actually, I went back to the website and ordered two more like right after my first workout. So, the Armachillo ones are supposed to keep you cool, and I actually can't speak to that because when I used them it was like 20 degrees outside, so Mother Nature was already keeping me cool. But the fabric dried really quickly

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when I hung them to dry, so I think that's a good indicator that they're going to be great for like wicking moisture away.

Now, the Armachillo ones are awesome. They also come in a couple of other options that I also recommend. There's the Buck Naked kind and the Invisi-skivvies kind. And so, each of them has its own things to recommend and they all come in the same styles. They come in bikini, high cut, hipster and briefs. They're about \$15 a pair. They do come in cotton but I never recommend cotton for running or working out in general because it tends to trap moisture and heat and when you are generating a lot of body heat, especially if you've got tights on, the last thing you want is for yourself to get overheated.

So, go to Duluth Trading and check out the Armachillo, the Buck Naked and the Invisi-skivvies. I tried the high cut, and that's just like my general favorite type of underwear to run in. But they do have, like I said, the bikini, the hipster and the briefs. And if you remember my sock dilemma from episode one – while I was at Duluth I found some no show socks, so they're not quarter height, they're no show, which is awesome. It said they were guaranteed to stay in place. I tried a pair; they actually worked as advertised. They were nice and cushiony; I love them. So they're called No Show Stay Put Socks and they come in lots of colors too.

So you can find links to both the undies and the socks and to Meb Keflezighi, and his amazingness, all in the show notes which is at NotYourAverageRunner.com/4. You could also go to NYARpodcast.com and all the episodes are listed there.

And yeah, I'm surprised – who knew that Duluth was such a great place to get running gear? I'm super happy about that.

Well my friend, our time is up again. This podcast episode went really fast for me. So if you're anxious to get started but you're like, "I've been

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listening to the podcast but I'm not quite sure what to do. This all seems too much, I don't know where to start." I do have a free one-week Jumpstart plan that's going to give you a week's worth of runs to get you started and give you a point of entry. And it's actually the same plan that Michelle, from earlier in this episode, used. So you'll get your first week of workouts along with some tips to help you get started, and I promise, they're super easy and anyone can do them. And after that, I'll check in with you a little bit on email.

So if you want to get that, just head over to www.NotYourAverageRunner.com/start to download the plan. Do that, make sure to check your email for the plan, because it's going to come that way, and if you can't find it right away, if you've waited a few minutes and the email hasn't come through, go ahead and check your spam because sometimes that happens.

So that is www.NotYourAverageRunner.com/start. And of course, there's always a link to that in the show notes, which again, for this episode is www.NotYourAverageRunner.com/four. So I promise your first week of runs is going to be amazing. And I am so glad that you and I are on this journey together, my friend. This has been so much fun. Four episodes in and I just love talking to you about running. So I hope you go out and have an amazing week and I'll talk to you next time; bye.

Thanks for listening to this episode of *The Not Your Average Runner Podcast*. If you liked what you heard and want more, head over to www.notyouraveragerunner.com to download your free one-week jumpstart plan and get started running today.