

Ep #145: How to Level Up Your Running and Your Life



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Jill Angie

[The Not Your Average Runner Podcast](#) with Jill Angie

Ep #145: How to Level Up Your Running and Your Life

I was coaching someone today, the day that I'm recording this, in the Run Your Best Life coaching program about strength training. We were talking about - she said, "I'm not strength training at all. I want to be strength training, and how do I get myself to do it?"

So her current baseline - we talked about leveling up from your current baseline. Her current baseline is zero. Whenever she thought about strength training, she'd start to think about, "First, I'm going to have to do a 15-minute warmup before I even get to the strength training. I don't have time for that. I'm too busy to do a 15-minute warmup." So she would do nothing.

Welcome to *The Not Your Average Runner Podcast*. If you're a woman who has never felt athletic but you still dream about becoming a runner, you are in the right place. I'm Jill Angie, a certified running and life coach and I teach women how to start running, feel confident, and change their lives, and now I want to help you.

Hello my rebel friends. How are you doing this week? Spring is finally here. I think for the final time. I don't think we have any more fake winters going on in the Northeast. And so running has been super pleasurable because it's like, 50 degrees in the morning. It's just right for a tank top and the leaves are out on the trees and it's just awesome.

This is my favorite time of year to run. So I do have a quick question for you. I want to know if you've signed up for the Rebel Run Virtual Race. I know I've been talking about it a lot on the podcast lately, but we are raising money to support the Northern Illinois Food Bank, help folks that have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. These folks are out of work, they're struggling to buy groceries. Every dollar we donate turns into eight dollars worth of food for a hungry family.

So basically, you get a race medal for running a race, someone else gets the benefit of not having to worry about where their next meal is coming

Ep #145: How to Level Up Your Running and Your Life

from. It's a win-win. And you can sign up for the race at notyouraveragerunner.com/rebelrun. Or just click the link in the show notes. It's notyouraveragerunner.com/rebelrun or click the link in the show notes.

And you can sign up any distance. You can run any distance for this race. So if your marathon was canceled or your 5K was canceled, it does not matter. You can totally run, do this virtual race for whatever your canceled race distance was. And the medal is super cute. Not even cute. Cute's a terrible word for that.

The medal is fucking awesome is what it is. It says, "I'm not training to be fast. I'm training to be fierce," which I think just completely and utterly personifies our entire community because we may want to be fast, we may be striving to be fast, we may not, but we are all striving to be fierce. And so this medal really, really captures that.

So again, notyouraveragerunner.com/rebelrun to sign up, or click the link in the show notes. You get a medal, somebody in Chicago gets a meal and gets fed and everybody wins.

Okay, so what are we talking about today? Well, we are talking about leveling up. Leveling up your training, leveling up your life, leveling up your habits. And when I say leveling up, I don't mean like, suddenly going from somebody who struggles to work out once a week to someone who just jumps out of bed every day at 5am and never misses a run and is Polly Perfect with her working out.

Leveling up is not like that. Leveling up is not going from zero to perfect. Leveling up is incremental. It's a little bit better than before. It's a level up. It's like a step up on the staircase. It is not going all the way to the top. You build on what you're consistently doing. You build on what is working for you, and then you do a little more.

Ep #145: How to Level Up Your Running and Your Life

And like, really just a little more. Not okay, I ran for 10 minutes yesterday, today I'm going to do an hour. Because when you do that, when you jump from the next level to the top level, what happens is you get injured. This happens all the time. Or you're really sore the next day and then you have to take like, five days off and when you get back to it, it's like you're starting all over again. You lose all of your progress.

So I know that there are some of you out there that can relate to this. And here's what I want to teach you. Leveling up starts with consistency. You take what you're consistently doing, and right now you might be consistently doing nothing, and so that's your current level.

So leveling up is your current level is what you're consistently doing and then you make small changes to the next level and you master that level. You get really good at it until it feels easy both physically and mentally, and then you can raise the bar.

So what does this look like? So if you're a new runner, it might look like starting with just 10 minutes of run-walk intervals two times a week. So if you're going from not running at all to becoming a runner, twice a week with 10 minutes of run-walk intervals, that's sort of the first level. And maybe those intervals are you run for 15 seconds and you walk for a minute.

And that might even be your workout for a couple weeks. Maybe more. Maybe a month of doing that. And what's going to happen is your brain will say things like, "You know, you should really be able to do more by now. Your progress is way too slow." But if you listen to your brain, you might do too much. You might push yourself too hard, get injured, and then you know what, you're back at square one and you have to start all over again.

So let your body guide you, first of all. Not your brain. Your brain can't be trusted. It's like a little kid on Halloween night who wants to eat all the candy in his basket. And this is always a terrible idea. As a parent, you

Ep #145: How to Level Up Your Running and Your Life

know this. As a child, you might have had to find it out the hard way. I know I did.

But your brain just wants to do all the things. So when you're new, that level up might be going from no running to 10 minutes of run-walk intervals twice a week. And if you're a new runner and you've been walking, you've got a walking program going on, maybe it looks like okay, I'm doing my regular walk and I'm going to throw in a few sprints of running.

And when I say sprint, sprint is the wrong word. You throw in a few little 30-second intervals of running. Not sprinting. More like jogging. So let your body guide you and after you've done that first run, maybe that 15-second running and a minute of walking and you've been doing that for 10 minutes at a time, twice a week, you've been doing that for a month.

And you're like, okay, I got this. This feels good, this feels comfortable, I'm ready for more. So what are you going to do? Are you going to like, triple that? Are you going to say, alright, it's time to run my first 5K? No, you're going to do maybe 10% more. 10% more distance, or you increase your running interval a little bit, or you keep that interval the same and you try running maybe 10% faster.

And I know, it's not sexy at all. Leveling up is boring as fuck. You guys, it is not super exciting. But this is how you become a runner. This is how you train for a race. This is how you become a marathon runner. You level up a little bit at a time.

And we do this for a couple of reasons. The first of course is so that you don't get injured. And I mentioned that a few times so far, but it's really important. A slight increase in training load executed consistently will help your body adapt and get stronger. A big sudden increase in training load can exceed your capabilities and cause problems.

Ep #145: How to Level Up Your Running and Your Life

It can cause injuries, it can cause delayed onset muscle soreness, which can keep you from working out, if you've got really bad DOMs and you're like, god, I can't even - I know this has happened to me after I've done a really hard leg day, after I pushed myself too far. And then the next day, it's like, oh god, I don't want to have to pee. My quads are on fire every time I go and try to sit down on the toilet to pee.

So we all know what that feels like and overdoing it, going beyond that level up and trying to go five levels up results in a lot of discomfort that can keep you from training. So the problem is we are in this sort of instant gratification society. We want our results yesterday. We're like, I ordered my iPhone 48 hours ago, why don't I have it?

That is, of course, a true story from my life. But we want our results yesterday. We want everything. We want instant shipping, we're like, "Oh, well I ate perfectly for dinner. I should get on the scale tomorrow and see a five-pound loss." You know you've done this. You know you have.

We want to start training and just have it be easy already. We want to do one set of squats and have a perfect ass. We want to journal one day and we're like, okay, I'm fixed. Because grinding out the miles and the reps and the journaling pages week after week after week is boring. It's not sexy, it's not fun.

We think that the result is the fun part. And we're in a hurry to get there, but the result is just a single point in time. The result is fleeting. It really is. It's an instant. The moment you achieve the goal, then it's over. You've achieved it. Done. Now it's history.

But the training and the effort that you put in to get there, that is what is really fun. And if you can fall in love with that process, you learn to enjoy your training. Your race day is going to be extra fun. I'm actually getting a little off topic here. Coming off on a bit of a tangent. Let's get back to this concept of leveling up.

Ep #145: How to Level Up Your Running and Your Life

So leveling up is what you do when you have mastered your current level and you are ready for more. It's a step. It's a small change. It's a small change that you know you can implement without any brain drama.

I was coaching someone today, the day that I'm recording this, in the Run Your Best Life coaching program about strength training. We were talking about - she said, "I'm not strength training at all. I want to be strength training, and how do I get myself to do it?"

So her current baseline - we talked about leveling up from your current baseline. Her current baseline is zero. Whenever she thought about strength training, she'd start to think about, "First, I'm going to have to do a 15-minute warmup before I even get to the strength training. I don't have time for that. I'm too busy to do a 15-minute warmup." So she would do nothing.

She was shutting herself down before she even started. And the most hilarious part, of course, and you and I know this, as somebody who's not inside my client's brain, but doing the strength training without a 15-minute warmup means you're actually doing the strength training. And yeah, it's not perfect, but in her mind, it was like, if you're going to do it, it has to be done right or not at all, which is totally messed up but brains are not super logical sometimes.

And so I said, "Hey, what if you did the strength training without a 15-minute warmup?" She's like, "Well, those first few sets would be hard." Like, and? So what? You'd still be doing it. You'd still be getting some benefit.

So the second rule of leveling up - and okay, in case you missed the first rule, which I've already talked about, the first rule of leveling up is small changes that build on your current consistent base. And the second rule is there is no such thing as perfect.

Ep #145: How to Level Up Your Running and Your Life

So for my client, leveling up isn't doing a 15-minute warmup and then 30 minutes of strength training five days a week. I mean, that's where she wants to be. That's a huge change from zero.

So even if it were mentally likely that she could make that shift, which it's not because she has a lot of stories about it, there's a big chance that even if she could mentally make that shift, if she jumped right into doing this new routine that she thinks she should be doing, she's going to overdo it, she's going to end up super sore from the first couple of workouts and then end up having to skip a run, maybe more, skip some strength workouts, which puts her right back at square one with the strength training and puts her behind schedule with the running.

So really, expecting perfection, it's so detrimental not just to our minds because we tell ourselves all these stories. It's detrimental to our bodies. So a small change, an incremental change, going from zero to that first level would be doing five minutes of strength training. Five minutes. Not 30 minutes but five minutes.

Maybe three times a week. And removing that requirement to do the 15-minute warmup because she's already running three times a week consistently. She can actually piggyback right off of that and do her strength training after she runs when she's warmed up.

This is a really awesome concept to say, okay, what am I already doing consistently? What can I piggyback off of to help me install a new habit? And then do that minimum baseline. This minimum baseline, if you've listened to episode 102, you already know about that. If not, make sure you go back and listen to that episode after you're done listening today.

But taking her minimum baseline and piggybacking off something that she's already doing consistently is a great way to install a new habit. Now, the thing is her brain, it already did tell her this story. But it's going to keep doing it until she works through it.

Ep #145: How to Level Up Your Running and Your Life

Her brain is going to tell her a story that unless it's a full 30 minutes of strength training, and unless she does a really thorough warmup, that it's not worth doing, that it won't count. It has to be perfect or not at all. We know that's a lie. We know that five minutes is a million more times effective to get stronger than no minutes.

Because five minutes three times a week, after a month, that is a full hour of strength training. And it's so much more effective - if you're going to do an hour of strength training, it's so much more effective to break it out over 12 mini workouts than to do one hour a month all at once.

Because the mini workouts, they build the habit of consistency mentally, they give your body a baseline that you can work with as you level up to maybe 10 minutes three times a week or maybe five minutes five times a week. So that's what leveling up is all about. You don't jump from zero to perfect.

Because again, the first rule of leveling up is small changes that you can consistently maintain. And the second rule of leveling up is there's no such thing as perfect. So you can apply this concept to anything. To running, to weight loss, to keeping your house organized, to studying, whatever it is.

The key is to be honest and realistic about what you're currently doing and then create a minimum baseline that's your incremental change to work your way up to where you ultimately want to be. You're going to take one step. Your step is applying that minimum baseline, adding it on to what you're currently doing, and that creates your incremental change.

That is actually what the Rebel Runner program does, the Rebel Runner Roadmap program that we are the current around of that - we're basically right at the 30 days. We're just a little bit past the 30 days and it's super fun to see where everybody in that group is right now because they've been consistently doing their workouts for a month.

Ep #145: How to Level Up Your Running and Your Life

In this program, we don't progress everyone forward each week like Couch to 5K. It's not like you do one week and then the next week we ramp it up and then the next week we ramp it up and then the next week we ramp it up. I have seen too many people get discouraged or injured because the expectations are very unrealistic in those types of programs.

So in the Rebel Runner Roadmap, everyone starts out with their baseline workout and then they repeat it, pretty much that same workout for the whole program. We do add in strength training and stretching, but what we really do is we work on the skills of running. We work on getting better at the actual act of running.

And you can't necessarily do that when you're constantly trying to run more. I need to be running more every week. No, get really good at your running form, get really good at your breathing, get really good at your pacing. And then you level up from there.

We also work on the mental side of things, which is super important. So while they're doing that same workout over and over for a whole month, they're working on the mental side of things, and that is key to leveling up. So after 30 days, the women in this group are finding that running feels easier and now, they are ready for the next step because they've practiced that baseline workout at least 12 times.

They got really good at it, they've got a beautiful base to level up from. So this week, I want you to think about your current habits. Whether it is fitness or otherwise, and how you can level up. I want you to be very realistic about where you're at right now. Don't lie to yourself.

You can lie to me, doesn't matter, but don't lie to yourself and say, "Oh, I'm running four times a week every week. My level up is to run five times a week," when really, it's like, twice on a good week and zero times on a bad week. So I'm not saying this to make you feel bad or to shame you. I want you to just be super honest with yourself.

Ep #145: How to Level Up Your Running and Your Life

That is the most important thing. Be super honest with yourself so that you can be successful when you work towards the improvements that you want instead of failing because you haven't been honest about where you are and what that level up step is.

So think about where you are right now, where you ultimately want to be, and then pick a small manageable change in that direction. And it's something you might even think it's not worth doing. You might even think, "You know what, that extra five minutes of strength training won't make a difference. It's too small."

It's small enough that your brain's not going to argue with you about getting it done. Your brain might argue with you about the effectiveness, but that's not your brain's problem right now. Something that's sort of below that drama threshold and then start doing that consistently.

Let it start to accumulate like compound interest. See where you get with that in 30 days or 60 days. Let it become second nature, and then you can level up again. So this is a huge concept and again, it's not sexy to say okay, I'm going to do five minutes of strength training three times a week for the next month.

But I guarantee, if you do that, at the end of the month, you're going to notice that you're a little bit stronger. And then maybe you can bump it up to 10 minutes. And you can do this with running, you can do this with anything.

So let me know. You guys want to go ahead, if you're in the Not Your Average Runner Facebook group, the official Not Your Average Runner Podcast community Facebook group, post about this. Let me know what your level ups are going to be. I want to know.

And by the way, we are opening up a new round of the Rebel Runner Roadmap in just about six weeks. So we're not actually going to do one this

Ep #145: How to Level Up Your Running and Your Life

summer because first of all, I was supposed to be getting married this summer and I'm not because of COVID and that's a whole other thing.

Actually, I am getting married this summer. Surprise. But we're just not doing the big old wedding. So I was like, I'm going to take this summer and do all these other things, and then COVID happened and people were saying, "Hey, we really, really, want to join the Roadmap." So I'm like, you know what, we're going to do another round of it.

So it opens on June 22nd. It's going to be open again for registration and then it's going to start on June 30th. So make sure you mark your calendars if you didn't get into this last round of the Roadmap. You can get in again this summer.

But we are going to be hitting this concept hard in the next round of the Roadmap. We'll help you create that baseline. We will help you start to level up slowly. But in the meantime, I want to know what your level ups are going to be. So go ahead, post them in the Facebook group. Let me know. And that's it for this week.

My friends, I love you. Stay safe. Get your ass out there and run and I will see you in the next episode.

Oh, and one last thing. If you enjoyed listening to this episode, you have to check out the Rebel Runner Roadmap. It's a 30-day online program that will teach you exactly how to start running, stick with it, and become the runner you've always wanted to be. Head on over to rebelrunnerroadmap.com to join. I'd love to be a part of your journey.