

## Ep #8: How to Shut Down Your Inner Mean Girl



### Full Episode Transcript

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.

You are listening to episode nine of The Not Your Average Runner Podcast. I'm your host, Jill Angie. And in this episode, we're going to talk about your inner mean girl, how to set custom intervals in Runkeeper, and my current secret obsession that you can try out without spending a single penny. So whether you're a brand-new runner, an experienced pro, or maybe even just contemplating it because all your friends are doing it, you are in the right place.

Okay, so we're going to get started this week with Ask the Curvy Coach. Now, Alyssa R writes, "Hi there, I'm loving the podcast and I have a question about Runkeeper. I've heard you mention it as a good free app for tracking runs and intervals. I have the free version and want to program in my own intervals, but that doesn't seem to be an option. Can you help?"

Great question, Alyssa, I get asked this a lot actually, and Runkeeper is my favorite free running app. They're constantly improving it, but the option to do custom intervals is hard to find. I promise you, though, it is there. So I'm going to walk you through it today, but I also created a downloadable PDF tutorial that you can grab for free off my website. So just head over to the show notes for this episode – and that's [notyouraveragerunner.com/9](http://notyouraveragerunner.com/9) – to grab it.

And I'm going to talk you, today, through the iPhone version, but Android is similar and on the website, I have both tutorials available for download. So the first thing you're going to do is open the app and then make sure you

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have cellular data turned on for Runkeeper, or the GPS won't work. Now, you should see a map of where you are, a start button at the bottom and then some other boxes like activity, workout, music, and audio stats.

Go ahead and click on workout, then click on custom at the bottom of the next screen. Now, at the top of that screen, you'll see *enter name for your workout*. So you're going to go ahead and put the name of your workout in there and hit done. And then move down to the green plus sign; click that to add a new action. And this is where you're going to start building out your custom intervals.

So you have some choices here. The speed is going to be either slow, steady or fast, and then the interval itself will be either time or distance. Now, I like to pick fast to designate running and slow to designate walking, but you can choose slow and steady or steady and fast, it's totally up to you. But words are irrelevant; they're just what the voice cue will tell you to do when the interval changes. Unfortunately, there's no option for a beep, which is kind of a bummer, but maybe we'll drop a line to Runkeeper and ask them to put that in there as an option.

Anyway, you're going to pick your pace – slow, steady or fast – for that first interval and then choose either time or distance. I usually do time. For example, if I'm going to do an interval run that's on one of my, sort of, short run days, I might say, "Okay, I'm going to do a 30 second run and a 60 second walk." So for my first interval, I'll choose fast, and then I'll choose time and scroll down to 30 seconds.

So once you've chosen that, you're going to hit the back button and you'll go back to the previous screen and you'll actually see your interval there with a red circle next to it. So your first interval is in. now you're going to hit the green plus sign to add the next one. Now you have a run and a walk interval set up. And here's the bonus – you just need to tell it how many

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times to repeat that series. You don't actually have to go in and put like 50 run and 50 walk intervals.

So click the repeat button, pick the number of times you want to do that interval minus one. So if you want to do 20 repetitions in total, you're going to pick repeat 19 more times. Then, if you want to have a warm up included in your workout, hit the warm up button. That will give you five minutes. I actually don't normally do this because I like to start Runkeeper just when I'm ready for my first running interval. So I warm up, then I hit start, but if you prefer to tuck your phone away before your warm up, you can use Runkeeper to cue the warm up. And just remember that the walking part of your workout will be included in your stats and is just going to skew you a little bit slower; totally fine.

Now, after you have all of that set up, you're going to hit the save button and then hit *select this workout*. It's the yellow button at the top. And then you're ready to go. You can actually hit start and go on your workout. Now, the next time you use Runkeeper, that workout will probably still be cued up. But if it isn't, just click the workout button then click custom and then scroll all the way down and you'll see all your saved workouts.

Alright, that is it for the Runkeeper tutorial. I hope that helped you, Alyssa. You're going to be getting your car magnet in the mail soon. And don't forget, if you want to print out a PDF that is going to walk you through that with some screenshots, head over to [www.notyouraveragerunner.com/9](http://www.notyouraveragerunner.com/9) for the show notes, and there will be a link to grab the tutorial over there.

Now, if you want to get your question answered on the show, all you have to do is email me at [podcast@notyouraveragerunner.com](mailto:podcast@notyouraveragerunner.com). I'll pick one each week to read and answer, and you can ask me anything. So, if I pick your question to answer on the show, I will also send you a Not Your Average Runner car magnet and then you can put it on your car and show everyone your NYAR pride.

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Okay, this week, we are going to do a deep dive into a topic that almost everyone can relate to; it's the inner mean girl. Now, if you've read any of my books, you know who she is. She's that mean girl in your head that always tries to make you feel shitty about yourself. You know you've been there; I've been there. It might be something like catching sight of yourself unexpectedly in the mirror and thinking, "Damn it, I thought I looked a lot better in that outfit." Or getting ready to sign up for your first 5K and thinking, "Oh, why even bother. I'm just going to come in last anyway."

So those are just a couple of examples, but we all have that inner mean girl voice in our heads that puts us down, compares us to others and basically just finds reasons why we're not good enough. Most of the time, it kind of seems like there's nothing we can do about it because we all know she speaks the truth, right. We don't want to be delusional. She's just saying what nobody else will say to you – that you have no business trying to run because you're too fat, too slow or too something.

We kind of believe that she says because she's in our head, first of all, and sometimes she's just so fucking loud. It's really hard to hear anything else. And even when people compliment us for doing something well, that sneaky inner mean girl speaks up and tells us all the reasons that these other people are wrong and that we are a piece of crap.

It's pretty exhausting and not super fun. But what I want you to know is that it doesn't have to be that way. You don't have to listen to her, you don't have to believe her. What I want to do today is give you three things to do when you hear that negative voice in your head, so that you can stop listening and just get on with your life; get on with whatever it is that you want to do.

So first, we need to understand exactly what the inner mean girl voice really is. And she might sound like your mom or your little brother or that

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sixth grade locker room bully that you still have nightmares about. But actually, she's just your brain trying to protect you from a perceived threat.

Humans evolved in a dangerous environment. There were lots of threats everywhere; mostly in the form of things trying to eat us. So our brains evolved to be constantly scanning the environment, the horizon, listening and looking at everything, looking for evidence that something could be harmful because if you were wrong about that, you would die. So we fast forward to the present day and that threat level from mountain lions and other things is much lower.

The problem with that is that our well-developed brain doesn't know the difference and it's still scanning for danger. And what it finds, instead of a charging elephant, is the danger of getting our feelings hurt. So to your brain, the danger of feeling embarrassment or shame is equal to the danger of being eaten. It's just as painful and just as scary in your brain, so we take immediate action to avoid the threat. And what that means is your brain is always trying to keep you from feeling something, an emotion, that's negative.

And the problem with that is, feelings are really just a vibration in our body. They're not actually life-threatening; so your brain is kind of overreacting. Feelings will eventually pass, unless we jump into the pool with our inner mean girl and start believing her stories. So we're going to use a 5K as an example here. Let's imagine that you want to sign up for a 5K race and you've never done one before and your brain is scanning for threats and decides there's a possibility you might not finish – and if you don't finish the race, you're going to be embarrassed.

Your brain says, "Oh hell no; we don't want to feel embarrassed." And it decides to save you – and I'm using finger quotes around save you – by scaring you away from the 5K with a bunch of bullshit reasons why it's a terrible idea. But you trust your brain; it's the only one you've got. It's the

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loudest voice in your head and you think this is a serious issue. You think, “I better listen or I might get hurt. I might get my feelings hurt.”

So you don't sign up for the race because you want to stay safe. The problem is that you're also missing out on a lot of good stuff as a result, and your brain is just confused. It's confused about what it means to come in last in a race. Your brain tells you that it's a bad thing, but it's literally just a neutral circumstance. It's just a reflection of how long it took you to get from point A to point B.

There's no meaning associated with it until your brain gets busy and attaches meaning to it. So because your brain is just your inner mean girl – I'm using it interchangeably here – because your inner mean girl is just trying to keep you safe, we can have a little compassion for her, right. She's not really a jerk; she's just doing her job. And unfortunately, we don't really have a need for that position anymore.

This is where it's going wrong. She should have been laid off a while ago, but we all know how corporations work. I was in corporate America for 20 years and there's always that employee that's really not doing his job but nobody wants to fire him because it would take way too much effort. And he's a nice guy, right. Or maybe he's not a nice guy, but it's just not worth the trouble. So they keep him around and he's always that annoying person in meetings, coming up with reasons that things won't work. Nobody really pays any attention to him, aside from getting annoyed. They just sort of roll their eyes and keep the meeting on track.

So your inner mean girl is like that guy. Nobody's given her any good projects to work on, so she spends all her time complaining and whispering to anybody that will listen. And here's what you need to know: you don't have to listen to her. So when your inner mean girl starts her shenanigans, the first thing you're going to do is just recognize what's going on; that's step one.

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Remember, this is actually a normal brain function. It's protecting you from perceived harm, not actual harm – because feeling embarrassed is not harmful, but our brain thinks it is. So it's just a brain function that's gone haywire and your inner mean girl is just trying to do her job. She just doesn't know that her job doesn't really exist anymore. She's got nothing else to do, so of course she's going to sit around and whine. She's going to be loud and insistent, but that doesn't mean that she's right.

This when you sit down and you have a chat with her, because you are in charge of your brain and your body; you are the CEO. You would not let an ineffective employee run the company, so don't let your inner mean girl run your brain and body. Explain to her that you've taken her opinion under very careful consideration and you've made an executive decision that her advice is not in the best interest of the organization. You appreciate everything she does, but for the moment, you're going in a different direction.

The shorthand here, you tell her your opinion is noted; we're still signing up for the race. Now often, this is all that is needed to turn things around, and it's just that awareness that you're letting your inner mean girl run amok is often enough to put you back in the driver's seat. But if it isn't, we're going to move onto step two, which is – challenge your inner mean girl.

Ask her why she's so concerned. Ask her, what is the worst thing that can happen if her fears come true? And again, she's usually just afraid of a feeling; maybe shame or embarrassment or disappointment. And she thinks that feeling those emotions is the end of the world, right. But the truth is, they're just emotions.

They're just feelings; a vibration in your body. You can feel them and move on. And the reason we feel any emotion is because of a thought that we have. So if your thought is, "I'm going to be a failure for coming in last in that race," your feeling is going to be shame. So the reason you're feeling

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shame is because you believe that you have failed. You've taken the neutral circumstance of the time it took you to cross the finish line and made it mean that it's failure, and then you feel shame.

But is it really failure, right? Do you have an option to feel differently? You showed up at the start line. You did the same distance as everyone else. You crossed the same finish line. You got the same medal. How is that failure? So in my mind, it's not. I choose to believe that crossing the finish line is a success, no matter what. And that makes me feel great. And it's all in how you define it.

So your inner mean girl wants you to think thoughts that create negative emotion, but again, you're the one in charge. You are the CEO of your brain and body, and even though it might not always feel that way, it's true. So the circumstance of crossing the finish line after everyone else is neutral; it is just your thinking about it that causes the emotions. So really let that sink in for a moment, because it is life changing.

If instead of thinking that you failed, you thought something like, "Wow, I can't believe I finished that race. That was so much fun." You're going to feel pride or excitement or happiness or any host of other emotions, right. Same race, same finish line, same finish time, but a different thought gives you a different emotion and a totally different experience. And it's very, very powerful.

So now that you know that your thoughts create your emotions, I want to move on to step three, which is – spending your thoughts wisely. We only have a certain number of hours in a day and a certain number of thoughts that we can think. And I actually looked this up on Google – according to Google, we have 50,000 thoughts per day on average and 70% of them are negative. 70% - that is 35,000 negative thoughts per day.

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Now, if our thoughts create our feelings – and by the way, our feelings drive our actions and our results – so if we're thinking 35,000 negative thoughts per day, we're going to have 35,000 negative feelings per day. Now, how do you think that that translates into actions and results? Well, I can tell you it's not going to be pretty. You're damn sure not going to sign up for that race.

So the secret I have for you is that your thoughts are optional. And you think they're not optional, right, because most of the time, you've practiced thinking the same thoughts over and over again that they seem like they're a truth, right. They're basically just a habit, but they're so habitual that they seem true. Choosing to think differently feels weird at first because it's not your habit – It's just like the first time you went running. That felt weird and uncomfortable, but after you practiced it for a while, it felt easier. Same thing with thinking – practice thinking differently, it gets easier.

So if you have 50,000 thoughts per day, how many of them do you want to hand over to your inner mean girl to manage? That ineffective employee that's sitting in the corner of the conference room complaining, do you really want to give that person 35,000 thoughts to think for you? Really, really take that to heart.

Let's talk about it in terms of money. So if you had \$500 to spend every day, would you want to spend \$350 of those on stuff that doesn't make you feel good or doesn't improve your quality of life or doesn't help you get to your goal? No, of course not, you would think about what is the best use of that money. Maybe you'd spend some of it on your rent, some of it on food, maybe go out to the movies with some of it or buy a new book to read, but you'd want to use it for things that keep you alive and give you the best quality of life, right, and give you some joy.

So I want you to start thinking about your thoughts that way. Decide whether you want to spend your thought money on things that make you

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feel terrible about yourself or if you want to spend your thought money on things that are going to make you feel great about yourself and drive you forward.

So this is your challenge for the week – I want you to pay attention to what your inner mean girl is saying to you. Then decide whether or not that thinking is serving you. And if it's not, what would you like to change it to? Because the only true freedom we have on this planet is the ability to think what we want. And it's incredibly powerful what we can accomplish with that.

Now, if you listen to last week's interview with Jen Lamplough – she is the runner who trained for her first full marathon, a super busy mom and she runs a huge department at the Chicago Food Bank, and she's also a plus-sized runner. And this was her first marathon – so she used her thoughts to get herself through her training and over that finish line, and it made all the difference in the world. I highly recommend you listen to that interview because it really, really drives home the point of how our thinking creates our experience. Your thoughts are power; what do you want to spend yours on?

So this week, for my current obsession, I'm going to share my guilty pleasure with you. Now, we talked about Runkeeper in the beginning of the show, and I deliberately did not mention my favorite thing about that app because I wanted to share it with you at the end of the podcast, and here it is – you can change the voices that call out your cues and some of them are really, really funny.

So there's a French woman who tells you how many croissants you can eat after your run based on how far you went. There's a drill-sergeant, there's a sports announcer, but my favorite is the one called *your conscience*, because the voice is hilarious and he says some really funny stuff. It makes me laugh every single time I hear it. So I actually have a little clip of what

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he sounds like that I'm going to play for you right now so you can see how funny he is... "Activity completed. After this run, you'll be able to sit on your couch and drink an entire bottle of wine. Just kidding. Activity completed – workout summary. Total time, 12 seconds. Total distance, zero miles. Average pace, 58 minutes 40 seconds per mile. Someone's been training hard."

All you have to do to change the voice to whichever one you want is go into settings, and that's from the main activity screen in Runkeeper. It's in the top left. There's a little gear icon. You're going to hit that and then you're going to turn on audio cues. Just flip the switch to on, and then after that, you'll see a line that says *audio cue voice*. And you click on that and you can choose whichever one you want. So I hope that you enjoy the fun of switching up the voices and it gives you a little bit of a laugh during your run when you're using Runkeeper.

And if you chose to switch them up and are enjoying them, I'd love to have you share it in the Facebook group and let people know which one you chose and why you like it.

Well, our time is up again, my friend. So if you're anxious to get started with running, if you haven't quite started yet, I have a free one-week jumpstart plan to help you do exactly that. 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. So you're going to head over to [notyouraveragerunner.com/start](http://notyouraveragerunner.com/start) to download your one-week jumpstart plan.

And then after you've done that, make sure to check your email for the plan, and I'll be dropping in on you a few more times through your email to give you some additional guidance. So you can grab that at [notyouraveragerunner.com/start](http://notyouraveragerunner.com/start). And then, don't forget, of course, to grab

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your PDF tutorial for Runkeeper from the show notes at [notyouraveragerunner.com/9](http://notyouraveragerunner.com/9).

I'm so glad we are on this running journey together, my friend. I hope you have an amazing week and I will talk to you next Thursday; 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](http://www.notyouraveragerunner.com) to download your free one-week jumpstart plan and get started running today.