

Ep #5: How Important is Consistency Really?



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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, you are listening to episode five of The Not Your Average Runner podcast. In this episode, I'm going to answer a listener question about blisters, then, we're going to talk all about consistency and how important it is to be consistent when you're a runner. And I'm going to let you in on the secret mittens that I'm obsessed with this week, and of course, how you can try them yourself.

So whether you are 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. So this week, we have an Ask the Curvy Coach question from Sandra. And Sandra writes, "Hey, I have been running for about a month and I absolutely love it, especially doing the run walk intervals because it means I can go farther than I would if I tried to run straight through. But I'm having a hard time with blisters on the outside of my pinky toe, and I also find that I'm chaffing where my shoe meets my Achilles tendon. I've been putting Band-Aids on those spots but they don't stay in place. I also tried Vaseline but my socks got all greasy and it still didn't work. And usually by halfway through my run, everything has slipped out of place and I'm in pain again." So she asks, "Do you have any suggestions? Thanks in advance, Sandra. P.S. I'm loving the podcast so far, is there any chance you can do an episode on the best way to train for your 5k?"

So first of all, Sandra, congratulations on becoming a runner. I am so glad that you have so much enthusiasm and that's just amazing. And I will absolutely be doing an episode on the best way to train for your 5k. I'll probably do a whole series on it. So keep tuned in, keep subscribed and I promise that's coming.

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Now, here's what I know about blisters and chaffing for sure. They suck. They suck, right? But they don't have to be a part of your running. I do have a few suggestions for you. To start with, if you're just feeling some light chaffing, like maybe a little bit of irritation on those areas, you can try a product called Body Glide, which comes in a stick and it goes on kind of like deodorant. It's sort of a silicone based product, and basically you just smooth it on to the areas that are chaffing and it actually it's not just for feet. It works anywhere your clothes irritate you. I often use it underneath the strap of my bra, kind of around my ribcage and it works really well.

And it stays there until you wash it off, it's sweat proof but it's not greasy or icky or anything. It's kind of a wonder product. So I would start by trying that, and then sometimes especially on your feet, you might need a little bit more protection, a little bit more of a layer, and so I would say if the Body Glide doesn't work on your feet, step it up to athletic tape or moleskin.

Now, I'm going to talk about the differences between those two. The advantage of athletic tape is that it's inexpensive, it's easy to apply, and it's very flexible because it's basically just cloth tape, but the reason it's so flexible is because it's thinner and you might sometimes need two layers, depending on how severe the rubbing of your shoes is. So I love athletic tape for that reason, that it's very flexible and it's inexpensive and you don't have to worry about like, using too much of it because it doesn't cost a lot to replace it.

Now, moleskin is thicker and pretty much completely prevents blisters when you stick it on your skin, but it is definitely more expensive and you actually need scissors to cut it, where you can rip athletic tape usually with your teeth and your fingers. So moleskin you need scissors, and because it's thicker, it doesn't really bend around heels and toes quite as easily, especially around your pinky toe. It might not - moleskin might not be the best option.

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So I would check both of those out. In fact, I would give all three of those things a try to see which works best for you, and I've put links to all of those items in the show notes so that you can see what I'm talking about. So I hope that answers your question, Sandra, and please let me know if I can help you further. And if you want to get your question answered, 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 you want. It doesn't even need to be a running question. If you ask me something really funny I'll probably read it on air.

And 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. And Sandra, you've already sent me your address so that is coming in the mail to you very soon.

Right, so today's main topic is about consistency and I'm going to give you a little bit of tough love. So something that you will learn about me is that I am the biggest cheerleader out there. I will always support you and tell you that you can do anything you set your mind to and I'm going to help you do it. But I'm also going to be very honest if I think there is something you really need to hear. So with that in mind today, I want to talk about consistency as a runner.

The only way to get stronger or faster or go farther as a runner is to be consistent with your training. This means sticking with it even when it isn't fun, when it feels hard, or when you'd rather stay in bed or do something else, right? It also means being patient to allow the results to come in time.

So the number one complaint that I hear from new runners is that running isn't getting any easier, or that they can't go any faster or farther. It's all about making progress and new runners get frustrated sometimes because they don't get evidence of improvement or progress as quickly as they would like.

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But then usually when I ask them, "Well, how many times did you run last month?" the answer is something like, "Well, I ran twice the first week and then I got busy and I went only once over the next couple weeks, and then the last week of the month I was on vacation so I didn't run at all, but last week I got back on track but it felt really hard." And I say, "Well, of course it did."

So the key is to see concrete results in your running performance, you need to run three times a week consistently. Not just when it's convenient, but also when it's not convenient. And I don't mean running through injury. If you've got an injury, you need to stop and chill out and heal your injury, but if you're not injured, three times a week is really what's necessary for you to see progress because you get out of running what you put into it.

So what I mean here is that skipping a run because you're tired or you want to sleep in, or you'd rather go to happy hour, and who wouldn't, right? Means you're delaying your progress. You're basically just saying, "Okay, I'm going to wait to make progress until the next time I go running."

So if improvement is your goal, you need to make running a priority to achieve that goal. Now, if your goal with running is just to go out there every once in a while and enjoy yourself, you don't really need to run three times a week. Just go when the spirit moves you and have fun with it, right? I don't expect that anybody has to run three times a week if their goal isn't necessarily improvement but rather just I want to go out running and have fun.

But if your goal is progress or improvement, or making it start to feel a little bit easier, consistency is the first step. I compare it to knitting, and anybody who knows me knows how desperately I want to be a knitter. I want to be somebody who's good at knitting, but I never practice, and so every time I try to knit I have to relearn it all over again.

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And if you've ever tried knitting, you know that the first couple times it's not intuitive. It feels awkward, it feels uncomfortable when you first learn, like, holding the needles feels weird, it's hard to remember where to move your fingers and where to push the yarn, and the first few inches of anything that you knit kind of look like shit. I have the evidence to prove that.

I mean, it really takes time to pick up the speed and the accuracy to be able to read patterns, to build those skills, switch out colors, stitches, use those weird circular sock knitting needles which I'm fascinated by but I don't understand how they work. And I mean, sometimes it takes a lot of time to build all that stuff, and you need to keep doing it, right? Like, maybe a little bit of knitting every day or maybe you knit for an hour once a week or whatever it is.

I mean, I've learned to knit at least five times in my life and each time I do it for a little while but I lose interest because it takes too long for me to get better at it, and by taking too long I mean after half an hour it doesn't feel easy and so I quit. So I never get proficient. The next time I try I have to start all over again, and that's really frustrating because what I want to do is just pick up some darn needles and some yarn when I'm in the mood and knit away. But that's not how it works.

So to get to the point of being proficient at knitting, I have to practice over and over and over again until it becomes second nature. I have to make those hand movements into muscle memory, and that takes longer than an hour once a year. So I don't get the payoff of knitting easily without putting in the time, and running is exactly the same thing.

So if you only run once or twice a month, you're going to find it hard to improve. Every time it's going to feel hard, every time it's going to feel like the first time because you haven't built up that muscle memory, that cardiovascular endurance and all of that stuff. But if you run three times a week for an entire month, it's actually going to start feel natural. You'll find

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yourself doing more each week without putting in more effort. So when I say running feels easier, I mean you're keeping your effort level the same but you're getting more done because your body adapts to the practice and it sets down muscle memory.

So I want to tell you about one of my clients who started running about three years ago. And she read my book, *Not Your Average Runner*, which by the way you can get on Amazon and there will be a link in the show notes. And she decided to give it a try. She was like, "I've always wanted to try this, this book makes it seem pretty easy so let's go."

So at the time she was I would say, probably a hundred pounds overweight, maybe more, maybe less, but let's - you know, in that ballpark. And she was able to run about 30 seconds at a time, and she stuck with it. It didn't get easy right away, but she stuck with it and she kept doing those 30 second intervals week after week and month after month.

And after a while she was able to do a 5k and then a 10k and I mean, when she started she was doing about a 16 minute mile, but she was consistent. She kept at it. She started getting a little faster, she did a 5k, she did a 10k, she trained for a half marathon, then she actually got injured. She was a little too consistent and got injured because she did a little bit too much too soon, but she rehabbed it, got right back to it, and then last year she actually ran her first marathon.

And we talked the other day and she's got I think three marathons on her calendar already for 2018. And so in just three years she went from being significantly overweight and sedentary to running a marathon, and the reason she did that is consistency. I mean, in the time that I have known her, I can probably count on one hand the number of times she's actually missed a training run.

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And now she can do a 5k in about 30 minutes, okay? So these results didn't come overnight. They came because her main priority was consistency. That's what she focused on. In the beginning, her only goal was to run. Now, over time she added in bigger and bigger goals, but she never lost her primary objective of just being someone who runs three to four times a week.

And by making that her goal, rather than a certain pace or distance, she ended up achieving way more than she ever expected to. So I mean, she's kind of amazing. Like, I - again, I spoke to her recently, and it sort of blew my mind the kind of mental shift that's happened in her over the last three years all because her goal was just to be a consistent runner.

So here is your challenge for the week. For the next month - actually, this is your challenge for the month, but there'll be another challenge next week. So for the next month, I want you to not pay attention to your pace or your distance at all. Just decide that you're going to run for 30 minutes, or maybe it's 40 minutes, three times a week. Make a plan to run 12 times in the next 30 days. Decide which days you're going to do it, mark them all out on your calendar ahead of time, and do those workouts no matter what on those days. No matter what.

And then pick out a reward for yourself when you finish those 12 runs and post it of course, in the Facebook group to show us all how amazing you are. So seriously, give yourself one month of running three times a week and just see what happens. I think you're going to be surprised at just how much you accomplish.

Now, if you're not in the Facebook group, you can join it at www.notyouraveragerunner.com/jointhecommunity, and I hope you do because we have so much fun there. And now let's talk about my current obsession, which is - every week it's something wacky. This week I'm

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obsessed with convertible mittens, and you heard that correctly.
Convertible mittens.

So it is winter here in Philadelphia, which means running in the cold, because I personally am not a big fan of the treadmill. I would much rather just suck it up, bundle up, and enjoy the outdoors, and of course, just like socks and underwear, having the right running gloves is really important if you're going to be running in the winter.

So my big problem with gloves, and just like with socks and underwear, I have very, very exacting specifications for what works for me. So my big problem with gloves is that when I start running my hands are cold and I want to wear super thick mittens. But within about 15 minutes, of course my whole body starts to warm up and then my hands start to get sweaty, and then I'm miserable because I cannot stand for my hands and feet to be too hot when I'm running.

I've been told that I'm a little bit of the princess and the pea type when I run. I have to be exactly the right temperature. So when my hands get hot, I take off my gloves, I stick them in my pockets, and then inevitably, one of them falls out somewhere on my running route and now I've got this basket full of lonely gloves at home. And also, I really hate having gloves stuffed in my pockets when I run because I feel like a pregnant kangaroo and that's never a fun feeling.

But last year, I got myself a pair of convertible mittens, which are basically fingerless gloves that have a mitten top that sort of folds over the ends of your fingers to keep them warm. And so they're basically mittens when you need them to be mittens, and then when your hands warm up, you can take that - the end, the mitten top and sort of fold it back so the ends of your fingers are exposed and then it like, Velcros against the back of the glove.

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And it's all attached so it's not going to fall off, and then you can kind of cool down your hands, let a little bit of heat escape, and you can also use your phone or your watch without taking off your gloves, which is amazing. And of course, you don't have to stuff your gloves in your pockets, which is the best thing of all, so there's no more lost gloves.

So there's a brand that I love called Trailheads, and they're available on Amazon, there's a link in the show notes and I freaking love these gloves, they're amazing. And so you can find the show notes with the links to everything I've talked about in today's episode at www.notyouraveragerunner.com/5. That's www.notyouraveragerunner.com/5. You can download the episode there, you can click over to iTunes there, you can get all of the show notes links and all that good stuff over there at www.notyouraveragerunner.com/5.

Well, our time is up again. I can't believe these episodes go so quickly. So if you are anxious to get started with running, I want you to know that I have a free one week jumpstart plan to help you do exactly that. Now, you're going to get your very first week of workouts along with some tips to help you get started, and I promise they're super easy, anyone can do them. If you're thinking to yourself, "No, I'm not ready yet", just give it a try because honestly, you've got nothing to lose.

So if you want to grab that, just go on over to www.notyouraveragerunner.com/start to download it, and after you've done that, make sure - actually, you're not going to download it there. You're going to give me your email and then I'm going to email you the plan. So go to www.notyouraveragerunner.com/start. Put your email in, I will email you the plan, and then after that I'm actually going to drop in on you every couple days to give you some additional guidance to make sure that you're able to use the plan.

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So that is going to be super fun, and that's the end of this episode. I'm so glad we're on this journey together, my friend. I wish you the best of running this week. 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.