

## Ep #79: How to Make the Treadmill Your Bitch



### 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 79 of *The Not Your Average Runner Podcast*. I'm your host, Jill Angie, and today we are talking about the treadmill, but first, a little backstory.

So a few weeks ago, I launched a brand new course called Not Your Average 5K. It's an eight-week online class to help you train for and run a 5K feeling awesome and proud of yourself. There's live coaching, there's a training plan, there's like, 150 women already signed up and we are going to be rocking it out officially starting on March 4th.

But right now, we've already got a lot of early birds that signed up and are already in the Facebook group chatting amongst themselves. And there's a ton of beginners in the class. We've got some folks that have never run before, we've got some folks that have done a few 5Ks but they weren't happy, they want to see if they can improve. It sort of runs the gamut.

Anyway, one of the most common discussions that has been coming up in the group while we're waiting to get started is that some folks are actually a little afraid of the treadmill. Some folks find it boring and some only feel comfortable running on the treadmill and don't know what to do - don't feel good about running outside, and we're going to address all of that in the class but just to kind of get people used to running on the treadmill now, I actually made a quick video for the class, sort of teaching them treadmill skills.

I called it, just for fun, how to make the treadmill your bitch because you know, I got to swear when I do everything. But really, treadmill skills, it kind

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of fits into the build a badass arsenal section of the rebel runner formula because having treadmill skills in your training toolbox is really important and it can sometimes make the difference between sticking with your plan or quitting and giving up on yourself.

So, today I thought, you know what, I probably should talk more about treadmill running just in general on this podcast. So I'm going to cover the basic of running on the treadmill and now, if you're already a master of that, you might just want to fast forward through the next few minutes, but I am going to answer some of the most common questions I get about treadmill running, such as why your GPS isn't as accurate or what to do if you get bored, or whether it's okay to use the treadmill during half marathon training.

We're going to talk about that at the end of the show, so I think even if you're a treadmill master, there's still something here for you. You might just want to fast forward through the next five minutes or so. So anyway, why should you even learn to master the treadmill in the first place?

Well, the most obvious is that there will be times when running outside isn't possible. Maybe there's a crazy ass thunderstorm during your only running window that day, or it's like five in the morning and you don't want to run alone in the dark. I get it. If you know how to use the treadmill, you don't have to miss out on your run. You can just stay on your training schedule and all will be well.

So the treadmill is also a great tool to help you become a better runner because the display tells you exactly how fast you're going, which makes it a little easier to sort of dial in your effort on each interval. You can keep track of your distance easily, it's a great place to practice your running form without having to worry about am I going to trip over a crack in the sidewalk or anything like that. You can just practice your running form on the

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treadmill without having to worry about anything else and really make it a habit.

But that practice does require confidence that you're not going to fall off, which is the biggest complaint and question I get from people. And I know there are a lot of you listening that really don't have that confidence on the treadmill or maybe you have fallen off a treadmill and you're like, fuck that, I'm not getting back on that thing.

Or if you've watched some of those treadmill fail videos that are always on YouTube, when somebody trips and face-plants and gets swept right off the back into a wall and goes through the drywall or I don't know, they're terrible. So the thing about those videos, if you're watching them, the person on the treadmill has usually made a mistake. Sometimes they do something stupid, sometimes they make a mistake that makes those crazy things happen.

Like, maybe they hop on when the belt is already going 10 miles per hour or something crazy like that. Now, I'm going to talk to you about basic safety rules because if you follow them, there is absolutely no reason you can't do your training runs on a treadmill. So basic safety, let's start out with that.

First of all, getting on the treadmill. Never ever start the belt before your feet are on it, Make sure the belt is stationary. There's not a workout in progress, and then stand on it facing the display. Familiarize yourself with the display and when I say display, I mean the piece of plastic with buttons and numbers on it that's at the front of the treadmill. Familiarize with the speed up and down buttons, the incline up and down buttons, the stop button, and the emergency cord.

You really don't need to worry about anything else. Those are the four things on a treadmill that concern you. Now, most treadmills do have at

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least two safety features built in because humans are humans, we have a tendency to do silly things or we're not paying attention, and manufacturers do not like to get sued. So they have built in safety features so that when you do something unexpected, the treadmill will have a failsafe that stops the belt so that you don't get hurt.

So I want you to know that right now is I don't know what is happening on these fail videos that we see on YouTube, but every treadmill I've ever been on, and I've been on a shit ton of them, has had all kinds of safety features to make sure that I don't get hurt. I am one of the clumsiest people out there. I can trip over dust and fall down. I've never fallen off a treadmill.

So let's start with the emergency cord. Now, this is a little cord that has a clip on it that will attach to your clothing. You can clip it onto your shirt or the waist of your shirt is probably best. And then the other end of the clip usually attaches to the machine through a magnet. And if you get too far to the back of the belt, the cord will stretch out, it will detach from the machine. That magnet connection will be broken and the machine immediately knows like, stop the belt. That happens automatically.

So the safety - that emergency cord, that safety cord is your first line of defense. I've never seen a treadmill without one. I want you to use that, especially when you're just getting started. Now, if you've been on a treadmill for a long time and you're really comfortable with it, you probably don't need to worry too much about the cord.

Although, if I was a treadmill manufacturer, I would just be advising everybody to do it. But if you're confident, that's fine. But if you're brand new, use that cord because that's going to mean if you do get too far back, you're going to learn your limits really quickly and the treadmill will have your back.

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The second important safety feature is the stop button. It will be big and easy to find and right probably near the front handles of the treadmill. And if at any time you feel like you're going to fall or slip, you can just slam your hand down on that button and it'll slow the belt right down to zero.

So, I hope that makes you feel a little bit better. They are two amazing safety features on every treadmill. Use them. Now that you've gotten the safety tour, let's talk about how to start the machine. So you're going to stand right in front of the display on the belt. Not on the sides. You don't want your feet on the sides like, on the side rails of the treadmill when you're starting up. Stand right on the belt.

Hit the speed up button a few times to get it up to point five miles per hour. Now, some treadmills have a start button that will bring it up to that speed automatically. The start button will never make it go faster than that. It's just there to get the belt moving slowly. So hold on to the handrails, press it up to point five miles per hour and you'll feel the belt move under your feet.

And now, point five miles per hour is very slow. If you did this speed for a 5K, it would take you six hours to cover five kilometers. It's half a mile per hour. It's much slower than a stroll and it's the perfect speed for you to get used to walking without going anywhere because that's what a treadmill is. We're walking and running, we're not actually going anywhere.

So it takes a moment or two for your brain to kind of figure that out, so just take a few minutes, walk really slowly. You can hang onto the side rails or the front rails if you want to. The side rails are probably going to make you more stable, but do that for a few minutes and then try taking your hands off and see how it feels.

Now, it may feel weird at first and that's okay, it's normal. Humans didn't evolve with treadmills. Now we have these treadmills the past 50 years, we've got 10,000 years of evolution and our brains haven't quite caught up,

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but I promise you, it will. So if you feel unsteady, remember to keep your head and your gaze up.

Don't look down at the belt while you're moving because your brain's going to be like, what the fuck is going on? The body's not going anywhere but the feet are moving. Just don't confuse your brain like that. Don't look down at the belt. Just look forward. Keep your gaze up, your head up, and just walk normally. Just relax and walk normally.

Once you're feeling confident at that half mile an hour speed, bring it up to one mile per hour. Hang there for a while. Keep your hands off the rail and just get used to it. And if that's all you do the first time on the treadmill, that's totally fine. Then you can go outside, do your regular workout. Maybe this is just a treadmill practice session. Maybe you hop on the elliptical or whatever.

Just let yourself get used to it. Prove to yourself that you can walk on it without falling off and then get off, that's fine. Now, I know it's tempting to hold on to the handrails too, especially on the side, but I promise you actually don't need to. Your body does know how to walk. Have you ever walked on a moving sidewalk at the airport? You don't need to hold on there. Nobody holds on there.

It's very natural. The belt is moving but you're moving on the belt. It's just that the belt is going in the other direction than a treadmill belt is, but it's the same thing on the treadmill just without luggage. So I want you to practice walking without holding on every time you get on the treadmill. Try it for 30 seconds and then you can grab the rails if you need to. Then try it for a minute, then two.

It might take a while to build up your confidence, that's totally okay. It's worth it. It's worth it to get this skill together. As you get more practiced and confident, start increasing the speed. And so maybe you increase the

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speed so that you're comfortably walking at like, three to three and a half miles per hour, and this is awesome. This is where you realize, oh, actually I can do this.

And here's another tip to keep you safe when you're on the treadmill. Remember that your body goes where your eyes go. So you want to keep your gaze straight forward as much as possible, and this is super helpful if you're at the gym where they have TVs everywhere and up and it keeps your eyes up, keeps you looking forward.

Don't be looking at a TV that's like, 90 degrees to your left because first of all, you're probably going to get a little bit of motion sickness and then also your head is going to be turned and your body's going to be trying to move forward. That's when people start to have problems on the treadmill. So keep your gaze forward.

I also don't recommend reading on the treadmill because first of all, again, you can get motion sickness, just like in a car. But also because it can really distract you from what you're doing and cause you to lose focus. Now, this doesn't really happen with watching TV because it doesn't require as much brainpower to sit back and passively consume a TV show.

But a book requires you to think and process and also, books are small and they're right in front of you, so you're going to have your head pointed down a little bit, you're going to be trying to focus on the letters. It's diverting a lot of attention away from what you're doing and that's where problems can occur. So I don't recommend having a book on the treadmill unless you're going a half a mile an hour, in which case you don't need too much brainpower.

Okay now, once you are confident walking, it is time to do a little bit of running, and running is just going faster than a walk. That it is. You can totally do this. So you're just going to punch the speed up a little bit, little by

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little until you need to jog to keep up with the belt. Just a really slow jog. No sprinting.

So I want you to do that for 15 seconds and then bring the speed back down and just let your brain evaluate what just happened, and then you're going to repeat that a few times. Now, I can feel you asking me what speed you should use. I can feel your brains right now like, what speed should I go? I don't know how fast to go.

You're creating a little bit of confusion because you're nervous about this. The answer is that it just depends on you. So if you're comfortable walking at a three and a half mile per hour speed, maybe punch it up to four. See if that requires you to jog. If it doesn't punch it up to four and a half. Go up a little bit at a time. And when you make this transition, you can hold on to the rails at first if it helps your confidence. It's totally fine.

Eventually though, you're going to want to transition away from holding on because it actually impacts your running form. Your arms need to be free to move forward and back when you run. If your hands are on the side rails, it's going to cause you to run funny. And not funny that other people are going to be looking at you, making fun of you, but funny like it's going to throw your back out of alignment and stuff and we don't want to do that because that's going to cause injuries.

Okay, so I want you to just practice that slow comfortable jog until it feels very normal and relaxed. It might take a while. You might need to work on your thoughts about it. You might need to remind yourself like, I can do this, I'm learning how to do this, I'm just going to practice. Right now you have the thought, "This is too hard, I'm going to fall off, I'm scared," and that's keeping you panicking. And when we're panicking, we don't operate from a relaxed place.

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So I want you to just practice the thoughts that like, I'm learning this, it's a new skill, lots of people do this, there's no reason for me to be worried. Whatever you need to practice in your brain to keep you calm, keep doing it. It's totally fine. Everybody goes through this when they learn the treadmill.

Now, when you're at a point where you can comfortably walk and run on the treadmill without holding on, it is time for your first actual workout. So, just like when you're outside, you're always going to start by walking for five minutes to warm up. And then at this time - because I recommend when people run outside that they actually don't start their Garmin or they don't start Runkeeper or whatever until they actually start their running intervals, and I think you should do the same on the treadmill.

Do five minute warm up, stop the treadmill, start it again, and then use that as your workout time. Or you could just make note of the distance that you covered in your warm up and then subtract it out later if you're going to upload it to Runkeeper. So just use - right now, you can use your standard timing app for your intervals. In fact, not right now, like, forever.

Just use your standard timing app for your intervals so you don't have to think about it. You want something beeping in your ears saying run, walk, run, walk, and then you're just going to ramp the speed up and down as needed. And then after you're done with your workout, you're going to follow it with the cool down walk and bring the belt back to zero before you get off the treadmill. And then don't forget to wipe down everything you touched with whatever sanitizer they provide at the gym or the cleanest Nazis will come after you, I promise, if you forget.

Okay, so those are the basics of running on a treadmill, and if you've never done it before because you have thoughts and opinions about it, I really want you to give it a try so you have one more weapon in your training arsenal. And then let me know how it goes in the Facebook group, I'd love

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that. And if you're listening to this, if you're in the 5K class, let me know there how it goes, although I know you guys have already been letting me know and it's going swimmingly.

Alright, so those are the basics, and now I want to address some of the most frequently asked questions I get asked about the treadmill. So first of all, sometimes treadmills next to each other don't have the same speed. The belts are moving - the display says that they're both going at four miles an hour but the belts are not moving at the same speed. This is because treadmills are not always calibrated.

That means if you use a different machine every week at the gym, you might notice it feels really hard one day, really easy the next, even though it still says five miles per hour or whatever. The differences aren't usually that noticeable, but it can happen. So this is why I recommend going by how your run feels and just lean into the effort instead of being completely obsessed with the numbers on the display.

Now sometimes, people also try to use their GPS on the treadmill to circumvent this issue. They're like, I'll just use GPS, that's way more accurate. But the problem with using a Garmin or Runkeeper or whatever GPS you're using is twofold. One is when you're indoors, you don't get a GPS signal. That's A.

And B, even if you could get a signal, GPS requires you to move from one point to another to calculate the distance using satellites, and with a treadmill, your position relative to the satellites and the Earth does not change. So the GPS thinks you're stationary. So that's another problem. It's not going to work right. If it's counting steps though, if it's a step counter, it'll register that you're doing something, and then it gets confused because it thinks you're moving but obviously you're not moving and that's why you see these crazy Runkeeper maps that look like a three year old scribbled all over the place.

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Now, if you're using a foot pod like a Garmin or a Nike in your shoe, you actually can get an accurate distance on the treadmill based on your stride length and your number of steps, but you have to have the foot pod to do that. Otherwise, GPS is not going to tell you anything about your treadmill run. And really, when you're training for an outdoor race, most of your running is going to be outside, so don't worry too much about your treadmill stats. Your goal is just to get the time on feet.

Now, let's talk about the elliptical because a lot of you think that that is an excellent substitute for treadmill training. It is absolutely not a substitute for running in any way. I know it seems like it should be because the motion is similar, but the elliptical doesn't ever require your feet to lose contact with the ground, which means it's a no impact activity. Running is a high impact activity and that's part of the training.

So the elliptical is fine if you want to sneak in an extra cardio workout or if you're injured and you can't do high impact right now because your doctor says don't. Totally fine. But it is not a substitute for running. It is just another way to workout, and I would not bother with the elliptical unless you absolutely have to.

Okay, how often should you train on a treadmill? Another big question I get. Now, in my opinion, if you're doing an outdoor race, you should be doing as much training as possible outdoors. That being said, there will be times that a treadmill is the best option, so all of my clients, I tell them that a good rule of thumb is to plan for all of your long runs to be done outside. So plan them on a day when you can get outside. And then if you need to run on the treadmill, you can do it for one to two runs a week, but just make sure they're your short runs, not your long runs.

And running outside does feel different, and I know people have trained for entire 5Ks on a treadmill and then they show up for their race that's outdoors and they're like, wow, that was a lot harder than I thought. Well,

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that's because you have wind resistance, you have hills, you have weather, you have all kinds of stuff outside and it takes practice. You can't get that experience just from running on a treadmill.

You can simulate it a little bit by setting the incline to one or two percent, but in general, outdoor running needs to be practiced outdoors. So that's why I say the treadmill is a tool in your arsenal, but it is not the only tool. It is one tool so that you can keep training when you can't get outside, but most of your training should be outside.

Alright, now the final thing that I hear - actually, the second to last thing is about how boring the treadmill is. Now, boredom is a result of thinking thoughts like, "I hate the treadmill, it's so boring," or, "I'd rather stick a fork in my eye than run on the treadmill." Boring is an emotion. Boring is not a fact.

The treadmill is not boring. You are boring on the treadmill. That it is. That is the honest truth that I'm laying down for you here. So I get it, there's not as much to look at when you run indoors, except other people who are sweaty and probably panting and not looking their best. There's no fresh air, it's hot, I get it.

All of that is the circumstance. You can run on the treadmill thinking your shitty thoughts about it and feeling bored or resistant or mad or whatever it is, but I suspect that that way of thinking is going to mean that you skip more workouts than you want. The treadmill is not boring. You are just boring on the treadmill. Remember that. You can always change up your thinking so you don't end up feeling bored.

So here's a great example. Right now, we're in the middle of the Polar Vortex. It's like, negative 20 in half of the country right now, so for two straight weeks, I've been hearing some version of the following statement.

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"It's too cold to run outside and I hate the treadmill and I missed three training runs. What do I do?"

Here's what you need to do. Get over it, sister. Yes, it's cold outside. That is a fact. You also have a race to train for. This gives you three options. Bundle the fuck up and get out there, get your ass on the treadmill and do your miles, or have a pity party, skip a bunch of training runs, and then have a shitty race. Those are your options.

So today, I'm assuming if we're talking about the treadmill, let's just say it's negative 20 degrees outside and you're not going to go outside. That means your options are get your ass on the treadmill or have a pity party. Either or. Now, being bored on the treadmill is just drama in your head. Seriously. It is your inner toddler throwing a fit because she's not getting what she wants.

The problem is what you keep saying to yourself. You keep saying, "I can't stand the treadmill, it's so boring, I can only do a mile before I quit." When you say that to yourself, you feel terrible. You feel bored. Stop torturing yourself, my friend. If I offered you a million dollars to do 10 miles on a treadmill, I'm pretty sure you would enjoy every fucking minute. There would be no whining or complaining. Only smiling and imagining what you're going to do with your money, right?

Because in that case, the treadmill is the path to what you want. In this case, it's a million dollars. But the treadmill is also the path to something else that you want, which is running your goal race like a boss. So you got to change your thinking around the treadmill. I mean, I just gave you that example because basically, when you think the treadmill is boring, you think that is the circumstance, you don't give yourself any leeway whatsoever.

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You think you have to be forced to run, you think there's some magic formula. The magic formula is your thinking. If the treadmill was boring and I offered you a million dollars to do 10 miles on a treadmill, you wouldn't be bored. I guarantee you wouldn't be bored. You'd be counting that money. That's how we know it's your thoughts.

So change your thinking around the treadmill. Here's some examples. You can think, "I'm so happy to have access to a treadmill so I can keep training even when it's negative 20 degrees outside." I mean really, that's an easy thought to think. "This treadmill means I don't have to miss a single training run. I don't have to worry about icy roads on the treadmill. If I don't want to run hills, I don't have to run hills on a treadmill. I can run perfectly flat. Running on the treadmill means I can binge watch Netflix and get my workout in. I get to do two things at once."

So you get the picture. Got to change your thinking about that machine so that it's not boring. The treadmill is not boring. You are just boring on the treadmill. Don't be boring on the treadmill.

Okay, the final question I get all the time is how to not sound like an elephant when you're running on the treadmill. So, here's the truth. Everyone sounds like an elephant on the treadmill. I promise. You don't sound any louder than anyone else. You are just closer to the sound of your running so it seems louder, and you're making drama about it in your head.

If it really feels like you're running heavy physically, you probably are landing a little bit harder on your heels. That's normal. It happens a lot. So you can play around with running lighter. You can try practice running on your tiptoes. Not for your whole run. Just for a little bit, and slow it down and just run on your tiptoes. Get the feel of how it feels to land lighter.

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So that will - might help your brain click a little bit on how to sort of land lighter. It's just literally something you need to practice. Another technique is to focus on landing on the part of your foot that's sort of between your heel and your instep. This will also force you to land a little bit lighter.

But you could also try to without increasing the speed of the belt, try to take more steps. So shorter steps and faster ones will also teach you to land a bit lighter. But it's something you're going to have to practice. But really, if you're not having any issues with the way you're landing other than your brain is saying, "People think I sound like an elephant," just there's no problem, really.

What other people think about how you run is none of your business. You do you and you let them do them. We don't really care if other people think we sound like an elephant. That's fine, they can think that. It's like, that's just the way the world works. So you do you.

And honestly friends, running is like, 10% physical and 90% managing your mind, and the treadmill is a great example of that. So I hope this was helpful to you. If it was and you want to run a 5K this spring, I'd love to invite you to join up with the 5K course that is starting very soon. Just go to [notyouraverage5K.com](http://notyouraverage5K.com) to sign up.

Training officially begins on March 4th but you're going to want to join early so that you can get to know everybody and prep yourself. So if you're listening to this after March 4th, you can still go to that site, get yourself on the waitlist for the summer session. It's [notyouraverage5K.com](http://notyouraverage5K.com).

Okay rebels, I also want to let you know about one more thing before we close for today and that is that Skirt Sports has released its new 1X to 3X line, and it is amazing. I was part of the photo shoot. I know I've been talking about it incessantly, but seriously, they fitted these particular pieces only on plus size bodies.

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So normally, when you want to make clothes bigger, you take the size eight and you just make it bigger, longer, wider, whatever, but that's not how bodies get bigger. That's now how bodies gain weight. So they actually went and fitted them on plus size people of all different sizes.

And so there's a skirt, there's capris, and there's a tank top. I love them all. I've just ordered them in all the colors for myself and I want to recommend them to you. I want you to check them out because running in a skirt is super fun. I actually wore a skirt this morning to my physical therapy appointment.

My physical therapist was like, "Oh, you dressed up for me." I'm like, "Yes, of course I did, Andrea." So they're super fun to run in, but if you don't like skirts, there's a pair of capris that is amazing. They make your butt look awesome. I love them. So you can check them out at the Skirt Sports website. I have a link to shop there in the show notes.

Also, if you use the code NYAR20, you'll get 20% off your order. So go ahead, use that code. NYAR20, get 20% off your order and head over to the show notes to grab the link to go shopping for some Skirt Sports gear.

Alright rebels, that it is for this week. Everything I mentioned in this episode can be found in the show notes at [notyouraveragerunner.com/79](http://notyouraveragerunner.com/79) 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](http://www.notyouraveragerunner.com) to download your free one week jumpstart plan and get started running today.