

## Ep #121: Philly Marathon Recap



### 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 121 of *The Not Your Average Runner Podcast*. I'm your host Jill Angie, and today I'm going to give you the long-awaited marathon recap. Plus of course, all my thoughts about what I learned, what I'm super proud of, and what I will definitely do differently next time.

So first of all, it was a great experience. I mean, Philly always puts on a very fun and professional race and the course is usually like, starts out by running through the city, which is gorgeous, and then through Fairmount Park and usually ends up next to the Schuylkill River, which again, is absolutely beautiful.

And the spectators and the course support as always are wonderful. They were wonderful. Now, spoiler alert, I did get to know the driver of the sweep van pretty well but he was a very nice guy and did an awesome job of watching over his flock. There was a few of us he was keeping an eye on.

So alright, let's start at the beginning. The day, it started out pretty cold and rainy. And fortunately, Andy and I had booked a hotel room in Centre City, which is about a mile and a half from the race start. But the race, of course, because Philly is amazing, provided buses at different spots around the city to bring people in to the start line.

And one of the stops was right behind our hotel, so that was awesome. But it was in the 30s and the forecast did not predict it to warm up all that much, and it had been raining all night long. So by the time we showed up to the start line, the starting area, the ground was just really muddy. It was like that sticky mud where you're like, I'm going to lose my shoe.

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But fortunately, because I had signed up to raise money for AACR, I actually got to hang out in their VIP tent that morning with Amy and Debbie and Andy. We had our own private gear check and changing tents and that was pretty amazing.

So the Porta Potty lines though, we need to talk about this. This was a big fail as far as I'm concerned with the Philadelphia Marathon. And in all the years that I've done this event, I mean, I've never done the actual marathon but I've always done the half marathon and it's the same weekend, I've never had an issue with the Porta Potty lines. With bigger races as well.

But I don't know what the fuck was happening, but I'm definitely not exaggerating when I say I waited in line for 20 minutes. I moved about 20 feet and there were still at least 1000 people in line ahead of me. It was mind-blowing.

So I was like, you know what, I'm going to wait until everyone gets in their corrals, then I'm going to go, which worked beautifully, I might add. Because I was in the blue corral, which is the very last one. There were about 12,000 people at the race, so I knew if everybody else was in their corrals, then I'd be able to go do my business and still have time. And it worked beautifully. Still had 10 minutes to spare. It was awesome.

Now, Debbie and I started in the blue corral, and that was the last one, like I said. We were also at the very back. We tried really hard to find Amy and her friend but there were just too many people. We didn't connect at that point. So Debbie and I started running together and if you remember from last week, the race guide was very clear that you needed to keep up at 16-minute mile or risk being removed from the course at the half marathon mark.

So I'd done a lot of mental work around that, around reading that and what I was making it mean. And we decided like, hey, we're going to go for it. We're going to see what happens. So that's exactly what we did. We kept

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up just a hair over a 16-mile pace for the first four miles, which is kind of amazing because I have not been training at that pace for my long runs, so I was pretty psyched about that.

But you guys, my feet were soaked before we even got into our corral. So I made a mistake. I forgot to put Body Glide on my feet. Actually no, I'm going to be honest here. I rarely put Body Glide on my feet. I didn't forget. I've never really had a blister issue and I'm just like, oh, I don't need Body Glide.

I had chaffing solutions everywhere else on my body but because I've never really had an issue with my feet, it didn't even occur to me. So I realized though, I've never actually run more than a few miles before in wet socks. I mean, I totally run in the rain a lot, but never for my really long runs.

And it's not because I've been avoiding it because I kind of believe in running the weather you're dealt. But I've been super lucky and my long training runs have always either fallen on days where it didn't rain at all, or if it did rain, it wasn't a long soaking rain where my feet got soaking wet.

And so I haven't really had the experience of running more than just maybe two or three miles in soaking wet socks. So I'm sure you can do the math. Wet feet, no Body Glide, blisters. I started to get blisters on the bottoms of both feet.

And honestly, by mile four, I was already starting to slow down a little bit. Like I said, I didn't train at that 16 minute per mile pace, and while I can definitely keep it up for a few miles in great weather, holding that pace for 26 miles in the rain was going to be a huge challenge. So by mile six, we were maybe three minutes behind schedule.

We were still tracking to hit the half marathon mark at around 3:36, which again, I was pretty proud of that. My fastest half marathon this year was

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four hours. And that was definitely a much hillier race than Philadelphia, but still, knowing that I could push hard enough to take that much time off my pace was very cool. I was kind of like, high-fiving myself as we were running.

So despite the fact that by mile six, there was a very clear blister forming on the bottom of my left foot, right on the ball of my foot too. The part where you push off for each running step. And I could feel something on the right foot was starting to develop.

But I was still feeling pretty good about our chances of at least making the half marathon cutoff because we'd actually passed a couple people by that point. The sweep van was no longer right behind us and I'm like, yeah, this is going pretty well.

Now, around seven miles, this very enthusiastic woman came running up behind us. She's in jeans and a t-shirt and she's like, "You guys are doing great, keep it up." And she's like, "How do you feel?" And she was super sweet. She ran with us for a little while. I'm like, looking at Debbie like, who is this person? Why is she so excited for us? What is going on?

And then she's like, running next to us and she's like, okay real quick, and I'm like, oh, she's race staff. So she told us they were getting ready to start opening the roads directly ahead of us. They do it kind of in a rolling manner. So she's like, they're starting to open the roads little by little.

We were still in the city at that point. We were getting close to the bridge where we were going to be crossing the river into West Philly, but she's like, we're going to be opening the roads little by little and we're going to be pulling down course support. And she's like, so you can totally keep going. If you feel great, keep going, but you're going to have to move to the sidewalks.

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So we knew this was going to happen. That's why I had two liters of water on my back. So I had a bunch of Nuun with me, plenty of race fuel because I knew that it was highly likely that I would be finishing the race without any course support.

It did happen maybe a little bit earlier than I'd expected, since we were pretty close to being on pace. I kind of thought we'd have a little more leeway. But it was getting really windy. The poor volunteers have been standing out there in the cold and the wet for hours at this point because they get there before the race even starts and then they have to wait.

And they have to set up and do all that stuff, so I totally get it. Those volunteers were probably like, we're fucking done. And so they probably gave us that message maybe a little earlier than they might have if it had been 50 degrees and sunny and not windy.

But I mean, we knew this was going to happen, and technically, we were behind the pace. We were a couple minutes behind. So, fair enough. So we had a conversation with her and I said, "Are we going to get pulled off the course at mile 13 if we're behind?" And she said, "Actually, no. You're fine. You just have to finish on the sidewalks."

So I was like, okay, cool, yay, which is kind of what I thought might happen but you never know. So she said you'll have to finish on the sidewalks. Then we asked about course marking because we were in a part of the course where there's a lot of different turns. And we were heading out of the main part of the city and into Fairmount Park.

And I mean, I know the city really, really well, but the little tiny twists and turns in Fairmount Park, not so much. And so she's like, no problem, they're probably going to take down the course markings but here's a map, here's a race map. Actually, Debbie had it pulled up on her phone as well so we knew turn by turn where we were going because she had the RaceJoy app up.

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So we kept going and then they ended up not opening the roads right away, which was cool because they were pulling down the course support. As we got to mile eight, they were definitely tearing it down, but there was still water left. As we got to mile nine, same thing, but we were still able to pretty much run in the roads.

There were a couple spots where they were letting traffic cross so we had to be a little careful, but honestly, wasn't as bad as I expected. And at mile nine, we ended up catching up with Amy and checking in with her. She was actually at that point getting ready to head back to the start with one of the volunteers because she wasn't feeling well.

She'd had an asthma attack a couple miles back, was having trouble breathing, and they were like, yeah we're taking you back. But we checked in with her, and at that point, after we passed the nine-mile mark, I said to Debbie, "You know what, would you mind if we finish the rest of this race walking? Because the blisters on my feet are really starting to hurt and running is not feeling too good on them right now. I know it's just going to keep getting worse and worse."

So she was totally cool with that. She's a great running buddy. She's like, whatever you want to do. And she did have some KT blister tape. She's like, do you want to put that on? And I'm like, no, no let's keep going. I didn't want to lose any more time, but honestly, that was not the best rationale.

And it was a mistake really because I should have stopped and treated them right then but I didn't. Kept going in the wet socks, with the blisters forming. And so I'll talk about that in a minute. But first, I actually want to give a shout-out to the race support crew.

And if you're one of my - actually, I know that some of my listeners were volunteering at the race, so thank you to all of you. And then the race support crew, the guys in the vans that were pulling down the aid stations,



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they were awesome. Because the vans that were responsible for picking up the last of the stuff, picking up the tables and the signage and everything, they waited for us at every single turn.

They waited and made sure that they pointed us in the right direction. They would sit there, standing outside their van watching for us, high-five us, give us some encouragement, tell us, okay, go left here, go right here, stop traffic for us. Then they would get in their van and drive up to the next spot.

And that was kind of awesome. I felt like we had a personal concierge just sort of like, helping us finish this race. It was awesome. And the whole time, the sweep van - by this point, the two people that we had passed had dropped out and so the sweep van was hanging out just behind us but at a very respectful distance.

And at every mile or so, he'd drive up and be like, "You guys good?" We'd say, yeah, we're good, and then he'd drive up past us a little bit and check on a couple other people that were ahead of us. Then he'd fall back and wait.

None of these people ever sounded annoyed or impatient. They were so encouraging and friendly. And so we felt - I mean, I can't speak for Debbie but I felt very watched over and very cared for, and I did not feel like anybody was rushing me or they were just thinking, oh, for fuck's sake, just finish already.

They were just super encouraging and patient and made it clear that they were in it with us until the very end. So I really appreciated that. Especially because I kind of went into this thinking like, I might get swept at mile 13, and it was obvious that while they were going to remove course support, they were still going to support us.

Now, they did tell us like, you probably won't have a finish line at the end. They will be breaking that down. But we're going to radio ahead and tell



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them, save you guys some medals. And I'm like, you guys are awesome. So that was super fun.

But by mile 11, I really knew I'm not going to finish this race. At that point, we're two miles, we've been walking for a couple more miles after the last stop that we made where we saw Amy and it was really starting to really hurt. I was limping. The wind was getting really strong and I was like, I don't see myself doing another 15 miles this way.

Because we weren't even at the halfway mark. So I said to Debbie, "Look, I'm going to stop at mile 14," which is basically where the course crosses back by the start line, which is at the art museum, and then heads six miles out and six miles back on the other side of the river.

So I said, "You know what, I'm going to call it at mile 14. I feel really good about it. I don't think it's smart for me to try and continue on these feet because I'm just going to destroy them." So I told her I was going to do that and I was like, please don't let me make the decision for you whether you're going to continue on or not.

I felt bad dropping out that I'm just going to drop out and leave you to finish this race on your own, but also I was kind of like, I'm taking care of myself. And Debbie was doing great. So she - I was like, I'm just going to leave it up to you to decide what you want to do. But I wanted to give her enough notice so it wasn't like, we get to mile 14 and I'm like, alright, peace out, I'll see you later. So I wanted to give her some time to mentally come to terms with it as well.

So anyway, we crossed over the 13-mile mark. We hit that half marathon point at about 3:55. And I was like, wait, what? It was my fastest half marathon this year. I mean, it was five minutes faster, but that was with walking the last four miles of the race in this weather, in this crazy wind. And that felt pretty fucking awesome, I got to say.

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I mean, I was really, really proud of that. The cold and the rain and the wind and blisters and I still got myself a PR. I took a little mental moment to just kind of do a happy dance in my brain. And then we still had a mile to go before we got back to the switch over point.

I was limping and I was like, you know what, mission accomplished. I set myself a PR for half marathon, I feel really good about that. There's no reason for me to keep walking that last mile. It's not going to add anything to my experience and I'm limping and I'm probably not going to feel great the longer I go, the worse my feet are going to feel.

So I decided not to keep going. I told Debbie, "Look, I'm done. I'm going to wave down the sweep van and get a ride back and I'll see you at the art museum," because at that point she said I'm going to stop at mile 14 as well because she was not loving the weather either. Neither of us was.

So I turn around, I wave to the sweep van, ask for a ride. It was so warm in the van, you guys. I was just like, I just want to lay down here and take a nap. It felt so good. He offered me water and snacks and kind of talked to me a little bit about the process for running the sweep van and how they do it and I was just even more adoring of the race staff at that point.

Now, of course, as soon as he dropped me off, it started sleeting really hard and I was like, yeah, I definitely made the right decision. And I felt terrible for Debbie because she was still out there. I think she probably was, I don't know, maybe a half mile, quarter of a mile away at that point and had to finish in the sleet.

But anyway, she did show up a few minutes later, very wet, but still smiling. We found Amy, we checked in on her. She was feeling much better. She was actually serving coffee to wet runners in the AACR tent like a total champ.

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So at that point, we started tracking Andy because he was still out there in the rain and the sleet. And he ended up finishing in about four hours and 55 minutes. He was soaking wet and tired but so proud of himself. And I realized, I was grateful for the opportunity to be able to hug him right after he finished.

Because I mean, honestly, I'm getting all teary. That boy, he knows how to set a goal and make it happen. He is just relentless when he decides he wants to do something. He's such an inspirational human to be around, and so even though I didn't get the result I wanted, I was so grateful that I was there for him.

I was able to see him after he finished his race and just to see how proud he was of himself, and that was pretty amazing. So anyway, sorry. I was not planning on crying on this podcast but I'm just so damn proud of him.

So anyway, after he changed into dry clothes, we headed back together. We took the shuttle bus back to our hotel so we could shower and nap, and then we met some friends for an early dinner. We got a bucket of beer, we watched the Eagles get destroyed by the Seahawks. It was brutal. It was just brutal.

Now, in their defense, they were actually playing a few miles away from us in the same weather that we had to run in. But still, guys, it was terrible. It was a slaughter. Anyway, that is my first marathon story and I am super proud of it for a lot of reasons.

I know last week I was very clear in the podcast that I was going to run a fucking marathon no matter what. Even if I got pulled off the course, I was going to figure out a way to get those remaining miles in and earn my medal. And so that is the energy. It was absolutely the energy I showed up with to this race.

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And considering the weather and the blisters, that energy got my pretty far and it got my faster than I've done it this year. So I didn't run 26 miles and I'm kind of cool with that because I think it was still a really awesome experience.

And I didn't get pulled off the course. My decision to end the marathon was my decision and not anyone else's. And I think that's what mattered so much to me was that I had the autonomy to say, oh no, I'm taking myself off the course and here's why and I feel good about it.

So what would I do differently? Well, in retrospect, after taking a year off to heal because I wasn't running from basically February 2018 to 2019, and then I was like, in February, once I started running again, I'm like, fuck it, I'm signing up for that marathon this year in November.

So that was probably an aggressive goal. I knew going into it that the time limit might be an issue because I was starting literally from scratch. But I did it anyway. And I mean, in some of my thought downloads, I kind of heard myself or I saw myself say it was irresponsible of me to sign up for a race when I had just started running again, for a marathon when I had just started running again.

That it was irresponsible because I knew there was a good chance I wouldn't be able to keep up with the time limit. And after giving it a lot of thought, really exploring why I wanted to think that way, I don't think it was irresponsible.

Because when we aim really high, we get so much farther than if we chose a goal that felt safe. If I had said okay, I'm going to sign up for the half marathon, I never would have done a 16-mile and 18-mile and a 20-mile training run. I never would have had those experiences this year and I wouldn't have had the amazing thought shifts that I did as a result of those.

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So the training for this race made me evolve as a person. It made me evolve as a runner. It showed me what is possible for me and it showed me what I'm capable of, and I would absolutely not trade that for anything. And so I think aiming high, like fuck, I'm going to run a marathon this year, even though I literally was just down and out with a knee injury for almost a year, got me so much farther as a person this year than if I had said I'm just going to do the half marathon.

Training for this race, it taught me so much about myself, about long distance running. I used to think a half marathon was really far and really, really hard. And now that distance is not a mental challenge for me. It feels pretty comfortable. I'm like, oh yeah, I could go out and do a half marathon no problem.

And that kind of amazes me. Watching that shift in my thinking has been super fun. So the training I did this season made me work - I mean, I worked on my body, yes, but I think the real benefit was all of the brain work that I did because I created all these new ways of thinking for myself.

And of course, I've shared them all here right on the show a lot. But those thought patterns allowed me to show up for a marathon that I was not sure if I could finish, that I was not sure if I could make the time limit. Helped me show up in the cold, in the rain, in the wind, and give 100%. And this is the most important part, and not suffer.

I mean, to me that is just huge. My feet were in a lot of pain. There was literally no suffering. There was no drama. There was no inner mean girl. There was no whining and complaining in my brain. Debbie and I just had a lot of fun running and walking and chatting.

And I just think that's so huge because 10 years ago, that would have been a suffer fest for me. I would have been miserable and bitching the whole time. I definitely would have quit a lot earlier. I would have said I'm never going to do another marathon again, this is the dumbest thing ever.

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And I mean honestly, I would have had the same experience I had when I did the breast cancer three-day, which literally was 10 years ago. 2009. I was miserable the entire time. I hated every step of the training, I hated every step of that walk. I swore I'd never do one again.

And I recognize now that the reason I was so miserable was because of my thinking and not because the walk was hard. And so all the work that I've done on my brain since then allowed me to show up for a similar type of event and have an awesome time. And fail and still not be upset about it.

Because I failed at my first marathon. Totally failed. And I had lots of people reach out and they're like, no, you didn't fail. As long as you showed up you won. And I completely disagree with that. I failed. A failure is simply the absence of the result that you want.

I wanted the result of finishing, it did not happen. Therefore, it's a failure. But I think I look at failure much differently than most people. Some people are like, oh, failure isn't an option. You either do it or you don't do it. But the thing is if you're going to do something, failure is always an option.

I mean, first of all, failure is kind of a requirement for doing something new because nobody gets it right on the first try. Success is actually the result of failure after failure after failure. As you practice and get better and gain skills.

So failure is just the absence of the result that you want, and that means you need to fail a lot to succeed. And I think there's this societal misunderstanding about failure. We think it means something about our worth or our talent or our abilities. We think it means if you fail, you need to stop trying. If you fail, it's not for you.

And again, failure is just the absence of the result that you want. That is it. It's neutral. Completely neutral. There's no emotion tied to failure. If you

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want the result, you just do it again. You've got to be willing to keep failing until you get the result you want.

So I totally failed at my first marathon and I'm cool with that. I can make it mean that marathons just aren't for me, or that I should be embarrassed or ashamed or that I wasn't ready, that I was under-trained, that I should have waited. I can make it mean all that stuff. Or I can make it mean that now I have this experience to draw on for the next one.

And obviously there's going to be a next one. Because I had fun. I had fun at this. Even though the weather was awful, it was really fucking fun. It was exciting to be at the start corral with a whole bunch of marathoners. The vibe was so good, you guys. And even though the weather was gross, everyone was just so excited and happy and I love being around that energy.

So I learned a lot, I had a great time, and let's see, what am I going to do differently next time around? First of all, there will definitely be more strength training. Twice a week this time. And I'll be honest, I skimmed on my strength training this year. I did the bare minimum to maintain all the work that I did in physical therapy for my knee.

And that in itself was a total win because in January, I was still in a lot of knee pain. Going up and down stairs was not super fun. It just hurt. And I was kind of thinking like, maybe I really will need that surgery to fix this. But by the end of February, I was running again and that pain did not come back.

So the bare minimum strength training that I did this year to kind of maintain the progress I'd made with my knee, total win. Pain didn't come back. Even with the 20-mile training run, still no knee pain. But strength work is definitely going to be a significant focus of mine as I go into my off season.



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And I'm going to hit it hard in December and January, but I'm going to keep that focus for next year's race season because it's going to help me with my speed, which is my other goal for 2020. I've decided I'm not going to sign up for the next marathon until I can complete a half marathon in under three hours.

And that's because I don't want to bump up against that time limit again like I did this time. I created a lot of extra mental work for myself to work my brain around okay, there's this time limit that I'm not going to meet. And so I've decided I would rather just eliminate that obstacle and not have to think about the time limit.

Now, I know - and trust me, tons of you have reached out and told me there are lots of marathons out there that don't require you to finish in seven hours. I know this. I get it. Even the New York City Marathon stays open until the last finisher comes in, no matter how long it takes. I love this. I love that there are long marathons.

But I've already gone through one training cycle. I don't want my training for the next one to take as much time as it did this year. My 18 and 20-mile training runs both took longer than six hours. And there's nothing wrong with that. I'm super proud of those training runs, but I don't want to spend that much time every other weekend running.

I tried it. It is not the experience I want to have next time. So my other focus in 2020 is going to be on pace, getting my half marathon time below three hours. I'm very confident I can get there in 2020. And of course, you know I'm going to share all that work right here on the podcast so you can learn from it.

And then once I get to that pace milestone, I'm going to pick my next full marathon and start training for it. So marathon number two might not happen until 2021. It may happen at the end of 2020, it may not happen until 2021. Totally okay with that. I'm super excited for it.

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So that is my marathon story. That's what I learned. And if you take nothing away from this podcast, remember that in order to succeed, you have to fail a lot along the way. It's part of the process. Failure is neutral. Failure doesn't mean anything other than that you did not get the result that you wanted. That's it.

Alright, so real quick before I dive into this week's obsession, the Rebel Runner Roadmap is currently open for enrollment. You guys, it is not going to be open forever. This is not an ongoing thing. It's a 30-day course. Class starts soon.

If you're like me and you want to improve your running skills in 2020, because I always want to improve my running skills, but this is the class for you. It's especially perfect if you're a new or newish runner and you're struggling to make progress and you're like, what the fuck am I doing wrong? I'm trying and trying and trying and I'm not getting any better.

So you'll come out of this class feeling confident and excited, ready to make 2020 your bitch. Knowing that you are becoming the runner you've always wanted to be. So go sign up right now at [rebelrunnerroadmap.com](http://rebelrunnerroadmap.com). There's a link in the show notes too. But it's [rebelrunnerroadmap.com](http://rebelrunnerroadmap.com).

And let's dive into this week's obsession, you guys. And it's sort of running related. I bought a cricut machine. Oh my god, a cricut maker, to be exact. And the reason I bought it, I've been sort of stalking them for a while. I wanted to make some fun paper crafts and I don't know, just for fun.

I'm like, looks like it's interesting, I kind of want to try it. Now, if you're not sure what I'm talking about, a cricut machine. It's a machine that cuts things. So you design what you want in their software and then you load in the material that you want to have cut, whether it's paper or felt or vinyl or whatever it is.

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And then it precision cuts your stuff for you, and then you use it to make whatever you want to make. And it is so much more fun than I even expected. It is amazing. I am obsessed with making stuff now. I made a card, I made these cute little turkey place cards for Thanksgiving. I made stickers for the fridge.

I may or may not have put stickers on all of the pie boxes for Thanksgiving Day. And oh my god, I can make t-shirts. And so now I'm super excited to make a bunch of running t-shirts and maybe make a bunch of running hats with fun sayings on them. It is awesome.

The design options are endless and I'm still learning the software but it's pretty easy so far anyway. I may have been watching a lot of tutorials on YouTube, but you guys, it's so fun. It's going to keep me busy all winter long.

So if you're looking for a new hobby, the cricut machine, it's just ridiculous fun so I highly recommend it. We'll have a link in the show notes and that it is for today, my rebellious friends. Go sign up for the Rebel Runner Roadmap. [rebelrunnerroadmap.com](http://rebelrunnerroadmap.com). Go sign up. Let's take your run from meh to magnificent in 2020 and I will see you next week.

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.