

Ep #17: 5K Training Series Part Three - The Complete Race Day Manual



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 number 17 of *The Not Your Average Runner Podcast*. I'm your host, Jill Angie, and this episode is the third one in our 5K Training Series. Today's topic is race day strategies and you can check out parts one and two of the series at episodes 14 and 16 respectively.

I don't have a Curvy Coach question or latest obsession today because we need the entire episode for our race day review. And also, I've actually decided to extend this series by one more episode to cover virtual 5K races. What they are, why they're awesome, and all of that stuff.

So make sure that you tune into that one if you don't have a local 5K you can do. That's going to be episode 19, coming out in two weeks. So whether you're a brand-new runner, an experienced pro, or maybe even just contemplating it because all your crazy friends are doing it, you are in the right place.

Here we are. Now that you've picked your race and trained for it, there's really nothing left to do but just show up and run. In this episode, we're going to cover the week leading up to the race and then race day itself. There are a few things that I think are really important to consider during your last week of training, and that is primarily what you're going to wear, what you're going to eat, and then how you're going to get your race packet and actually get to the race.

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Now, one of the cardinal rules of running is never ever, ever, ever try anything new on race day. Your training period is not just for building up the strength and endurance to cover the distance. It's also for trying out race day strategies such as what to wear and how to eat.

So this week you're going to do a dress rehearsal for the big day. The clothes, the gadgets, the nutrition, the timing, everything you need to address so that any potential issues come up before the race instead of during the race. So basically, everything that you've practiced for the past two months is finally going to come together.

Now, by now you've done enough running that you know which outfits are your favorites, which ones make you feel fabulous, which ones don't require constantly tugging on the seams to keep them in place. So this is what you should be wearing on race day. It's an outfit that will not distract you and frustrate you but rather will boost your confidence and remind you that you're a real runner.

So I'm going to suggest that you prepare a good weather outfit and one that's appropriate for more inclement weather such as, you know, longer tights maybe or a rain jacket and gloves if it's cold out. And as always, make sure that you've tried them out before you do the race. So that's something to maybe try out during your dress rehearsal.

And of course, before your actual dress rehearsal which you're going to do the weekend before your race, check the expected weather on race day and wear the outfit that you're most likely to need.

So we should talk about nutrition next and a 5K is a pretty short race. And even though it might feel long to you if you're a beginner, what you eat the race morning, that morning before the race is important but honestly, if

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you're used to running on an empty stomach, that's probably your best bet on race day.

The thing that is really more important than what you eat that very morning is what you eat and drink in the days leading up to the event. So first of all, I want to make sure you stay well hydrated for that whole week. Drink extra water just to make sure and honestly, better overhydrated a little bit than a little bit dehydrated.

Now, the night before your race, I want you to fuel yourself with really high-quality nutrition. Maybe even avoid alcohol or keep it no more than one drink. And again, a 5K really is a short race. It's an hour or less, so there's no need to carb load with a huge plate of pasta.

I mean, actually there's really no need to do that before any race, but definitely not before a 5K. You're just going to end up really feeling kind of sluggish and shitty the next morning, so don't do that. If you're used to eating right before you go for a training run, then make sure you eat that same thing on race day with the same timing.

And allow the appropriate amount of time for your regular bathroom routine. So if you know you have to go like, 20 minutes after you eat or after you drink coffee, build that into your schedule. Either go before you leave home or make sure that you get to the race site in plenty of time to stand in line at the porta-potties. And sometimes those lines can get pretty long, so the more time you allow the better. But it's even best if you can just do it before you leave your house in the first place.

Alright, we need to talk about the race website next, and the race website in that I include any informational emails you may have gotten in the days leading up to your event. Make sure you review all of the website

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information carefully and read through all those emails because there's often information in there that's critical to your success on race day.

And sometimes they actually seem like they're written in a foreign language, and so it's always easy to ignore - just ignore what you don't understand. But like I said, that could be a big mistake because sometimes there are very important rules and details that might impact you. Like whether or not you can wear headphones or where you should park, or what time you should be there before the race start.

So I'm going to give you a quick guide to the terms that you need to know to be able to interpret what a lot of the language that's on the website or in the email. And don't worry, I'm actually putting all of this into a little downloadable guide that you can grab over at the show notes for this episode, which is notyouraveragerunner.com/17. It's just going to be a quickie download for you.

Okay, the first term is race director. Now, this is the person ultimately responsible for the execution of the event. She or he is the person who makes the decisions on a lot of stuff, and if you have questions about whether or not something is allowed if you can't find that information on the website or in the emails, that's the person you need to contact.

The next term is race bib. This is a very important, very important term. It's basically the runner jargon for your race number. So everyone in the race is going to have to wear a number on their shirt and what you're going to do is actually pin it on your shirt or you can get some sort of device that holds it, but if this is your first race, just use the safety pins that come in your packet.

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So you're going to pin that number on your shirt so that you can be seen as you're running, if they're taking pictures they'll be able to identify you from your race number. If something happens to you, they'll be able to identify who you are and get your emergency contact information and so forth. So it's really important that you wear that. If you're not wearing your race bib, you probably will not be allowed to run the race. So that's one of the most important things.

Your race packet is what you'll pick up or it might be mailed to you, but one way or another, you need to have your race packet before you start the race. Most of the time you're going to pick it up the day before, but then some races allow you to pick it up the morning of.

And this contains your race bib, your timing chip if there is one, and we're going to talk about that in a few minutes. It may include a course map and other instructions, almost always has a bunch of coupons and random stuff from sponsors. Like, sometimes you get lucky and there's free Chapstick, which is always my favorite.

And you'll usually - you may get your race shirt in your race packet or you may have to pick it up at a separate table after you pick up your packet. But either way, you'll get those at the same time.

Aid stations, so these are also very important for you to know about. These are basically tables that are set up along the course with volunteers who are handing out water and other sports drinks. For a 5K, there's usually going to be at least one, maybe two. And as you are passing the aid station, a volunteer will hand you a cup.

Make sure to ask whether it is water or Gatorade so you don't get any surprises. Because if you have a bad reaction to Gatorade, you think you're

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getting water, you take a huge swig of it, it's not pretty. So they usually have both available, but make sure you ask what it is if it's not obvious.

Alright, timing chip. This is a little device that either attaches to your shoe or the back of your race number, and not every race has them. It's mostly the larger races. If it's a small race, maybe 25 to 50 people you're probably not going to have a timing chip, but if it's bigger than that, you might.

And it's just like a little device that most of the time it's like already glued to the back of your race number, and what happens is it detects the exact time you cross the start line and the exact time you cross the finish line to determine what's called your chip time.

So unless you're at the very front of the pack in a race, it's going to take you anywhere from maybe 30 seconds to several minutes to get over the starting mat, after the starting gun is fired. And if you have a timing chip, this period of time is not counted against your race time.

So unless the race you're running is very small or informal, it's likely that you're going to have a timing chip provided to you in your race packet. Now, make sure to read the instructions because sometimes you have to return them at the end of the race if it's something that you tie to your shoe, for example.

Alright, let's talk about clock time and chip time. Clock time is the time elapsed between when the starting gun is fired and the very first runner crosses the start line and the time when you cross the finish line. So like I said, if it takes you a few minutes to get to the start line because there's a lot of runners, your clock time is going to be longer than the actual time it took you to run the race.

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Now, if you have a chip, a timing chip, that's actually going to tell you the exact time it took you to cross the start line and the finish line, and that's the number that you're going to be looking at when you look at your race results. It's the number that you're interested in.

Alright, race expo. If you're doing a 5K that's part of a larger event, such as a marathon or half marathon, or even a 10K, or if you're doing any kind of a Disney race, you will likely pick up your packet at the expo. And this is just another way of saying huge sports fare with people giving away free samples and trying to get you to buy random stuff.

It is a chance for vendors to set up booths and try to sell you their wares, and sometimes you can get really good deals on discontinued gear, you can try samples of new nutrition bars or drinks for free. Just make sure that you don't get so distracted by all the fun stuff that you forget to grab your race packet.

So race rules and logistics. We talked about what the importance of checking out the website, and I want to go through some of the things that you want to really pay attention to. I mean, to make sure that you're able to run your very best race, it is critical for you to know the rules and logistics for that particular race because each event is different.

I would hate to see you get disqualified for not following a rule that you didn't even know about, right? So be informed. Review that website and the emails and familiarize yourself with the information so there are no surprises.

And the organizers are sending you the things that they think you need to know. If you have questions, you can email them back, reach out to the race director. Very often, a race will have a Facebook page, you can

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probably ask questions there, and I've actually created a checklist for you to make sure you've got it all covered.

And again, you can go to the show notes for this episode to print out this information. So it's notyouraveragerunner.com/17. So the first thing you want to know is what is the weather policy. And that means what happens if the race is canceled due to rain. Most races will not be canceled unless there is thunder and lightning or hail or something that is actually potentially harmful to the runners.

A little bit of rain and or even snow, it's unlikely that the race will be canceled. But you want to know what the weather policy is. Is there a rain day? If it's canceled and there's no rescheduling of it, do you get your money back or can you defer that enrollment to next year? There's all different scenarios so you need to know what the policy is.

You also want to know where are the start lines and the finish lines. And your race website should have a map for you. And also, where your family and friends can stand to cheer you on. I mean, are there spots along the race route that are great for spectators, or will it be better if they're just waiting for you at the finish line?

You need to know what time the race starts and then what time you need to be there because often, the race might start at 7:15 but they expect you to be there at 6:30 so you can listen to any pre-race announcements. So make sure you know what those times are.

Find out if headphones are allowed on the race course. Most of the time the race directors will say they're discouraged but they don't outright disallow them. So you need to know for sure though because some races

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say absolutely not, and if you're somebody who's used to running with music, then you want to be mentally prepared for that.

You also need to know where and when you can pick up your race packet, your race bib, your t-shirt, all of that stuff. Now, like I said, for many races, smaller ones you can do it the morning of the race, sometimes you can even register the morning of the race. But for large races, they often require you to pick it up the day or maybe even two days before.

Sometimes if you choose that option when you register, they will mail it to you, but there's always a deadline for that too. So just make sure you know how you get your race number.

Alright, make sure you know what information you need to bring with you when you pick up your race packet. For example, do you need ID, do you need a driver's license, do you need a registration receipt? Can somebody else pick up your packet for you if you're not available?

Sometimes when that is the scenario, if that person emails you and says I give permission for so and so to pick up my packet, all you need to do is show an email, but there are a bunch of different options there so you need to make sure you figure that out.

You need to know where race parking is and you need to know if you have to have cash on hand to pay for it, and I actually kind of got caught - not caught doing something wrong, but like, caught unexpectedly not having cash on hand for a race a few years ago. The race was about an hour and a half from my house and I drove up there with somebody and we just assumed that there would be free parking.

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Well, surprise surprise, the free parking was really, really far away from the race start and I was unfamiliar with the town, and of course you know, parking near the race was \$10 cash only. And so we had to figure out really quickly like, where can we go get money, where can we go get cash so that we can park and it was sort of a race against time because parking was filling up.

So I want to make sure that you don't fall into that trap and that if the race parking is free, awesome, make sure you know where it is, but if there's going to be paid parking, make sure you have cash on hand to pay for that.

Now, find out if there are going to be any road closures and if so, do those closures affect the route that you will be driving on to get to the race because you don't want to be leaving for your race and then finding out that they've closed all the roads on that side of town and you can't even get there.

Know where the aid stations are along the route and if you're somebody who runs with water usually and for a 5K you probably don't need to run with water, but just in case, know where the aid stations are so if you're going - if you usually run with water and you don't want to carry it with you on race day, find out is it at one mile, is it at two mile, will there be water when you need it.

Find out if you're going to have a timing chip that you need to return after the race. It's also important. I mean, sometimes they'll ask you to return it right after you cross over the finish line, but sometimes you have to mail it back and whatever. And that's like, maybe 5% of 5Ks are like that, but it's good to know ahead of time.

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Now, if you don't find answers to these questions, email the race director or post the question on the race's Facebook page and make sure that you get an answer.

Alright, so that's sort of like prep week. I have a few miscellaneous tips about that that I kind of want to add to. Make sure you don't throw out the pins that come with your race packet. You're going to get four safety pins and they are to pin your bib onto your shirt. Do not throw them out. You can throw them out later if you want or you can put them in a jar.

I have a jar - I should take a picture of it and post it sometime because I have a jar of tiny little safety pins because they always come in the race packet and I'm always like, four more, yay. One of these days I'll donate them to Goodwill.

So I want you to make sure you plan to arrive early enough for at least two last minute porta-potty visits. Just trust me on this. Like, one of them is going to be legit, and one of them is going to be your bladder being nervous and you're going to think you have to pee, you're going to stand in line, you're going to get in the porta-potty, nothing's going to come out, you're going to say, "Oh, I didn't really have to pee," but at least like - first of all, I think it gives you something to do instead of just standing there looking around at other people while you're waiting for the race to start. And also, it sort of puts your mind at ease that okay, I'm not going to have to pee while I'm running.

You will almost always get a race shirt. You may or may not get a finisher's medal for a 5K, and that's just - you know, the finisher's medals are not an inexpensive thing to add to a 5K, so if it's a really small 5K they might not be able to provide them.

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Doesn't take away from your experience at all, but just know that if you cross the finish line and nobody hands you a medal, it's not because you didn't do a great job, it's probably because they just didn't have them for that race.

So as far as prepping for the race, like, once you've done all this stuff with like, learning everything on the race site and all of the rules and logistics, now it's time to pack your stuff. I want you to lay it out - your whole outfit - the night before just so the next morning you can just get up, get dressed, eat your breakfast if that's what you want, and go.

And a lot of people, they actually lay their outfit out on their bed and take a picture of it and then say like, "Flat Jill is ready for her race tomorrow," and so it's just kind of a fun little thing to do to kind of build up a little excitement the night before.

But definitely, you know, make sure you've got everything ready to go the night before so the morning of, if it's one of those things where you have to get up at five in the morning, you don't want to be searching around for your other sock or your headphones, right?

Now, if you're picking your race bib up at the race itself, make sure you leave an extra 20 to 30 minutes just in case there's a line. And - oh, but if you're picking your race bib up at the expo, make sure you leave enough time to shop and browse afterwards. That's always a tip I tell people.

I just realized I'm kind of going out of order here because I'm adding in little things in there as I think of them, but you'll bear with me because again, you can download the whole list of everything from the show notes so I'm just going to keep going.

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Alright, the weekend before your race, I want you to do a dress rehearsal of the distance with all the gear that you plan to use on race day at roughly the same time of day and using the intervals and nutrition that you've been training with. Then take note of what went well and what didn't go exactly as expected. And plan to make those adjustments on race day.

So race day itself is - it's one of my favorite things because really, it's the celebration and the reward for all the hard work that you put in over the past few months. The prep work has been completed, your gear is ready, you've worked out all the logistics, family and friends are going to be waiting for you at the finish line.

All that's left to do now is run. And I like to think of a race as just a catered workout. Basically, it's like yet another workout where people are handing you fuel, handing you water and hydration, cheering you on, clearing the roads. It's like you get to feel like a princess because the entire world is out there to make it easy for you to run the distance.

Now, the night before the race it's completely normal for you to feel nervous about that. I mean, you're going to be a princess tomorrow but that doesn't mean that princesses aren't nervous the night before their coronation, right?

So a lot of people don't actually sleep well, and that's okay and it's typical. It's very normal. So just get what sleep you can and know that everyone else is in the same boat. And actually, what I like to do is the night before race night, get a really good night's sleep that night.

So two nights before, sleep really well and then just in case the night before your race has you tossing and turning. And know that even if you like, only

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get two hours of sleep, you're going to be fine in the race. Your body is going to kick it into gear and do what it needs to do.

And remember, your goal for this race is simply to finish feeling amazing and proud of yourself, right? The time on the clock is irrelevant, and I want you to burn that into your brain. This is your first 5K, your goal is to finish. Your goal is to just be like, damn, I did that.

I really - I really don't care what your finish time is. It doesn't matter. It doesn't matter if you come in first or last. Everybody runs the same distance and I just want you to be, you know, super proud of what you did. You trained for this race, you showed up, you finished it, you earned it.

Now, you're going to use the intervals that worked for you during your training runs. If you felt great with a one-minute run, one-minute walk ratio, now is not the time to sprint out of the gate and try to run the first 10 minutes. This is going to tire you out very quickly and you won't have anything left to give in the last mile, then you end your race not feeling so great about yourself.

So as soon as you cross that start line, I want you to do your intervals from that very moment. Now, everybody else is going to be running, so you're going to start running, maybe you'll run 30 seconds, maybe you'll be running a minute, and your beeper will go off and you'll say, "Okay, it's time for me to walk."

But everyone else is still going to be running, and you're going to be excited, and you're going to think, "You know what, I'm just going to run through the first interval, first walk interval, and maybe the second one." And I just want to tell you, if you're a run-walk interval runner, this is a mistake.

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I can't stress this enough. I hear so many stories about people who they just felt so amazing and energetic in the beginning that they ran the first mile like two minutes faster than usual and they ran through all their walk intervals, and then by the end of the race they were totally dragging and they don't understand what went wrong.

What went wrong is that they started out way too fast and that they didn't follow the routine. So they trained to run the entire distance with run-walk intervals, but they didn't run the race that way. They started the race out without them.

So I want you to make sure that you follow the training that you trained with. Start out slow, manage your energy and save something for that finish line sprint. Because I'll tell you what, sprinting across the finish line makes some damn good race pictures. I want you to look happy and energetic and pretty badass for the photographers. Not tired and defeated. We don't want that.

Alright, here is another checklist for you. And again, this is part of the download in the show notes. This is what you're going to do the night before the race. You're going to lay out all your clothes and your gear, including your timing chip, your bib, the safety pins, shoes, running tights, running top, jacket, gloves, socks, undies, sports bra, hat or a headband. Your timing chip is probably attached to the back of your bib if you have one. You can even pin your bib to your shirt ahead of time.

Next, you're going to prepare what I call a go back. It's going to have lip balm, bobby pins, extra ponytail holder, Body Glide if you're prone to chaffing, contact lens solution, an extra bottle of water, maybe a granola bar if you like a post run granola bar, whatever snack you would eat after you run. Sunscreen, extra socks, extra headphones.

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Every possible thing you might need. You can leave it in the car, but in the event, you need something, if you get to the race and realize, "Oh shit, I forgot something," you can send somebody back to the parking lot to grab it for you or run back yourself or something like that. So it's always good to just have that in case of emergency.

And honestly, I just keep something like that in my car all the time so that - especially extra headphones. I always have them in my car because I don't want to get caught without something that I really need.

Like I said earlier, you're going to figure out exactly when you need to leave your house to get - or your hotel to get to the race on time. I want you to set three alarms. At least one of them should be on the other side of the room so you can't accidentally turn it off.

Now, make sure to set them for earlier than you think you need to awaken. And I mean, to be honest, you're probably not going to sleep through them because race night sleep is usually pretty patchy. But just in case, I want you to set all kinds of like, backup situations.

Make sure that that morning meal, if you need it, is ready to go. Maybe you set the timer on the coffee maker also. And then I want you to make sure all of your devices like your phone, your running watch, whatever it is that you're going to run with, make sure that they are charging, double check that they are charging.

I've been caught a couple times that I plugged in my phone and you know, the USB port wasn't all the way in or something like that. I got up in the morning and lo and behold, my phone's at like, 4% and I'm like, crap, like, trying to like, power charge it in the car on the way to the race. So don't be that person.

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Okay, make sure you know how you're going to carry ID with you during the race because it's important to do that. Now, you might have a road ID, you might be one of those people that's got one of those little bars engraved with your name and your address and your phone number and your emergency contact, and that's perfect.

But I also recommend carrying maybe a driver's license and like, a \$20 bill with you just in case. Just in case something happens. So you can carry that in a pocket or your waist pack or your armband. Just like, figure that out ahead of time and make sure that you've got it.

Check the weather the night before, check it one last time, check the race website and your email one last time for any last-minute announcements. And then the morning of the race, it's go time.

Now, even if you've got everything ready the night before, something always comes up, so the dog steals a shoe and hides it or like I said, your phone wasn't fully plugged in. So get up earlier than you think you need to and again, leave earlier than you think you need to. It's better to be the first one there and wait around than still parking your car while the starting gun is going off and everybody else is running the race. So if no guidance is given on the race site, I always aim to be at the location at least 60 minutes before the gun goes off.

Okay, so that's all the prep work. Now I want to talk about race day etiquette. And this is really important. A lot of people don't necessarily know this intuitively. I don't know if I knew it intuitively during my first race, I've just done so many of them that I've kind of figured it out. But I'm just going to give you the short and sweet cheat sheet for how to follow the etiquette that most experienced runners follow.

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Now, first of all, unless you're running like, a six or eight-minute mile, which if you're listening to this podcast, you're probably not. I want you to place yourself towards the back half of the starting pack and maybe even all the way in the back, and then off to either left or right side. Preferably the right side because that's generally - people pass on the left.

Now, there are two reasons for this. First of all, it's good race etiquette to make sure you're not in the way of faster runners. There is nothing wrong with being slow. Nothing at all. I am a super slow runner, proud of it. But think of it like a highway. The flow of traffic gets interrupted when a slower car is in the wrong lane.

And then everybody's backed up behind that person and getting frustrated. So just make sure that you're respecting that and that you kind of start out towards the back of the pack. Doesn't need to be all the way in the back, although I prefer - this is what I love to do. I start almost dead last because it's way more fun for me to pass people as I'm like running the race than it is for me to get passed. So that's just like, my little trick but again, everybody has their own way of doing it.

Now, after the race starts out, after everybody's started, or gotten across the start line and the pack is starting to thin out, like people will spread out a little bit, you can run in the center of the road. Just make sure there's plenty of room around you to pass, but until that happens, I would stick to either the left side or the right side and preferably the right side. But again, like, as soon as it thins out, you can move into the center.

When you pass people, you need to let them know where you are. If you're coming close to them, like if you're within a foot of somebody or a few inches, like, nothing is more annoying than having somebody suddenly appear three inches away from you when you weren't expecting it.

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Especially if you've maybe got a headphone in and you know, again, like you shouldn't have your music up super loud but we can't always control what other people do.

So it can be very startling if you come up on somebody who's listening to music and they didn't know you were there. So make sure you pass people with enough room so that they don't get freaked out. And also, the preference at least in the US is to pass on the left, and then as you're passing, just say, "On your left," as you're approaching, or "On your right," if that's the case.

Just so that they know, hey, there's a human back here, and they don't start flailing their arms and you know, freak out when they catch you out of the corner of their eye. And along those lines, don't follow other people too closely.

First of all, because if they stop running, you're going to run right into them and that's not fun for anybody. But it is actually your responsibility to avoid running into people in front of you. Just like in traffic where you don't follow too closely because if you hit the guy in front of you because he stops short, it's your fault, right? Same thing in running.

And if you're running with friends, don't run more than two abreast. I mean, three at the very most if it's a really, really wide road, but it's super frustrating when you're running and there's this line of like, four or five people in front of you and you have to like, run all the way to one side of the other to get around them because they are - because they all want to hang out and talk.

I mean, it's a race and like, I just can't stress that enough. Like, be aware that other people are running as well. So like, two abreast is really, you

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know, fine, but like three abreast is sort of pushing it. More than that, you're just kind of being a jerk, so don't do that.

Now, at the aid stations, you're going to take your water and keep moving. I'm going to suggest that you take your water - that you start walking, grab your water, and walk through the aid stations so you don't choke like trying to run and drink at the same time. But don't just stop. Don't like, grab your water and then just stop there and start drinking it.

Take your water, keep moving. If you need to stop moving so that you can drink, you know, just go up past the aid station and then get out of the way of other people so that other people can get their hydration as well.

And speaking of pulling off to the side and stopping, if you want to take a selfie while you're running, which is awesome, I'm all for this, please get out of the way of other runners. Again, step over to the side so that nobody's running into you. I mean, unless you want a picture of somebody running into you, in which case, have at it, but then you're - again, you're kind of a jerk if you do that.

So just be cognizant that other people are doing this race and they also want to have a great experience, so just step out of the way if you want to do something that doesn't involve continual forward motion.

Now, here's the fun part about running towards the back of the pack. I love to do that and just sort of talk to the people around me. So I encourage you, talk to the people around you, encourage them, tell other people they're doing great, be someone's cheerleader and I promise it's going to make you feel awesome. It might make the difference between a good and a bad race for someone else.

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So don't be afraid to talk to people. And a lot of times, people have a scowl on their face when they're running, especially if it's in a race and they're just trying really hard. That doesn't mean they're mad or angry or frustrated. It just means that they're concentrating. You can still say, "Hey, you're doing great."

A lot of times, I love to - if I see somebody that's wearing a great outfit, I always say, "I love your tights, I love your top, where did you get it? They look amazing." So it's really fun. I've made some pretty good friends - actually, I've gotten some clients by talking to people at the end of the race because, you know, we just started talking and had a great conversation and sort of ended up working together.

Now, when you get close to the finish line, if you are crossing with other people, try to leave some space in between you. Otherwise, first of all, you'll have strangers in your race photos, and so will they. But if somebody - like, if you're sprinting for the finish line and you're going to be passing somebody closer - that's ahead of you but you're going to be passing them before you get across the finish line, don't throw your arms out so that you're blocking their face.

I've had somebody do that to me once and I was like, really? Like, it was a great race finish and somebody's hand was in front of my face. So just be aware of that. Like, the cameras are going to be taking pictures of you but they're taking pictures of the other people as well, and just be aware that other people might actually want a nice race photo as well.

And this is again, another benefit of running towards the back of the pack is you're less likely to have 10 people crossing the finish line at once. There might only be a couple of you, which gives you plenty of room.

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Okay, the next one is sort of this like, ultimate question that everybody always asks. Should I wear the race shirt during the race? It is a very hotly debated topic. Now, there are those who staunchly believe that wearing the race shirt is very bad karma until you've actually crossed the finish line. And also, it pretty much shouts to the world that you're a newbie.

So that's one school of thought. And then there's another school of thought that says, hey, I signed up for this race, I paid for this shirt, I'm going to wear it with pride, right? So neither way is wrong, neither way is against "code," it's totally up to you. But just remember this, wearing a new shirt on race day isn't the best idea simply because you haven't trained in it.

So you may be super proud that you're running this race and you may want to wear that shirt during the race, but you haven't worn it for your training so you might find out the hard way that it's really not a good shirt for you to run in, and you might end up not running your best race because that shirt is making you uncomfortable.

So again, I apologize for the jumping around but we're going to talk back again about the race start. So if there's a big race, like, if there's more than a few hundred people, you're going to have to shuffle for a while before you cross the start line. And sometimes they even corral and you've probably heard people talk about which corral are you in.

So they'll put people into corrals, maybe A, B, C, D, E, and so forth. It might be like, two or three hundred people per corral. And the faster your expected pace, the closer to the start line you'll be. So it's very normal for that to happen, and again, your chip will take this into account. Once you cross that start line, your chip time starts.

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And so it's not going to count against you if it takes you 15 minutes to get up to the start line. And then after you cross it, again, follow those intervals from the very beginning, from that very first second. Plan to walk the aid stations so you don't spill water all over the place when you're trying to drink, and also start a little slower than you think you can maintain for the entire race.

And this is hard for some people, right? You're super excited, it's high energy, there's a lot of music playing, there's an announcer yelling and everybody's running, and you want to run fast. It just feels so good.

It will really serve you if you force yourself to slow down in the beginning, as weird as it seems because then you can slowly pick up the pace throughout the entire race that you finish the second half faster than the first half and you're crossing that finish line with like, a big smile on your face.

Alright, people will pass you. That's the other thing. Unless you start dead last like I love to do, there are going to be people behind you that are faster than you, right? It's normal, it doesn't mean you're running too slowly, it doesn't mean you're not a real runner, it doesn't mean anything about you other than this person runs this pace, and you run that pace.

Everyone is running his or her own race. Comparing your pace to someone else's is really going to dial down your happiness a little bit. So I just want you to remember like, stay in your own lane, run your own race, there's always going to be somebody faster than you, somebody that passes you. There's always going to be somebody older and heavier than you that will leave you in the dust.

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So I want you to look to that person as an example of what is possible rather than some kind of evidence that you suck. And seriously, I did a half marathon one time and I got passed by a woman on crutches. I mean, come on, she was on crutches. Half marathon, 13 miles she did. It's an amazing story.

She trained for this race and she was running it in memory of a really good friend of hers who had passed away, and about two weeks before the race she broke her ankle and she thought she couldn't do it, and then she said, "Nope, fuck it, I'm doing this thing on crutches." And she did, and she passed me.

And I was kind of in awe of her, so I just want you to look at people like that not as evidence that there's something wrong with you, that you're not good enough, but as evidence of what is possible. And always remember that first place and last place, they both run the same distance.

Now, when you see a photographer, and keep your eye out for them because they're not always just at the finish line, sometimes they're along the race course. I want you to smile and wave. I, for some reason, I always do this doofy thumbs up thing and so I got some race pictures where I just look like a complete goofball.

But at least I'm not scowling, right? So make sure you smile, you wave at the photographer. This is going to give you the best chance for some awesome race photos. And as soon as you see that finish line in the distance, I want you to kick it into high gear and give it your all.

Like, you can do something really fun when you cross the finish line. My friend, Laura, Laura Backus, and you can read more about her at Fat Girl Ironman Journey. She's amazing. She always does this jump and kicks up

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her heels at the end and she has just got some amazing, amazing race photos because of that. She also always runs in a sparkly skirt, so it's really fun. Really fun to see those pictures of her kicking up her heels in her little sparkle skirt.

Okay, so we've crossed the finish line, the race is over, you're going to want to keep your legs moving for at least 20 minutes. So don't just like, sit down on the curb and say, "Glad that's over." Like, keep your legs moving, drink some water, have that snack if you want to.

And then take a moment, hang around the finish line, and if there are still people finishing, cheer them on. Yo, good job, just tell them how awesome they are. Just remember all the people that cheered for you when you were running, like, you want to be that person for the people that are finishing behind you.

Take some time to stretch, and you can do that while you're finishing your bottle of water or whatever it is, but just take some time to stretch. And then take lots of pictures of yourself after the race, especially if you got a race medal or, you know, if you can get one with your family, post that shit on social media. Celebrate it, you did it. That's amazing.

So that is race day. That's the whole thing. And the last thing you need to do is just make sure you take a ton of pictures of yourself after the race, maybe with your medal or with your family. Post them on social media to celebrate that because you did it, you did that shit. Good job.

Alright, that's it for race strategies. Now, next week I've got another special interview episode with Latoya Shauntay Snell and Martinus Evans. And I did mention them last week in episode 16 when I gave you my list of

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favorite body positive Instagram accounts to follow. So make sure you follow them and then tune in next week for my interview with them.

And of course, if you're on Instagram, make sure you check out my account @notyouraveragerunner because I post some really fun stuff too. Alright, before we end, and I know this episode's getting kind of long, but I have a couple quick announcements to make this week.

So the first is that if you listen to all three podcasts on 5K training and you haven't quite taken the leap or you think that some - you know, maybe you want some community and support to do it, I want you to just take a moment and check out the Run Your Best Life coaching group.

There are a lot of members in there right now that are doing their first race in the next couple months - actually, all the time. There's always somebody that like, lives in New Orleans and they're racing in January. But there's a lot of members in there that are joining to get help with doing their first race.

And we check in every week on their progress, get help with their training plans, I coach there live every single week, and you basically get all the help and accountability you need to make it happen. And of course, we laugh a lot, and there is definitely swearing. So if you want to run a 5K and drop some F bombs along the way, it's definitely the place for you.

You can check that out at www.runyourbestlife.com for all the details, and it even comes with a six-week beginner training plan so if you need a little extra boost to get yourself to the point of training for a 5K. So in other words, you don't even need to have started running yet to get to that point because I've got you covered to get you through that first six weeks before we even start training for a 5K. So if you're an absolute brand-new beginner, also this is a great group for you.

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Alright, and the other thing I want to tell you is that I'm compiling a list of funny running stories for an upcoming podcast. And that episode airs on May 24th. I want you guys, if you have some stories to submit them. The deadline is May 7th to submit the stories, and there's two ways to do it. The first is to call *The Not Your Average Runner Podcast* hotline, which is at 484-754-6794, and then leave a voicemail with your running story.

The funnier, the better. And I'd love it if you leave your name, but if you don't want to that's totally fine, and if you really don't feel comfortable recording yourself, you can always email your story to me at podcast@notyouraveragerunner.com, and then I'll read it for you.

So I'm going to pick around 10 of them to share, and then after the podcast airs we're going to have a little contest where you guys will vote on your favorite story and I'm going to send a nice little *Not Your Average Runner* price pack to the winner.

So to have the best chance of getting your story included on the episode, make sure that you speak very clearly and it's always kind of a good idea to sort of write out notes about what you want to say first so that you don't lose your train of thought like I tend to do in the middle of a story or get off track.

Alright, that is it for this week. I cannot wait to hear your running stories and I cannot wait to hear all about how your 5Ks have gone. All the instructions to do that and everything else that we talked about today are in the show notes for this episode at notyouraveragerunner.com/17.

And hey, if you are loving the podcast, why not head over to iTunes and leave me a review because what that does is it helps other people find the podcast if it's got higher ratings and more ranking. So I would love it if you

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did that. Other than that, we are done for this week, I hope you have an amazing week of running and I will talk to you soon. 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.