

Ep #14: 5K Training Series Part One – Getting You to the Starting Line



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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 number 14 of *The Not Your Average Runner Podcast*. I'm your host, Jill Angie, and in this episode, we're starting the first of a three-part series on 5K training. Today, I'm going to help you decide whether you're ready to start training and what you need to do to prepare. Then in part two, I'll cover the training itself, and part three will be race day strategies.

We also have an Ask the Curvy Coach question from Jess, an update on Jen Lamplough from episode eight, and as always, my current obsession. 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.

Before we get into our Curvy Coach question this week, I have a great update for everyone on Jen Lamplough. Now, if you remember, she's our marathon runner from episode eight, and she wasn't feeling too great about her marathon finish. Partly, that was because she despite completing the entire 26.2 miles, she was unable to run under the actual finish line arch, and it really felt to her like something was missing.

Now, I'm happy to report this past weekend, she ran the Shamrock 8K, which is five miles, and that happened to have the exact same location and almost the same finish line arch as the Chicago Marathon. So basically, she got a do over. She got her chance to run

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through that arch at the exact same spot where the Chicago Marathon finish line was and finished what she started.

And I just love stories like this so much because it really shows that being a successful runner isn't all about finish times. Sometimes it's about those really - actually, most of the time it's about those really meaningful little details that help us tell a different story about ourselves than our inner mean girl wants to tell. And it reminds me that we always get to decide what that story is going to be.

So congratulations to Jen, we are all so proud of you, not just for running that marathon like the true badass rebel runner that you are, but for sharing your story with us and being willing to rewrite the ending for yourself. Love you so much mama, way to go.

Now, this week's Ask the Curvy Coach question comes to us from Jess Lauer. Jess writes, "Okay lady, I have a question about intervals. I was listening to your podcast about intervals and it got me thinking. I only used intervals when I was training my body to run, and I don't use them currently. I also don't really run more than eight to nine miles at a time, and I'm kind of slowish (11 to 12 minutes per mile), which I'm fine with. I'm only competing with me. My question though is this: will intervals help me jump to longer distances easier? I have not yet attempted more than nine miles in a long time, and I have a half marathon coming up, so I'm wondering if doing the intervals would actually help in the long run (pun intended)."

That is such a great question, Jess, and the short answer is a resounding yes. Intervals are a great way to increase both your distance and your speed because they conserve energy by allowing you short breaks in running where your legs can actually recover a little bit. This means when you're running, you're actually running faster, which results in overall gains

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in your pace, and it also means you can go farther because you're giving that body those little micro rests, which allows your energy of the muscles and everything else to last a lot longer.

Now, I know your half marathon is coming up pretty soon, it's about two weeks away from when this episode will air, but if you're currently doing nine miles without intervals, you should easily be able to translate that into a 13-mile interval run.

I think you have a couple options here. I mean, you could always do the first nine miles of the race as usual, without intervals, and then switch over and finish with them. Certainly, that's one way to go, and you might even find when you get to nine miles you don't need to switch over to intervals, which is awesome. Go for it. But in my opinion, you didn't really specify when your most recent nine mile was in your letter, so unless it was within the past few weeks, I think you might want to consider starting the race with intervals and doing the whole thing like that.

So what I'm going to suggest is you try them out between now and your race on some of your shorter training runs to see what a good ratio is for you. Since you're already running several miles in a row without taking walk breaks, I'm going to suggest that you experiment with three-minute run, one-minute walk, and then also two-minute run, one-minute walk, and then a one and one ratio.

Now, try that out on at least three different runs. Don't mix up the ratios within the same workout. You want to see what it's like when you go three to four miles doing three-minute run, one-minute walk, or two and one, or one and one. Now, I hope that helps, Jess, and good luck with your race. Make sure you drop me a line and let me know how it went.

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And now I have a special message for those of you, and I can feel you thinking this right now. Those of you that listened to Jess's letter and said, "Oh hey, 11 to 12-minute mile isn't kind of slowish, that's my goal pace, and that must mean I'm not a real runner because I'm so much slower than that." I want you to stop right there and just remember that everyone's definition of what is fast and what is slow and what is in between is determined by themselves.

So what's fast to one person might be slow to another, and vice versa. It's all good. Comparing yourself to someone else's accomplishments, someone else's pace never ends up feeling good for you, and we're all just out here running our own race. It's completely irrelevant whether someone is faster than you, or whether someone who is faster than you calls themselves slow. It's honestly none of your business. So just remember to stay in your own lane, and just love on yourself for what you're doing.

Alright, now the tough love segment is over. And if you want to get your question answered on the podcast, all you have to do is email me at podcast@notyouraveragerunner.com. I'll pick one each week to read and answer, and you can ask me anything you want. If I pick your question to answer on the show, I'm also going to send you a Not Your Average Runner car magnet, so yay for that.

Okay now on to our main topic for this week. This episode is for you if you have started running but you haven't done a 5K race yet. Or maybe if you - maybe you ran a while ago and you took a few years off and you're coming back to it, and still you haven't done a 5K. Now, if you're wondering if a 5K is something you're ready for, or if it's even something you should do at all, we're going to talk about that right now.

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First of all, if you have been considering a 5K, you've probably already been out there walking, maybe even running a little bit here and there, maybe doing the whole thing with run-walk intervals, and you know that 3.1 miles is totally within your reach. If you're able to walk continuously for an hour, you can do a 5K.

If you're already run walking three times a week, you're ready to start this 5K training. So if you're listening to this with that question in your mind, that question, should I start training for a 5K? Can I really do it? Is this something that's even possible for me? Here's what I want you to know: you can go the distance. It is not about that.

What you're really asking is whether or not you'll be the slowest person there, whether the other runners will yell at you for taking walk breaks, whether you'll feel out of place, embarrassed or uncomfortable, whether you'll come in last. That's what you're really asking yourself.

And the true question is this: it's not are you ready to complete a 5K, it's whether you're ready to claim your new identity as a runner. Taking it public, letting the world know you're part of this crazy ass sport, and being proud of it, and then letting people have opinions about that.

So the truth is, you might have to take some walk breaks, and that's okay. And actually, that's the way I recommend you approach it. Use a run-walk interval approach during your training and on race day. We actually covered that topic in detail in episode seven, and then in episode nine I gave you a tutorial on how to time them in Runkeeper. You can also find a great training plan in my book, *Not Your Average 5K*, or check out Jeff Galloway. He's got a lot of great training plans as well.

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And you'll see on race day that there are tons and tons of other people doing the exact same thing. I just ran a 5K over this past weekend and honestly, I was kind of looking around going, where are the people that aren't taking walk breaks? Like, there were so many people doing a run-walk interval approach that people that weren't doing it were actually the exception rather than the rule.

Now, you might be nervous about the race, and again, this is totally okay. It's normal to be a little uncertain about something new. It's really common. And I mean, honestly, you're trying out something brand new. It's your first 5K. That can be a little bit scary.

You might have a million questions about what might happen, and the human brain being what it is tends to go right to that worst-case scenario when the outcome is uncertain. Sometimes the worst-case scenario is like, we're out there running and we're in last place and a bear comes out of the woods and chases us and we get eaten because there's nobody there to help because we're so slow and everyone left us in the dust because runners are terrible people, right?

I mean, that's kind of the worst-case scenario that I can think of happening in a race, and it sort of makes coming in last but intact seem a lot less scary. But all joking aside, I really want to talk about worse case scenarios right now because I want to set your mind at ease that everything's going to be absolutely fine.

So when you're getting ready for your race, you might look around at everyone else lined up to start and think, "I don't belong here. Everyone else looks like a runner, they don't look nervous," and then your worst-case scenario is like, at some point security is going to show up and drag me out.

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Now, I promise you, if you paid your race fee, nobody is going to drag you away. But what you can do to sort of counteract some of those thoughts that you're having is try smiling at some of the people near you. First of all, they might be nervous as well, and then you'll have a buddy to commiserate with. But you can also say, "Hey stranger, this is my first race and I'm a little nervous. I'm not quite sure what to expect. Do you have any tips for me?"

And runners are seriously awesome people, and they love to help newbies and they love to talk about running. So best case scenario you'll end up making a new best friend that's going to tell you everything she knows. Worst case scenario, she smiles and nods and says, "Good luck, you'll be fine."

But seriously, runners are friendly. I want you to say hi to them. Make eye contact. Don't hide in your hoodie and pretend to be invisible with your face in your phone because your inner mean girl is going to have a field day with that. She gets a lot quieter when you're interacting with other people because you're drowning her out with actual conversation.

I want you to really hear me right now, and make sure your inner mean girl is listening too. You belong there. You belong at that race, you belong at that start line, you belong in that community of runners. Why? Because you all share the desire to run or walk a 5K. That's literally it. That's all it takes and you're in the club.

Everyone there has that same goal. It's to cross the finish line, give their best effort, and your finish times might be different than the person who comes in at first place, but the spirit is the same. It's to do something that feels meaningful, something you can be proud of, something that maybe

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even felt a little bit out of reach a few months back. That's what it's all about.

Now, let's talk about the elephant in the room. What happens if you come in last or maybe if you don't even finish? Because a lot of new runners have that fear that the world is going to end if they come in last or if they don't finish.

Now, first of all, I promise you're going to finish. You are. Let's just put that one to the side, okay? Unless a meteor comes down and lands on you, or that bear chases you, which actually, some of my clients do live in bear country, so that is a legit concern, but I'm pretty sure there's not going to be a lot of bears around if there's a lot of people running a race.

And I know I'm overdramatizing this, but seriously, like, this concept of, "Oh my gosh, what if I come in last? Or what if I don't finish?" That's a really big fear, and what you're actually afraid of - this is the secret. What you're actually afraid of is how you'll feel if you come in last or if you don't finish. It's not the actual coming in last that's causing the pain. It's your feeling that you might be embarrassed or ashamed or feel defeated.

And here's the thing: all of our feelings in life are determined by our thoughts. So if you come in last, you're going to have thoughts about that. We have circumstances in our life, the circumstance here is you come in last. You have a thought about it and that thought creates a feeling.

Now, if the thought is, "I came in last, I suck. Everyone is laughing at me," it's going to make you feel pretty bad. But if your thought is, "Hey, I finished. I'm amazing," or, "Hey, I showed up to that start line and I did something that was really scary and out of my comfort zone. I'm amazing," those thoughts make you feel pretty good.

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So this is where managing your inner mean girl is so important, and I know, do you remember we talked about her in episode nine? Like, you are in the driver's seat, so we just have to manage her. She's going to have opinions. It's totally fine. You get the final decision.

So whether or not anyone is actually laughing at you for coming in last, or whether people say things to you, or whatever people think, it's irrelevant. And spoiler alert, most of the time, people are actually thinking you're pretty awesome, but that's also irrelevant, right? Like, when you think mean thoughts about yourself, you're literally causing yourself pain.

It is not what other people are thinking about you that causes the pain. It's your assumption and your imagination about what they think that's stirring up all of the trouble. So you're making up, like, "This person is thinking I'm fat, this person's thinking I'm slow, this person's thinking I'm not a real runner, I shouldn't be here, I should just go home."

We don't know what people are thinking unless they say it out loud, and most of the time, they don't. So basically, you're letting imaginary thoughts of other people, either strangers, other strangers at the race, or family members or whatever. But you're letting the imaginary thoughts other people have make you feel like shit. That is no fun, right?

So I want you to repeat after me. Just like, imagine that you're Dorothy and you're wearing the ruby slippers. I get to decide how I feel. I get to decide how I feel. I get to decide how I feel. That's it. For real. You're in charge, you get to decide and it all starts with how you think about yourself.

So let me ask you this: what do you want to believe about your running? Do you want to believe you're a failure? That you're not good enough? That you're too slow? That you should just stay home? Doesn't feel very good to

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think that. Or do you want to think that you're amazing and courageous, and frankly, kind of rebellious because you're out there doing your thing, giving it your all, giving everything you've got, disrupting the entire fitness industry by showing that you don't have to be a size six to run and show up to a 5K?

I mean, personally, I prefer the second one because it means I don't have to fit in to anyone else's standard size or pace or anything like that for me to feel good. Now, it takes practice to change those beliefs about yourself, but I promise that you can do it. And this is why when somebody asks me if I think they're ready for a 5K, I always say yes. Because it really is not a question of whether you can finish the race, but rather what your experience will be like. And 80% of that experience is mental and it's what you believe about yourself. Only 20% of it is the actual training.

So here's your challenge for this week. I want you to decide when you want to run your first 5K. Give yourself a couple of months. And then decide in advance what you want to believe about it. No matter what. Just let's decide right now. Even if you come in dead last, even if you don't finish, I want you to decide right now that you're going to believe some pretty awesome shit about yourself no matter what happens.

And then start practicing believing it right now. Just say it to yourself over and over again. Make it a mantra when you're on your run. Write it on a post-it and put it on the dashboard of your car, put it like, in a note on your phone and make it pop up every hour or something like that. Like, you literally have to practice new beliefs. The old beliefs, you've had them for a while, you're really good at thinking them. The new ones are going to feel weird at first so you have to practice.

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Now, in two weeks, I am going to cover the nuts and bolts of 5K training, and how you can get the most out of it so that you're completely prepared on race day. So that's two weeks from now. But next week, I'm interviewing Denny Krahe of DizRuns.com because he's got a book coming out about how to prepare for a race, and put together your own training plan, which is perfect, right?

So I want you to listen to Denny's episode first, and then we are - like, hear all about his book, and then we're going to go into 5K training the week after that.

This week, my obsession is running hats. And I probably have 20 running hats, I'm embarrassed to say. I probably have more running hats than sneakers right now. Or running shoes. This week specifically, I'm obsessed with the Under Armour Women's Renegade Twist Cap. These are - like, they're ridiculous. They're so cool.

So they're these sort of stretchy baseball caps that are great for running. They're great for basically any sports. They're also like, super cute to just wear like, if you're running out to the store and you want to put on a baseball cap. They're really cute that way too. I actually have them in three colors now. I have a purple one, I have a grey one, and I have - it's kind of a magenta color.

And I love, love, love them because they're super pretty. They're shaped nicely, they're shaped for a woman's head, they're a little bigger than your average running hat and my problem with most running caps are I can't fit all of my hair in there without them looking like they're perched on top of my head. I don't know if I have a big head or what, but like, regular running caps just don't seem to fit me just right.

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So these are like, super comfortable, they're a little bit bigger than a running cap but they're not like, a trucker cap either. And they're stretchy so it's easy to put them on, pull my ponytail through without popping the button off the back, which is one of my pet peeves.

So they're super comfortable, they're easy to throw in the washing machine, and like I said, they're called Under Armour Women's Renegade Twist Cap. It's a very long name, but you can grab one on Amazon, they're around \$20 and like, each color is a slightly different price. Some of them are less than \$20, some of them are more than \$20, but honestly, like, I bought one, loved it, bought another one, and now I've got three of them because I like to match my hats to my outfits.

And I also like my caps to be comfortable, and they're like, super soft and stretchy too. Can't say enough good things about them. And you can find a link to the caps in the show notes, which are at notyouraveragerunner.com/14.

Well, that is it for our episode this week. It has been as usual, my pleasure to be in your ear. If you're out running, or if you're in your car, maybe you're just sitting at home having a snack. And I just wanted to let you know, if you're a brand-new runner or you just want me to email you every week with inspiration, with some tough love, or to find out where Not Your Average Runner is going to be travelling next, you can get on the list to have all of that happen at www.notyouraveragerunner.com/start.

What I'll do is send you a one-week jumpstart plan and then we'll just be in contact after that. I'll send you some love notes every Friday and it's going to be amazing. We're going to be besties. So make sure you check out the show notes, www.notyouraveragerunner.com/14 for all the details of everything that was in this episode, including the transcript and all the links.

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I am so glad we're on this journey together, my friend. Happy running.

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.