

Ep #75: How to Get Started Again After a Break



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.

Hey rebels, you are listening to episode number 75 of *The Not Your Average Runner Podcast*. I'm your host, Jill Angie, and this week we are going to talk about how to get started again after a break.

Now, quite a few of you have emailed me or posted in the Facebook group asking me to cover this topic, so here it is. Since I am on a break right now from running while I rehab my own knee, it's also a topic very close to my heart. But before I do that, I do want to share a listener review. And if you love this podcast and you want to support it, I would be deeply grateful if you would head over to iTunes or wherever it is that you get your podcast and write a review telling others what this show has done for you.

Okay, here's this week's review from JBLRunner that I thought summed up exactly what this show is all about. And she writes, "This is the best podcast for women runners, especially those who don't fit the profile of a typical runner. It is motivational, funny, and instructive, all while giving you the kick in the butt you need to kick butt in your life. Not just in running."

Thanks, JBLRunning, I am so glad we were able to give you a kick in the butt to help you kick butt, and yes, this podcast is not just about running but about getting you results everywhere in your life. So I would love for you to email support@notyouraveragerunner.com with your mailing address and we will get your car magnet out to you as soon as possible.

Okay, and before we dive into our topic, I need to just bitch a little bit here. This is completely un-running related but it's been on my mind all morning. So you guys, Andy's birthday is coming up this weekend and I'm so

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excited. It's our first one of us celebrating a birthday while we've been living together and so I went to my favorite grocery store, which is Wegmans and asked them to make a cake.

Well actually, I went online and I ordered the cake and I wrote down everything that I wanted the cake to say and I submitted the order and I took Andy's most recent finish line photo. He did a 5K on New Year's Day, he finished it in 25 minutes. His finish line photo is awesome so I took that picture and I gave it to them to put on the cake.

Anyway, the cake's supposed to be ready tomorrow and I get a call from them this morning and they're just like, "Hey, we have a problem with the wording that you put on that you want us to put on the cake," and apparently, they have a no profanity rule. And I knew they had this rule because I was looking at the website and it said we proofread everything, every request, and we won't do profanity.

And so I said okay, what I wanted the cake to say was holy shit, you're 37, happy birthday Andy. And instead of writing the word shit, I used an asterisk and a dollar sign and I just used symbols instead and I thought, perfect. I get a call and they're like, yeah, we can't do that because everybody knows what that's supposed to mean.

So I was so disappointed and of course now it's too late for me to go and find a cake someplace else that I can actually write what I want, so instead the cake is just going to say oh my god, you're 37, happy birthday Andy. But I'll tell you what, I've been - it's been bumming me out all day so I just want to let you know, there's going to be a lot of extra swearing in today's episode because Wegmans has silenced me.

And so with that being said, let's dive into today's topic. So here's the deal. the best way to start running again after a break is to just fucking start. The reason you're not doing that is you're telling yourself a bullshit story that it's

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hard or that you've lost so much fitness or that it's not fair that you had an injury or that you're some kind of loser for quitting on yourself, or any other excuse that you have in your brain. You feel me?

Now, after you've taken time off, depending on how long it was, you need to ease back in slowly. But if you haven't exercised in a week or two, that's not really taking a break, my friends. That's missing a few workouts. You just start right up where you left off, and I don't want to hear all of this like, oh my god, it's been two weeks, I'm probably going to be so slow.

Just stop it, that's bullshit. If it's been a month, two months, three months, a year, I want you to ease back in. Maybe you scale back to the distance you were running three months ago and built back up from there. If it's been six months or more, you might need to be a beginner again, and don't worry, your fitness will come back very quickly, but I want you to let yourself start over. Be a beginner again.

And that is really all there is to it. If you've taken time off due to injury, you're going to listen to your doctor or your physical therapist on when it is okay to start again and what you can do and you are going to follow her instructions to the letter. All the rest of you, if you took time off due to life circumstances, or because you just quit on yourself, just be a fucking beginner again.

That's it. Alright, end of podcast. Not quite. So all of that just start, just get started again at the level that makes sense for you, it sounds really easy and it is. But when people ask me the question, how do I get started again after a break, they really don't mean physically. They mean how do I get my motivation back? How do I get excited about running again? How do I shut up my inner mean girl and make her stop saying all the stuff she's saying to me?

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Basically, if you're asking me the question, if you're saying to me, "How do I get started again after a break?" I know you're all up in your head about it. You're creating confusion because you actually do know how to start, you just start. So you're just creating a bunch of drama and confusion in your brain.

So that is really what we're going to focus on today, the drama and the confusion and all the inner mean girl stuff. We're going to get inside your head, figure out why you're getting in your own way instead of getting your running shoes on and logging some miles.

Now, in my experience, there are three reasons that people don't get back in the saddle right away. It's hard and you want it to be easy, or it's hard and you want it to be easy, or it's really fucking hard and you want it to be easy, damn it. Seriously though, every single reason that somebody gives me for riding the struggle bus when they're trying to get back to running comes down to this.

You want to snap your fingers, just like Thanos in Infinity War, snap your fingers and be right back to where you were before you stopped running. And I mean, this goes for anybody. Whether you stopped due to illness, injury, or circumstances beyond your control, or whether you just lost your mojo for a while, if you're asking me this question, it just means that you want to snap your fingers and be right back to where you were, and that is not how it works.

It's really not how it works. It's not how you got to the level you were at before the first time. When you first start running you don't snap your fingers and suddenly, you're an accomplished runner with lots of stamina. You had to work your way up to it, right? So same thing happens when you've taken a break that's long enough for you to lose some of your fitness.

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But here is the good news. Being on the struggle bus is just a thought. And like, really let that sink in. Do you remember last week when I told you that body flaws are literally just a thought in your mind and they're not an actual thing? Struggling is the same thing.

The circumstance here is that you took X weeks or months off of running and then you have a lot of thoughts about it. Maybe you think, I've lost so much fitness I'll have to start all over again, it's going to be really hard, I'll never get back to where I was, it's harder this time around, I'll probably fail again, maybe I'll never get back there.

You have all this drama in your brain and you're probably throwing some stuff in there like why do I always quit on myself, what's wrong with me that I can't stick with anything, right? You're just heaping the beatings on top of beatings.

Now, if this sounds familiar, it's because you've had all these thoughts and you believed them. That's the key right there. It's not the problem. The problem isn't so much that you have the thoughts. The problem is that you're just like, yeah, that sounds good, that's a terrible thought, I'm all in, let's think that until we feel awful.

When you think the thought, "I've lost so much fitness, I'll have to start all over again, it's going to be so hard," you feel defeated. And when you feel defeated, you either don't start again or you do and you kind of half-ass it and then you come to the Facebook group and you whine about how hard it is and then everybody in the group jumps in and says, yes, you're right, it is hard, you poor thing, poor you, hang in there.

They confirm your shitty pity story about how much you're suffering and then you start in with how you'll never get back to where you were and you just give up, right? It's just a bunch of drama in your mind. A month goes by and then you start the whole thing again. You're like, nope, this time it's

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going to be different. You go out, take your first run, it's hard, and you're like, this isn't fair, it's hard.

So here's my advice to you. Stop it. Stop doing that. The thought that you're thinking, that you have to start all over again because you've lost so much fitness, that is not helping you get back to the level you're at. I mean, yes, you may have lost some fitness. That is the truth. If you took off several months, your fitness is going to decline. That is the circumstance. You won't be able to do as much as you did before until you built it back up again.

But focusing on that, spending all of your mental energy on how hard it feels, how unfair it is, how terrible you are for quitting on yourself is not serving you in the slightest. Those are things that happened, they are not moving you forward. And focusing on how hard it feels is also a lie.

The very first time you started running, I want you to think back. Maybe it was a few months ago, maybe it was years ago, maybe it was 20 years ago. But the first time you went for a run, it was just as hard. I promise, you huffed and you puffed and you sweated and it was a fuck ton of effort. But the reason it was different back then is because you didn't have all those mean old thoughts in your head about how much fitness you'd lost, so you were not making yourself suffer.

Pain is inevitable. Suffering, what goes on in your brain, the drama is the suffering, that's all optional. So back when you were a beginner, the very first time when you're huffing and puffing and sweating, you just got to business and you did your miles. Day after day, week after week, until it got easier. It was just as hard back then, maybe even harder, but your thoughts about it were way different and that is the secret sauce.

So when you spend time focusing on what you do not have, you don't move forward. You stay right where you are, planted in misery. It's

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miserable, it's full of self-pity, you're arguing with reality. It's no fun, my friends, no fun. So when I say you need to start at the beginning after you take a break, I mean more than just where you were physically. I mean mentally as well.

So what were the thoughts that you were thinking when you first started? I know for me it was like, "Oh my god, I'm really running," or, "Wow, after two weeks I can feel this getting easier." Like a million things like this feels great, I had no idea I could do this, I'm really a runner. All of the thoughts that you had when you were a beginner that kept you moving forward, they made you feel excited, not defeated.

They made you feel motivated. They made you feel curious to see how much you could do, right? You're inspired to see how much further you can go. So when you go back to the beginning with running, I want you to tap into that beginner's mindset; the mindset of curiosity, of excitement, of accomplishment.

And for those of you that are sitting out there right now saying, "Yeah, but it's hard to do it when you've already gone through it once." Well, that is just another thought. It's just a sentence you're speaking in your mind. It is not true. It is not a fact. It is just a story that you're telling yourself because you don't want to do the work.

I know that might not be easy to hear, my friends, but I promise, it is essential to getting you back on your feet. It is not the circumstance of taking a break that is hard for you to deal with; it is the shit show in your brain that's causing all the problems.

So, what can you do about that? Here is my suggestion. I tell this to all of my clients. I want you to spend some time every single day doing a five-minute thought download. Grab a notebook and a pen. Set a timer and

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write for five minutes about all the drama in your brain, all the terrible things in your life, all the reasons that running is so fucking hard this time around.

Whatever it is, write for five minutes, write for ten minutes, write for 20 minutes. Whatever is keeping you from doing what you want to do, I want you to put it down on paper. Then, I want you to look at that thought download and ask yourself, is any of this really true? Could someone else look at these words and come to a different conclusion. And I promise you, like 98% of the time, the answer is yes.

Now, once you have all of the thoughts in front of you, decide what result you're getting from thinking those thoughts over and over again. And if one of those thoughts is, it's so hard to get back into running after a break, I promise you, the result is going to be that it's going to be really hard. If you're spending a lot of time thinking about how hard it is, it's going to be really hard.

Actually, I just read a study online today. I'll put a link to it in the show notes. I read about it on newyorktimes.com. Anyway, the study, basically, they took a bunch of people, men and women, and they did a bunch of genetic testing on them to look for a gene that made them predisposed to having a harder time with endurance exercise.

Everyone got the genetic test and then they sat them down and they told everybody their results, except they lied. The people who had the gene were told that they didn't and the people without it were told that they did. Now, what do you think happened?

The people that thought they had the gene had a much harder time with exercise and the people that thought they didn't have the gene had an easier time. So the people that thought they had the gene didn't have it and should have had an easier time, but the reverse was true because they

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were thinking, “Oh, I’m predisposed to have a hard time with exercise. It’s genetic. I have no choice.”

They thought it was a circumstance. They made up a story about it, and then running was harder. That is the power of your thoughts. It’s science, my friends. It is science. So if you believe it’s hard to get started again after a break, it will be immensely harder than it would have been otherwise.

So you need to decide what you want to believe instead. That’s where you need to, you know, pick your thoughts, pick your beliefs about it ahead of time and practice it; practice, practice, practice. And when I say practice, I mean write that shit down every day, read it into a voice memo on your phone, listen to it on the way to work, repeat it over and over while you’re running, mumble it to yourself on the subway.

Whatever you need to do, I want you saying those words over and over again. And here are some example thoughts to get you started, because I’ve used these myself when I’ve had to get back after running. And, honestly, in about a month to six weeks, that’s exactly what I’m going to be doing.

I’m going to start running again when my physical therapy is done and I’m going to have to use all of these techniques. So, I promise you, this is what I do and it works. So I’m going to give you some examples. Here are some things that I like to say to myself.

I’m so glad I’m able to run again. This feels amazing. I’ll be back where I used to be in no time at all. It’s fun to be a beginner again. Running is as hard as I make it and I choose for it to be easy. This is part of the journey and every runner goes through it. I’m stronger for having gone through this.

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Or, just come up with your own. You could use all of those, you can use your own, anything that gives you a result of feeling motivated and confident and excited about getting back out there to run instead of showing up to that pity party.

Because in the beginning, your brain actually is going to want to slip back into old habits, throw that pity party, right? So the practice is necessary. You need to keep redirecting. It's normal. It's how brains work. Brains like routine. Brains like to be efficient, and so they've programmed this whole thought process into your brain about how hard it is.

And now, you're coming along and you're like, "Hey, we're going to have to change this..." and your brain is saying, "Fuck no. we like that old thought pattern because it kept us on the couch and the couch feels good."

So you're going to have to literally redirecting your brain. And it doesn't mean that anything's gone wrong. It's normal. That's how brains work. So the choice here is all up to you.

You can put on your party hat and wallow in the pity party, or you can get started again and stop telling yourself a shitty story about how you always quit on yourself, how you'll never be a real runner. You can stop telling that story. It's a terrible story.

If that story was a movie, on Rotten Tomatoes, it would get like 5%. Nobody would watch it, okay. So make the choice to get back on your feet, get back to where you were in no time, use your thoughts. And that, my friends, is how rebel runners behave.

So if you want to consider yourself a rebel runner, you've got to put on those big girl panties and get the fuck out there. So, if you got something out of today's ass-kicking – and this was an ass-kicking, my friends – and I

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know not all of you have this issue. I know some of you, you fall down, you get right back up, you go right back out there. I'm not talking to you.

I'm talking to those of you that are complaining about how hard it is to get started again. So if you got something out of today's ass-kicking, I want you to know that I actually do this for my clients on the regular and tough love is my specialty.

And if your tendency is to quit when things get hard, you actually need someone on your side that is going to give you the tough love. Somebody that's going to be like, "Oh poor you..." somebody that's going to buy into your story, that person is not your friend. They are not helping you get what you want.

You need somebody to tell you the truth. I tell my clients the truth. And there's no judgment. Everyone struggles from time to time. Everyone falls down. My job is to help you pick yourself back up and get going again. That is what a coach does.

A coach is not your best friend. A coach is the person that says, "You said you wanted this, let's make it happen." And honestly, I don't like working with perfect clients. It's no fun. There's no fun in it for me because I don't get to help them. They already know everything.

So, if you're perfect, we're probably not a good fit to work together. I want the imperfect people. I want the folks that struggle. I want the folks that are like, "This is hard and I want to work on it and I need help." I don't expect perfection from my clients. I expect them to give their best effort, whatever that looks like, and then come to me when they're having a hard time so that I can help you get through it.

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This is my entire approach to half-marathon training. I know that you're going to stumble along the way. It's part of the process. Being a rebel runner is not about perfection. It is about rising. It is about managing your mind so that you can keep going.

And I know, each week, we talk on this podcast a little about running and a lot about managing the mind, because running is 90% mental. So this is really what the Rebel Runner Unleashed program is all about. It's like, yes, you're going to run a half-marathon, but it's so much more than that.

I'm going to teach you confidence, motivation, body love, how to get that inner mean girl to shut the F up, okay. So, if a half-marathon is on your wish list for this year, please schedule a free call with Lauren on my team.

You'll talk to her. You'll come away from that call with a clear vision on what is getting in your way and where you need to go to fix it. Now, that might be the Rebel Runner Unleashed program. And if it is, she'll set some time up for you and I to dive really deep into your struggles, figure out a plan to get you where you want to go.

So they're free calls and the whole point of them is to help you figure out why you're not getting what you want and how we can get you there. So, if you want to sign up for your free call with Lauren, head on over to talktojill.com – we probably should fix that.

You can also go to notyouraveragerunner.com/rebel and you'll have a few short questions to answer, then you can set up an appointment with Lauren for your free session.

Okay, so, rebels, that is it for this week. Everything I mentioned in this ass-kicking of a podcast episode can be found in the show notes at notyouraveragerunner.com/75 and I will talk to you soon.

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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.