

Ep #65: Winter Running



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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.

Hey rebels, you are listening to episode number 65 of *The Not Your Average Runner Podcast*. I'm your host, Jill Angie, and today's episode is all about winter running because we are literally getting our first snowfall here in Philly, as I record this. The snow is coming fast and furious, and suddenly I'm realizing that most of my winter running gear is somewhere in the pile of boxes to be moved to Princeton next week.

So fortunately I did just receive a very nice package of cold weather gear from Skirt Sports to keep me warm, so thank you so much to Skirt Sports for that, and oh, by the way, if you want to get 20% off your Skirt Sports order and try out the Wonder Wool that I'm going to be talking about later in this episode, just enter the code NYAR20 at checkout and you'll get 20% off. So it's skirtsports.com, the code is NYAR20.

And this episode, if I'm not mistaken, is going to be coming out on Thanksgiving. So, if you're in the US, happy turkey day. I hope you're out doing a turkey trot right now, and I want you to know, whether you're in the US or elsewhere, that I am super thankful for all of my Not Your Average Runner Podcast listeners. You guys are amazing and this show wouldn't be nearly as awesome without you, so thank you.

Now, cold weather always makes me think about vacations and race-cations, in particular, warm places with fun races to do like New Orleans or Savannah. And we did just add another race to the Rebel Runner Unleashed program, and that is the Savannah Rock 'n' Roll race series in November next year. So basically, when it is snowing up north this time of

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year, I'm going to be down south watching all of my fabulous Rebel Runner clients cross those finish lines.

So if you want to be there with us, you can. Sign up for a quick consultation call with my team to learn more about that at talktojill.com, and this is especially for you if you're struggling right now to stay on track with your running, and just you know, keep going with your healthy routines through the holidays. I don't believe in making resolutions. I believe in doing the mental work necessary to stop quitting and stay on track in the first place, despite everything going on in your life, despite the holidays. Stop quitting so you don't ever have to start over and make a resolution.

So what is that saying? It's a slow process but quitting won't speed it up. yeah, that is my motto. So if you're heading into fuck it mode for the next two months because you think it's going to be way too hard to stick with your fitness routine while the holidays are happening, I really want you to set up a call with us so we can help you out. So just go to talktojill.com, go right now, I promise I'll wait, and let's talk about this.

Alright my rebels, here is today's quote. "If you wait for perfect conditions, you will never get anything done." So true, right? And almost every runner I talk to doesn't like the cold. In fact, when I interview people for the Rebel Runner program and I ask them what their biggest obstacles are, almost every single one of them includes winter running on their list.

So that's exactly what we're going to cover this week. Now, Jen Lamplough, our director of nutrition at Not Your Average Runner here, was struggling with the cold weather last week, and to be fair, she lives in Chicago. It was 18 degrees out and with the wind chill it was seven. So that's cold, right? That's definitely a circumstance, at least as far as I'm concerned.

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But she mentioned to me that she created a great new thought to get her out of bed. So she's laying there in bed, her alarm goes off, she looks at her phone, she sees the weather and she's like, "Fuck, no." And then she came up with this new thought, and I can't remember her exact words but it was something along the lines of, staying warm in bed right now is not going to help me get across the finish line in New Orleans.

And just like that, she got up, she bundled up, and she got it done. That right there is rebel runner behavior because if you wait for perfect conditions, you'll never get anything done because nothing's ever perfect. So that's what I want to talk about today. How can you tackle winter weather and still get your run done?

And it is really simple. There's two things that you need to worry about. The first is you need to dress for and accommodate for the conditions, and the other is to work on your thoughts about the conditions. So the conditions are the circumstance, and your thoughts and your opinions are going to determine everything you do.

Now, all of my clients that are training for the New Orleans half marathon in February right now are currently learning to run in the winter, so I'm just going to teach you everything that they're doing, okay? So the first part, the easy part in my mind, is dressing for the weather. Now, the key to comfortable winter running is wearing multiple light layers. And by multiple I don't mean seven. I mean three, tops, when it's really cold.

So our natural instinct in this kind of weather is to just bundle everything up in a thick coat, like a puffer jacket that hangs to your knees with three pairs of tights and a scarf and anything else you can find to keep you warm. But you're going to be comfortable for the first 10 minutes of your run, then your body's going to start to heat up and suddenly you'll be drenched in sweat and you're going to need to start peeling things off.

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Then, you're out in the cold, you're sweaty and you're wet, and you start shivering, right? This actually just happened to one of my Run Your Best Life clients. She said, "You know, I put all this stuff on, I went out running, I got really hot, I took it all off, then I was freezing because here's my wet sweaty body being exposed to the cold."

So the way to avoid this is to layer yourself properly. Be prepared to feel cold for the first 10 to 15 minutes of your run. Not frozen. Well, maybe a little bit frozen because you will warm up, but just know that like, you're going to feel cold in the first 10 minutes if you're dressed properly, but then your body's going to get warm and you'll feel very comfortable. Multiple light layers that can be easily removed and tied either around your waist or stuffed into a fanny pack or something are key.

Also, I want you to make sure that the layers are breathable. So we want to keep sticking with the stuff that we're using in the summer, which is that technical synthetic fabric that breathes really well. A bunch of long sleeve cotton shirts are not going to breathe well. They're just going to get wet and sweaty and gross. And here's the other thing; chafing from trapped sweat can happen just as easily in the winter as in the summer, so make sure you use your Body Glide and wear that tech fabric.

Now, if it's around 30 degrees outside, I'll usually go with like, a long sleeve running top and then a lightweight jacket on top of that. If it's even colder, I might use a fleece-lined jacket or add a fleece vest, or put like, maybe a tank top underneath the long sleeve running top. I might add a third layer like that. If it's extra cold, you can also wear two pairs of tights or get a pair that has a lightweight fleece lining, and that will make a big difference for you.

Because here's the great thing about the fleece lining. When you put it on, it already feels a little bit warmer so that getting out the door is not quite as painful as it is if you're just wearing regular tights. Now, I also want you to

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think about getting some convertible gloves so you can like, flip the tops off and let some heat out if your hands get too warm rather than having to take off your gloves and stuff them in a pocket. So convertible gloves are key in the winter, and also, you can always just like, flip one finger off if you need to use your phone without having to take your whole glove off.

On your head, you're going to want to wear a fleece headband instead of a hat. And I mean, this is personal preference. Some people like to wear a beanie, and that's fine, but I like the fleece headband for women at least because it keeps your ears and your forehead warm but it still kind of allows heat to escape from your head. And if you're like me and you have a ponytail, there's actually a place for the ponytail to go instead of like, stuffing it up inside your hat.

So but that's a matter of personal preference. A fleece headband is mine instead of a beanie. And one option that I really love, kind of going back to the tights a little bit is to wear a running skirt that has built in tights, or just wear a skirt over your tights because it keeps your tushie warm. It keeps your tushie nice and warm, because if you've ever run with a cold butt, that's not super fun. So a skirt will really help with that by keeping your tush warm with an extra layer, but it doesn't add a lot of bulk or restrict the movement of your legs.

Now, as far as skirts go, I highly recommend the Skirt Sports Wonder Wool line for this very purpose. And if you go to my Instagram, you can see both me and chef Jen from Not Your Average Runner wearing the skirt in a couple different colors in cold weather and we super love it. So I actually highly recommend Skirt Sports, but any running skirt is going to help with that because it just gives you a little bit of extra warmth around your tush without kind of adding an extra layer around your legs.

Now, another challenge that you might have with the cold weather is of course the air hurting your lungs. So this has happened to me, and if you

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happen to have asthma, it might bother you even more. So definitely bring your inhaler when you're running in the cold in the winter, but a really easy way to solve this cold air problem is to just use a lightweight neck gaiter. And you can actually get them pretty cheap on Amazon, but what they are is basically a thin layer of kind of stretchy fabric. Usually they're made out of - it feels like cotton but it's more of a synthetic and it covers your neck, goes around your neck, and it can be pulled up over your mouth and nose to kind of warm the air you're breathing.

So you can breathe in through it, but when you exhale, the moisture that's in your breath gets sort of trapped there and it allows your breathing to feel a little bit gentler, a little bit less harsh on the lungs. And of course, if you get too warm, they're super easy to pull it down and just have it around your neck, or even take them off completely and stuff them in your pocket. They're that thin.

Now, when it comes to your feet, so we've done everything else on the body, you want to keep your feet warm, I just suggest switching to thicker socks and then carry an extra pair with you if you're doing a long run of like, more than an hour in case your feet get wet. Because if you're out there running in the snow and you step in a puddle or something like that, your socks get wet, that is the worst. It's just the worst. So I like to carry an extra pair with me if I'm going to be going for like, more than an hour of running because I don't like to run that long with wet feet.

Okay, so that's kind of what you should be wearing, and I want to kind of transition into the more logistical aspects of running. So first and foremost, let's talk about ice and snow. Now, you can actually run pretty easily in packed snow or in snow that's maybe like, an inch or two thick. So I would not let that hold you back from getting out there. But if you think that there's going to be ice, you know, ice is kind of like, you can slip and you can actually really hurt yourself.

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So what I like to do, you can get these rubber outsoles that will go around your shoe that are a little bit more grippy on the ice, or you can just decide to do your run that day on a treadmill to be absolutely safe. Now, when you're running on a treadmill, always remember to set the incline to one or two percent to mimic outdoor conditions.

And this, I mean, honestly, if you know that your entire running path is just going to be coated with ice, I honestly say that's the point where you say fuck winter running, I'm going to run indoors. So part of winter running is knowing when it makes sense to come inside and do a treadmill run.

Now, there is also a lot more darkness in the winter, so if you're going to run in the dark, you need to be seen, and you also need to light the way for yourself so you need other people to be able to see you and you need to be able to see where you're going. So the seeing where you're going is easy. Get yourself a headlamp that you can wear on your forehead so that you can actually see the road in front of you. They're super cheap, they're easy to use, you can get one for under \$20 on Amazon.

The only thing I suggest is you get one that has a - where the lamp can be tilted a little bit because when you're running on the side of the road or wherever you're running and if there's cars coming toward you, if you're looking straight ahead and you've got your headlamp pointed straight ahead, your lamp is going to be shining directly into the eyes of the drivers of oncoming traffic, and that is not so good.

So you want one that you can sort of tilt down so that when you're looking straight up and ahead, the light itself is still pointing somewhat down at the ground in front of you so that it's not like, shining directly in the driver's eyes because we all know what it feels like when you're driving someplace and some jerk's got his bright lights on and it's right in your eye and you're like, I can't see, I can't see, right? Don't be that person running on the road. Don't

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blind oncoming traffic because you want them to be able to see you, but you don't want them to be blinded.

So speaking of being seen though, that means wearing lights on your body elsewhere, not just your headlamp. And you can wear reflective gear. That's helpful, but it's only helpful when the headlights are shining directly on to you and that might not happen until it's too late. So I highly recommend getting some kind of blinking lights to wear on your back and your front. You want to be as obvious and visible as possible.

Now, my clients that are clients that are training for the Nola race in February have been loving the Noxgear vest, and that's Noxgear, and really, it isn't a vest. It's actually a couple strings of color blinking LED lights that wrap around your torso, which is not nearly as weird and creepy as it sounds. They're actually really cool. What they do is they make you super visible. They come in different colors - or actually, I think the basic one that you buy does a bunch of different colors. Like, it'll cycle through colors or something like that.

Anyway, they make you super visible, they're very lightweight, they're very durable, they're a bit of an investment but I think they're worth if you're going to be doing a lot of running after dark or early in the morning when you're going to be near traffic, I think it's worth the investment. I think they're in like, the \$50 to \$60 range.

Now, you can also get inexpensive clip-on blinking lights to attach to the back of your jacket or your shoes or anywhere else. You can get a reflective vest and clip some lights on to that, but I really think like, the more obvious you are, the better, the safer you're going to be. The point is make yourself unmissable. And this goes especially if you're running at dusk, like, so if you get home from work and you're like, I've got just enough time to get in a run before it gets dark, you know that you're going to be running at sort of spot in time where you can see the cars really easily

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but they can't see you. If you drive anywhere, you know that sort of witching hour where it's really hard to see pedestrians. It's even more important for you to make yourself visible at those times of day and of night and morning.

And of course, please, please, please, please, I cannot stress this enough, run facing traffic. Even if this is inconvenient for you because if you cannot see a car coming, you will not see if it's drifting towards the shoulder. If that person is not paying attention, if they're texting and driving like, you need to be able to see the cars coming so that you can jump out of the way if necessary. Always face oncoming traffic. Always. Did I mention always?

Now, there are some people out there who've said to me, "No, no, no, pedestrians should go with the flow of traffic." This is crazy talk. That's the rule for bicycles. Pedestrians go against traffic. Please don't ever forget that. Since winter is a time when people are running after dark, where roads are slippery and stuff like, just run against traffic so you can see what's coming.

Alright, that's my public service announcement soapbox for today. Alright, let's talk about sickness. So, since winter is a time when people are more likely to get sick because everybody's inside passing their germs around to each other, I do get asked a lot if it's okay to go running when you're feeling under the weather, and the short answer is it depends.

So I mean, in general, I have no desire to workout when I'm sick. I usually just choose to stay in bed and rest, and that's generally what I recommend to people. But you know, if your symptoms aren't super bad or if you're some kind of glutton for punishment, here are my guidelines. For symptoms above the neck, if all of your symptoms are above the neck and only above the neck, like stuffy head, runny nose, sore throat, plugged up ears or whatever, it's okay to run.

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If you have a fever, stay home and let your body do its job. A fever means your body needs all of its resources to fight off infection, and if you go running, you are diverting energy from that very important task and you're going to delay getting better. So above the neck symptoms it's okay to run. If you have a fever, stay home and sleep. Relax. Give your body a change to rest.

If your symptoms have moved into your chest, that means that your lungs are going to be involved. They're going to have more difficulty keeping up with oxygen transfer because you've got mucus and phlegm in there blocking the membranes. So you're going to have a hard time breathing, your lungs are obviously fighting off infection, and you're not going to be circulating as much oxygen. Your performance is going to suffer, and again, you're getting in the way of your body recuperating. So stay home and let your body heal if your symptoms are below the neck.

Okay, we talked about the logistics and there's really just one more thing that might get in your way this winter, and that is your beautiful, amazing, pain in the ass brain. Because your brain is just going to tell you that it's too cold and that you're going to be miserable and you should probably stay home and watch *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel*, which starts on December fifth and I can't wait.

The circumstance here is the weather. The number on the thermometer, or on the app on your phone that says it's 27 degrees outside. It's the circumstances, the precipitation that is or isn't happening, or the amount of snow on the roads, right? Everything else is just an opinion, even when you say it's really cold outside, it's just an opinion. What's really cold to you might not be really cold to somebody else, and that means it's a thought.

So I just shared this video on Facebook in my Rebel Runner Unleashed Facebook group about this marathon that takes place in Antarctica every year and it was a video about the people that did the race, who were mostly

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men, which is fascinating, and they all had these huge beards and they were crusted with ice at the - they interviewed them at the finish line. And the temps were like, legit below zero. They were really, really cold.

Honestly, if that is not cold, I don't know what is. But yet, they still managed to do a marathon. So I want you to remember that race the next time you think that 20 is too cold to run. It's not. You will not get frostbite, you will not die. You're just going to be a little cold. And once you get warmed up, once you run for 10 or 15 minutes, you're going to warm up. You're not going to be cold anymore. And if you skip your run, you're going to be beating yourself up all day long.

So here's a thought for you to think instead of, "Oh, it's too cold." Here it is; running any given route in the winter makes you at least 50% more badass than running that same route on a nice warm day. Now, go get out there and run. And by the way, I'm going to put a link to that Facebook video in the show notes along with some of the equipment that I mentioned because first of all, you need to go check out that Facebook video. It is amazing. It's just amazing. But also, the equipment that I mentioned today, I'm going to have links to that too as well, just to make it easier for you to find it.

Okay rebels, this week I don't actually have an obsession to share with you because I'm completely obsessed with packing up everything in my apartment so that I can move to Princeton, New Jersey. Next week. Did I mention it's next week? Actually, it's next week from when I'm recording this. It's actually - we're moving the Saturday after Thanksgiving so from when you listen to this, it's probably just a couple days away.

Anyway, if you live near that area, I am really hoping to have a meet up there probably in January after we get unpacked and get everything sorted out. So drop me a line if you live near Princeton. Let me know the best

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running trails in the area and I promise like, we're going to do a meet up soon and get to know each other.

Alright rebels, that is it for this week. Everything I mentioned in this episode can be found in the show notes at notyouraveragerunner.com/65, and I will talk to you soon.

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.