

## Ep #166: Cold Weather Running Tips



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**Jill Angie**

[The Not Your Average Runner Podcast](#) with Jill Angie

## Ep #166: Cold Weather Running Tips

Think about those dudes the next time you think that 20 degrees is too cold to run. It's not. You won't get frostbite, you won't die, you're just going to be a little cold. So here's a thought for you to think instead.

Welcome to *The Not Your Average Runner Podcast*. If you're a woman who has never felt athletic but you still dream about becoming a runner, you are in the right place. I'm Jill Angie, a certified running and life coach and I teach women how to start running, feel confident, and change their lives, and now I want to help you.

Hey rebels. How are you? What is new and exciting with you? I wish you were right here next to me so you could tell me everything. I feel like we're best friends sometimes. Do you feel that way? After this pandemic is under control, I'm going to start figuring out how we can do some meetups in person around the country.

I have five plane tickets from this year from trips I had to cancel, and they're just sitting in my American Airlines account, waiting for me to have some place to go. So maybe I will come to your city and we'll get to hang out. That would be so fun, right?

I would love to visit Idaho or Montana or Wyoming. I spend so much time either on the East coast or the West coast, and not enough time in the middle. So let's do that. Meanwhile, we're just going to keep hanging out right here on the podcast and speaking of the podcast, I do have a huge favor to ask you this week.

Would you please write a review if you haven't done so already? And if you have, thank you. But if you haven't, the more reviews that the show has, especially if they're five-star reviews, the more iTunes and the other podcast apps like Spotify and Stitcher, and I guess we're on Amazon Music now.

## Ep #166: Cold Weather Running Tips

But the more five-star reviews or reviews in general we have, the more those apps will show the podcast to new listeners, which means we get more women up and running, you get more running buddies in the end, and I just want to ask you to please consider leaving one. Let me know what you think. I do read them all and I love reading them. Even the ones who say I swear too much. That's just your opinion, but I do really deeply appreciate everyone who takes the time to do it.

So what are we going to talk about today? Well right now, we're just wrapping up the last round of the Rebel Runner Roadmap class, or R3 as my students are calling it now. And since the weather's starting to turn, there have actually been a lot of questions about how to keep running all winter.

And it's been a hot minute, and by hot minute, I mean two entire years since I've covered it on the show. So today we're going to talk all about cold weather running. And I know if you live in Texas or Florida or Costa Rica, I know you don't have to deal with the snow. I get it.

But some of this actually does apply to you anyway. So hopefully you'll stick with me. So first let's talk about why you should learn to run in the cold. Because if you have a treadmill, you could just run on that all winter and not even bother going outside, and I get it.

And if that's what you want to do, you go. Do you and have at it. But I do believe that running in all types of weather conditions is actually an important skill for runners to develop. First and foremost, because there's no guarantee you're going to have great weather on race day.

So practicing running in the cold or the rain or even the snow, and definitely the heat is important, especially if you're training for a race in Philadelphia like the Love Run or the Hot Chocolate because they're in the spring, and you could legit have an 80-degree day or a blizzard. Ask me how I know.

## Ep #166: Cold Weather Running Tips

Also, there are some awesome races that take place in the spring and traditionally, they're big races and popular races, and if those are on your bucket list like the Boston Marathon, for example, and you want to be ready to do your best, guess when you have to run. All winter long.

So seriously, Boston Marathon runners train right through the winter. Think about some of the Disney races that take place in January and February. You're going to be doing your training during the winter. So it's really important to master that skill because you can't train for a half marathon on a treadmill. You really can't even train for a 5K on a treadmill because you're going to be a little bit surprised when you try to make the transition from constant treadmill running to running outside. It's a bit of an adjustment.

So that's a skill that I want you guys to really think about developing and I know what you're saying to me right now. You're like, I don't like the cold. I get it. A lot of people don't like it. I love it. I actually grew up in western New York in the snow belts in Rochester. We were right on Lake Ontario and I mean, my house wasn't right on Lake Ontario, but I was just a few miles literally from the edge of the lake.

And we would get this crazy lake effect snow and there would be some mornings I would wake up and there would be six feet of snow on the ground and they'd be like school's canceled. And it would just, boom, overnight, six feet of snow.

And this happened multiple times throughout my childhood. So I grew up learning to drive in the snow, learning how to play in the snow. So to me, the snow is not a big deal. I moved to Pennsylvania to kind of get warm because I was like, alright, it's really, really cold up there.

Now it's not so much. Now it's delightful, thanks to climate change. That's a little bittersweet. Now it's delightful up there. We didn't even have air conditioners when I was a kid. It wasn't necessary.

## Ep #166: Cold Weather Running Tips

Anyway, I'm getting off track a little bit. So I like the snow, but I know a lot of people don't like the cold, don't like the snow, and don't really feel comfortable doing anything outside in it. So I get that. But thinking about the cold, just the cold, not the snow - we'll talk about the snow in a minute.

Once you've warmed up, you actually don't really notice it all that much because your body is throwing off some serious heat when you're in the middle of your workout and sometimes the cold actually feels good. But seriously, it starts with recognizing that I don't like the cold is just something that you're thinking.

You got to stop saying that because when you say I don't like the cold, it sort of gets in the way of you running your best. But I'm actually not here to coach you about that today, believe it or not. I will save that rant for another podcast or a Facebook Live. I'm just going to leave you with one quick story, and then we are going to get into the tips about safe and fun cold weather running.

So a couple years ago, Jen Lamplough, one of my coaches in Run Your Best Life was struggling with the cold weather. She lives near Chicago. It was 18 degrees that morning with a wind chill of seven. She was training for a half marathon in New Orleans that was two months away.

And Jen, she hates the cold. She just fucking hates it. When we were in New Orleans she was cold. She slept under this big fake fur blanket every night, she was just freezing the whole time. But anyway, I can't remember her exact words, but when she told me how she got herself out of bed that morning when it was seven degrees with the wind chill, it was something along the lines of staying warm in bed right now isn't going to help me get across the finish line in New Orleans.

So she got up, she bundled up, and she got it done. She's such a badass. So I want to leave you with that. When you're thinking about your own

## Ep #166: Cold Weather Running Tips

opinions about the cold and how you shouldn't run in the cold, just channel your inner Jen.

So let's talk about what you do need for winter running. So first and foremost, I know this is obvious, but you have to dress for the weather. The key to comfortable winter running is to dress in light layers, multiple light layers, and dress as if it's 20 degrees warmer than it is.

So when it's cold, our natural instinct is to bundle up in a big heavy coat with three pairs of tights and a scarf and earmuffs and anything else you can find that'll keep you warm. But then about 10 minutes into your run, as your body heats up, suddenly you're drenched in sweat and you need to start peeling things off.

And then next thing you know, after that, you're out in the cold, you're sweaty and wet, and you start shivering like crazy. So the way to avoid this is to layer properly. So I want you to be prepared to just feel cold for the first 10 minutes or so.

You're going to be a little uncomfortable for the first part of your run, but you're going to feel great for the rest of it, versus feeling comfortable because you're all bundled up for the first 10 minutes, and then being miserable for the rest of your run.

So choose the discomfort that's only a little bit of time at the beginning of your run because when your body gets warm, you will feel just about right. And again, multiple light layers that can be easily removed and tied around your waist are key. And make sure they are layers that breathe.

You don't want to be wearing a parka that's going to trap all your body heat and all the moisture because then you get chaffing from trapped sweat. And it can happen just as easily in the winter as the summer, so it's something you really need to think about.

## Ep #166: Cold Weather Running Tips

So if it's around 30 degrees outside, I usually will go out with a long sleeve running top, and then a lightweight jacket on top. And then if I get warm enough, I'll take that jacket and tie it around my waist, or sometimes if it's maybe between 30 and 40, I'll go out with a long sleeve running top and then I'll just use a super lightweight, maybe a fleece vest or a really light, thin, quilted vest.

I've gotten some of those from Old Navy and they're awesome. And so what that does is it keeps my torso warm, but it still allows heat to escape. So I would go with a lightweight jacket, long sleeve running top. If it's 20 degrees outside, then maybe you want to wear lightly lined long sleeve running top, and Athlete makes these tops that have just the thinnest of fleecy lining on the inside and they're perfect if it's 20 degrees outside, and then you put a vest on top of that, or a lightweight jacket.

If it's extra cold, I will often wear two pairs of tights, or I'll wear a pair of tights that has a lightweight fleece lining. And again, you can find these. If you Google it, you'll find them all over the place. You can wear convertible gloves, which I freaking love. And the brand that I love is by - I think it's called TrailHeads. And we'll put a link in the show notes.

And what they are is they're basically gloves with the fingers cut off, and then they also have this little flap that goes around the top of your - it's a pocket that goes around the top of your fingers so that they're basically mitten gloves. They're glittens. I don't know if that's a word. Let's just call them convertible gloves.

And so if your hands are getting warm when you're running, you can flip the tops of the gloves off and expose your fingers, and that helps let some heat out as well. So it's kind of all about heat management. You want to dress as if it's 20 degrees warmer than it is, and do things with light layers that you can tie around your waist, or convertible things that you can flip up.

## Ep #166: Cold Weather Running Tips

Fleece headband instead of a hat, this actually is a game-changer. It has been for me. So the fleece headband keeps your forehead and your ears nice and warm, but it still allows heat to escape from your head. From the top of your head.

And so if you wear a hat, again, that traps - your hair is going to get all sweaty and if it's cold outside and you've got a lot of moisture trapped against your skin, you're going to start to shiver. You're going to get really, really cold.

So the fleece headband allows the sweat and the moisture from your head to evaporate and the heat to dissipate, but it still keeps your little ear extremities nice and warm. Turtle Fur is the brand I love for fleece headbands. But you can get - I've gone to Walmart and gotten like, a two-pack of fleece headbands for three dollars. So they're not super expensive.

Let's see, what else? Another option that I really like in the winter is to wear a running skirt that has built in tights, or wear a running skirt over my tights. Because what that does is it sort of keeps my tushie warm and my hips warm with that extra layer from the skirt, but it doesn't bulk me up or restrict the movement of my legs at all.

And another thing that I've done in the past, and I've done this - I think the coldest I've ever gone running was like, around zero degrees. If it's below zero, I'm usually like, alright, let's come up with another plan. But if it's zero degrees outside or higher, I'll go.

So anyway, when it's getting close to zero, sometimes I'll take my nice full-length tights, and then I'll put a pair of bike length tights, like the sort of knee-length tights on top. Not actual bike shorts because they have padding in them and then it feels like you're running in a diaper.

But just like, knee-length tights. I'll put those on top of the other ones, and then in between the layers, I'll take those little hand warmers that you can



## Ep #166: Cold Weather Running Tips

get, that you take to football games, and I'll put them over my quads or I'll put them over my butt, just to kind of help my muscles stay warm while I'm running. And usually after about 15, 20 minutes, I don't need it anymore. But that kind of helps in the beginning as well.

So that's some of the gear to help you dress for the weather. Another challenge that people have with the cold weather is the air hurting your lungs, and I completely understand this. So an easy way to solve this is to use a lightweight neck gaiter, which you can get really cheap on Amazon, although now that people are wearing them as COVID masks, which actually, it's been proven that those neck gaiters are terrible COVID masks and actually cause more problems than they solve.

But regardless, you can grab them pretty cheap on Amazon because everybody's making them now. But they're basically a thin layer of t-shirt type material that covers your neck, goes around your neck, and you can pull it up over your mouth and nose, and that will help keep moisture in the air that you're breathing, give your skin a little bit of protection from the cold, and it helps you warm the air that you're breathing.

And then of course, if you don't need them anymore, you can just pull them down and let it sit around your neck, or I know sometimes I even wear them as a headband, so they're very versatile. But you can also - now that everybody's wearing face masks, you can wear a COVID face mask when you're out running in the cold weather to help warm the air up a little bit and keep the moisture in it.

Now, when it comes to winter running, another concern is of course keeping your feet warm and dry. So I do suggest switching to thicker socks that just gives you a little bit of extra layer. Maybe even carrying an extra pair if you're doing a long run, in case your feet get wet. Maybe you step in a slushy puddle or something like that, bring an extra pair of socks.

## Ep #166: Cold Weather Running Tips

You could also invest in running shoes that have Gore-Tex in them, and Brooks actually makes versions of their most popular shoes with Gore-Tex. And I know a lot of other manufacturers do that as well. So Gore-Tex will help keep the moisture out and help keep the heat in. And Gore-Tex shoes are pretty awesome. They're a little bit more expensive, but it's worth it if it keeps you running all winter long.

So let's talk a little bit about some of the more logistical aspects of winter running. So first and foremost, ice and snow. And you can run pretty easily in packed snow. So if the snow is packed down, I wouldn't let that hold you back. But if you think there's going to be ice, you can try using maybe a rubber outsole for your shoes to give you some grip, or you can try getting some nano spikes for your shoes.

And the brand that I like is Kahtoola. And they're these little teeny tiny spikes, and it's just basically this thing that you put around your shoe and it puts these little spikes on the bottom, and then they dig into the ice. So you can do that as well.

If you're afraid of the ice, maybe you do want to run on the treadmill for that. But I do think it's worth getting - seeing if there's a way that you can run on the snow and ice that allows you to keep training throughout the winter. So that's one thing to consider.

The other thing about the logistical aspects of winter running is that there's a lot more darkness in the winter. And we're already seeing it. It's October and I wake up in the morning and it's not warm out or it's not light out at all. So if you're going to run in the dark, you need two things. You need to be seen by other people, in particular cars, vehicles, and you also need to light the way for yourself.

So lighting the way for yourself, super easy, get yourself a headlamp so you can see where you're going. They're cheap, they're easy to use, get

## Ep #166: Cold Weather Running Tips

one for under \$20 on Amazon. Being seen means wearing lights on your body and reflective gear.

Now, reflective gear is great, but it's only useful when headlights are shining directly on you. And that might not happen until it's too late. So reflective gear is supplementary safety gear. Blinking lights are critical when you are running outside anywhere near traffic.

And by traffic I also mean bikes. So if you're on a sidewalk where there's a lot of bicycles, again, you want to be seen. So get some blinking lights. My clients love the Noxgear vest. It's actually not a vest. But it's these strings of colored blinking LED lights that wrap around your torso.

Not nearly as weird as it sounds. But they are amazing, they make you super visible. They're very lightweight. So I highly recommend Noxgear, but you can also get clip-on blinking lights that will attach to the back of your jacket or your shoes or anywhere else.

But the more you can light yourself up, the safer you're going to be. And please, I cannot stress this last point enough. Run facing traffic. Even if it's inconvenient. Because if you can't see a car coming, you will not see if it's drifting into the shoulder, if it's getting too close to you. Always face oncoming traffic. Always.

Did I mention always? Because there are some people out there who seem to think that pedestrians should go with the flow of traffic. And yeah, you know what, when you're on a sidewalk and you're walking or running on a sidewalk, yeah, you do want to go in the same direction that car traffic might go. You're the car when you're on a sidewalk, right?

But when you're on a road, when you're on the shoulder of a road, pedestrians always go against traffic. Always. Bikes go with traffic because they're vehicles. Pedestrians go against traffic. Please don't forget that ever.

## Ep #166: Cold Weather Running Tips

It freaks me out every time I'm driving and I see somebody, I'm coming up on some person that's running and they have their back to me and I think, oh my god, I'm always looking out for pedestrians, I'm always looking out for bikes when I drive because I'm thinking, oh, that's me. I'm that person sometimes on the side of the road, so I'm always thinking about that.

But not everybody does when they're driving, and a lot of people are driving and texting. A lot of people are driving and talking on the phone and they're not paying attention. So please, always, always run and walk against traffic so that you can see it coming towards you.

And here's the other thing that I do when I'm walking and running on a road is I'm always thinking like, if a car comes too close to me, where am I going to go? So I'm always thinking like, can I jump into that ditch? Is there enough space for me to run off the side of the road? So really be thinking about your exit plan as well.

And that goes for darkness or lightness, to be honest. So the last thing I want to talk about - maybe the second to last thing is sickness. So winter is the time when people are more likely to get sick. And of course right now, we've got a COVID pandemic happening.

But I get asked a lot if it's okay to go running when you're not feeling good. And the short answer is it kind of depends. I mean, in general, I have no desire to workout when I'm sick. And I usually just stay in bed and rest. That's what I choose, that's generally what I recommend.

But if your symptoms aren't that bad, or you're a glutton for punishment, here are my recommendations. If your symptoms are above the neck, stuffy head, runny nose, sore throat, plugged ears, it is okay to run. If you have a fever, I'd stay home and let your body do its job because your body needs all the resources to fight off infection. And if you have a fever and then you decide to go running, you're diverting energy from the body's job of fighting off infection.

## Ep #166: Cold Weather Running Tips

And so give it a fighting chance, so to speak. Give your body a fighting chance to do its job. Give your immune system to do its job by staying home and resting. So that's just kind of my recommendation. You can go running if your symptoms are above the neck.

I don't really recommend it. If you're on the ramp up to a cold, then I would definitely stay home. If it's a week later and you've just got a little bit of a cough, maybe still a runny nose, that's maybe a little bit different. The bulk of the infection has been dealt with. But if you're in the beginning stages of a cold or it's that first day where you kind of feel okay, I would just rest.

But if your symptoms have moved into your chest, this means your lungs are going to have difficulty keeping up with oxygen transfer. If you're coughing up phlegm, that means there's phlegm coating the inside of your lungs, you're going to have a hard time breathing while you run because your lungs are fighting off infection.

Your immune system is trying to get all the shit out of your lungs. But you're also not going to be circulating as much oxygen, your performance will suffer. Just stay home and let your body heal.

Okay, so we talked all about the logistics and there's just one more thing that might get in your way this winter. And that is your beautiful amazing pain in the ass brain, which is going to tell you that it's too cold and you're going to be miserable.

The circumstance here is the weather. The number on the thermometer, the precipitation that is or isn't happening, the condition of the roads. Everything else is just your opinion. And there is the marathon that takes place in Antarctica. There's also one that takes place in the Arctic Circle maybe.

Yeah, there's one that happens at the North Pole, there's one that happens at the South Pole. I think the one that happens at the South Pole, I saw a

## Ep #166: Cold Weather Running Tips

video of - it was mostly men. They all had these enormous beards. But it was a video of them finishing this marathon and they came, they're crossing the finish line, their beards are just crusted with ice, the temperatures were well below zero.

So if that's not cold, I don't know what is. And these guys still managed to do a marathon. Nobody got frostbite. So it's too cold is literally just your opinion. So think about those dudes the next time you think that 20 degrees is too cold to run. It's not. You won't get frostbite, you won't die, you're just going to be a little cold.

So here's a thought for you to think instead. Running any given route in the winter makes you at least 50% more badass than running it on a nice warm day. So the bottom line here is that running in the winter is just like any other running. Winter is just another season. You get the right gear, you get your thinking straight, you get your butt out there, just like you do any other day.

And hey, if you're a winter runner, I want you to post pictures of yourself in your gear in the Not Your Average Runner podcast Facebook group. Be an example of what's possible. You might inspire somebody else to give it a try.

Now, if you are just starting out on your running journey, I want to encourage you to sign up for my free 30-day Running Start training plan. It is perfect for anyone who's new to running or maybe somebody coming back into it after some time off. Just go to [notyouraveragerunner.com](http://notyouraveragerunner.com) to sign up and if you know somebody else who could use it, make sure you tell them about it.

Okay my friends, I love you. Stay safe. Get cold. Get your ass out there and run and I will see you next week.

## **Ep #166: Cold Weather Running Tips**

Oh, and one last thing. If you enjoyed listening to this episode, you have to check out the Rebel Runner Roadmap. It's a 30-day online program that will teach you exactly how to start running, stick with it, and become the runner you've always wanted to be. Head on over to [rebelrunnerroadmap.com](http://rebelrunnerroadmap.com) to join. I'd love to be a part of your journey.