Ep #167: How to Create Your Own Training Plan

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With Your Host

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Ep #167: How to Create Your Own Training Plan

So guess what? I thought today I would spill all my secrets on how I create my plans, how I help my clients modify them so that they can get just the right training for their big race.

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. Can you believe Halloween is a week away? What is happening? Are you going to dress in costume for your Zoom meetings next week? I might do that. Coach Jen was just telling me how there's a costume contest where she works and that their Zoom background actually has to be part of the costume. I love that. I can't wait to see what she comes up with.

And you know what else I love? I love how even though our world has shifted so much in the past six months - and has it really only been six months? This seems like forever. But it's shifted so much and still, most of us have adapted and in some ways actually embraced it.

And here's a great example. Last weekend was the Run Your Best Life fall retreat. We were supposed to be in Cincinnati for the Flying Pig race series, but we did it as a virtual event instead. And I think a year ago, nobody would have been excited about that.

Most folks would have thought sitting in front of my laptop for two days instead of being in person, no thank you. But the pandemic, it forced us to do so much more virtually that it's now becoming obvious how many advantages there are to working and connecting over Zoom.

And the most obvious, obviously, is that there's no travel time. I mean, so many more people can participate. We actually had over 75 people signed

up for this retreat, which was awesome. And also, and I think this is the really fun part is that you can see everyone's faces when you're in a Zoom event most of the time, unless it's webinar style.

But when it's Brady Bunch style and everybody's on video, normally when you're at an event like that, you see the backs of people's head if you're in person or if you're seated at round tables, maybe you could see a few faces. But mostly you're just looking forward at the speaker and you're not connecting with people's faces.

But with a virtual event, you can see everyone attending. You can see their expressions. You can see their pets. The pets, oh my gosh. We had so many pets join us for the retreat. It was glorious. Cats, dogs, birds, it was just awesome.

And also, you can come in your pajamas or your yoga pants. Have a glass of wine, relax on the couch while you're participating. It really is just awesome. And I know nothing takes the place of an in-person hug, but the virtual event has a lot of benefits and I really, really love it.

And I know that remote learning is a different experience entirely. I get it. A lot of parents are struggling right now and my heart goes out to you. And I'm not saying we should do everything virtually. But for sure, the Zoom retreat format, it rocks. And we're going to be doing a lot more of them.

Alright, so what are we going to talk about today? Well, one question I get asked a lot is how do I modify my training plan, or how do I bridge the gap between a 5K and a 10K, or a 10K and a half marathon, if there's a few months between the races and the training plans don't line up.

So I provide training plans to my coaching clients, and these plans have been tested over and over again with hundreds of women. And they work really well. But sometimes, my clients need modifications based on their

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race schedule, or maybe they're doing an odd distance, like an eight-miler and I don't have that in the library.

So in that case, I help them build something custom that fits their needs. So guess what? I thought today I would spill all my secrets on how I create my plans, how I help my clients modify them so that they can get just the right training for their big race. Alright, let's do this.

So here are my basic guidelines for a training plan. Now, if you're doing a 5K or a 10K, you're going to run three times a week. For a half marathon, three, maybe four if you're an experienced half marathoner, times a week. And then for a marathon, four times a week.

So scheduling those days, I suggest you do not run back to back wherever that's possible, especially if you're like, but Friday, Saturday, Sunday is most convenient for me. Don't do that. I mean, you're going to have to run two days in a row if you're doing a four times a week plan. I get that, but the rest of the time you should include at least a day in between your training runs.

And if you try to squish them all together when it's convenient for you, what's going to happen is by the time you get to that third run or even that fourth run in a row, you're going to be really fatigued and you're going to be setting yourself up for injury and overtraining.

So really make sure that you give yourself as much space between your training runs as you can. Now, a training run consists of some shorter mileage during the week, and then a long run on the weekend. And now if your "weekend" is on Tuesday and Wednesday because those are your days off from work, that's fine. You can do your long run then.

My training plans are always day one, two, three, four, five, six, seven. And then usually day six or seven is the long run. And then you can fit that in

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wherever it makes sense. Again, if your day six and seven is Tuesday, Wednesday, then just set your calendar up like that.

But the long run is where you build your mileage. So every training plan, you're going to have some shorter miles during the week, and then you're going to have a long run on the weekend. And that long run is where you really start to develop endurance.

And it's every other week, this is what I highly recommend. Every other week, you're going to add a mile to that long run. And so a lot of people are like, but I should run really long every weekend, and the answer is no. You should not do that.

Your body needs time to adapt and absorb the training. And if you're pushing yourself every weekend to go really, really long, again, you're going to end up overtraining, you're going to get injured, you're going to get burnt out. So every other weekend is when you add mileage. And then on those off weekends, you kind of keep it a little bit lower. Maybe a mile or two longer than your baseline miles during the week.

Now, if you're doing a 5K, your long run is going to be between three and four miles every week. If you're a first time 5Ker, I just keep it at three miles for your long run. And there's not going to be a lot of difference between week to week on your long runs. Because three miles is kind of a baseline mileage for most people.

Once you get trained up to that, that's going to be your baseline mileage for other training plans. But if you're doing a 10K, then you're going to build up every other week, and you can even - if you've got a long run away, if you've got a lot of time, you can even add a half a mile every other week if you're doing a 10K training plan.

If you're doing a half marathon, you're going to add a mile every other week. And if you're doing a marathon, you're going to add a mile every

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other week until you get around that 14-mile mark and then you can add two miles every other week. Once you get to a certain baseline of mileage, you can add two miles every other week.

Now, the other thing is how long should your longest long run be. Sounds like a Dr. Seuss book. How long was his longest long run? Anyway, you don't need to run the full distance, especially if you're a beginner. You don't need to run a half marathon before you run a half marathon. You don't need to run a marathon before you run a marathon.

So if you're doing a half marathon, I recommend your longest run stops at 10 miles. If you're doing a marathon, I recommend your long run stops at 20 miles. And I know, your brain is going to go to a place of how will I know if I can succeed on race day if I don't do the distance first.

I promise, you will. If you can run 10 miles, you can do 13. If you can run 20 miles, you can do 26. You got to get your brain wrapped around that because otherwise, you're going to end up doing too much training, and then your race day is not going to be super fun.

So that's where I recommend you fall with how much mileage you should schedule. If you're doing a 5K and 10K during the week, your shorter runs are going to be between two and three miles. If you're doing a half marathon, probably between three and four miles. And if you're doing a marathon, maybe between four and six miles will be your runs during the week.

Okay, so we talked about not running back to back, we talked about long runs. Oh, give yourself a rest day after a long run also. I think that's really, really important, especially as you're getting into half marathon and marathon training.

You're going to want to let your body recover the next day when you've gone a longer distance than you've ever gone before. If you're in your off

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week for your long runs and you're doing maybe half the distance that you did the week before, then you don't necessarily need a rest day as much as possible. But after those long runs especially as you're adding new distance every other week, take a rest day.

Alright, so we talked about how to schedule the runs. What else should you be doing during your training? Well, I recommend that you do strength training at least once a week. Twice a week is even better. And you can schedule your strength training on your run days if you want to. I just recommend doing your strength training after you run because then your running is - you're able to come at it with fresh legs.

But if you need to switch it around, if you need to do your strength training in the morning, you can do your run in the afternoon. That's totally fine. I also recommend doing some cross-training if you have room in your schedule.

So the priority is running and strength training, probably even priority. And then if you have some room, you can do some cross-training. Like cycling or yoga or swimming. It's totally fine. But do not do cross-training instead of taking a rest day. The rest day is more important than cross-training.

So I guess the priority is running and strength training are both equal priority number one. Rest day, make sure that's included. And then if you have space, I want you to do some cross-training. And by the way, on your rest day, I'm not implying that you should just lay in bed all day.

You can go out for a relaxing walk, or just kind of - you can move your body. You're just not going to do a hard workout. So that's kind of how you build out a basic training plan. I also recommend when you're doing half marathon and marathon, that one of your run days during the week, one of your shorter runs includes either hill repeats or some kind of sprints drills to kind of get your legs challenged a little bit and practice running faster, practice that finish line sprint.

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So make sure that at least one of your days is either hill repeats or spirit repeats or some other kind of agility drill when you're doing a half marathon or a full marathon training plan. When you're doing a 10K, it's a real nice to have if you're able to fit that in to one of your run days during a 10K.

And that means that you're not going to go out and just run three miles. You might cover three miles, but you might do it on the track as your drills and so forth. If you're doing a 5K, especially if it's your first time doing a 5K, I wouldn't really include any special hills or sprints or anything like that.

You're just going to focus on building consistency, getting your run-walk intervals dialed in and all of that. Alright, so that's the plan. That's how you build out a training plan. So what if you have a training plan already and you're like, I need to modify.

For example, say you're training for an 8K race, which is about five miles. I think it's 4.96 miles or something. You're training for an 8K race. You could take an existing 10K training plan and cut it down and just stop it a week early. You could take a 5K plan and extend it using the guidelines that I just taught you.

So you can take an existing training plan and just kind of modify it up or down as needed. Just make sure that you don't lose the taper. And I forgot to talk about the taper. I'll tell you what, I'm not as organized this week as I thought I should be. What is a taper?

A taper is the two to three weeks after you've done your longest run in your training plan and before your race. And so that time gives your body a chance to rest and recover and absorb the training and get ready for a big effort. For a 5K, probably a two-week taper. Maybe a week and a half even.

For a 10K, two-week taper. For a half marathon, two to three weeks. And for a marathon, definitely a three-week taper. So the longer the distance that you've been training for, the longer your long runs are, the longer

you're going to spend between the end of that last long run and your race day.

And it's not like you're just lying on the couch. You're still going to run. You're just going to taper the mileage down from that peak, down to maybe - if you're doing a marathon for example, your long run the week before your marathon should be maybe five miles. So you should be really storing up that energy, imagine that you're just resting and storing energy so that you can explode on race day and really, really kill it.

So when you're modifying a training plan by cutting it down, make sure that you don't cut out the taper. You got to modify to include that. What about if you just finished a 5K and you want to train for a 10K, but that 10K is four months in the distance? And your 10K training plan is only eight weeks. What do you do for that two months in between so that you don't lose fitness?

So here's what I usually do. I look at the training plan for the next distance. I look at the first long run on that plan, and it might be - if it's a 10K, it might be three miles. If it's a half marathon, it might be four miles. If it's a marathon, it might be six or eight miles. But look at the first long run on that plan, and then you want to keep your long runs at that level, maybe a mile longer in the meantime.

So if you're bridging between 5K and 10K, and that 10K plan, the first training run is three miles or three and a half miles, then you're going to run maybe every other weekend. You're going to do three and a half miles, maybe even four miles to kind of keep a fitness base so that when it's time to start that training plan, you're up and ready, you're already at that level and it's an easy entry into the training plan.

Alright, the last question I want to answer that I get quite often, and you can build this into your training plans, is what should you do in the week

immediately following a big race? Should you just go right back to training as usual or should you completely rest? What should you do?

And that is - that week immediately following and if it's a half marathon it might be two weeks, if it's a marathon, it might even be three or four weeks. That is your recovery time. So you put out a really big effort for your race, you want to recover by doing a couple of maybe relaxed runs or walks.

Maybe you go out and you do a couple two-mile runs, take some nice brisk walks. I want you to sleep extra. I want you to hydrate, fuel yourself well, get a massage, foam roll. Let your muscles rest. Let them just kind of take a moment, recover, and reset back to where you were maybe a couple months ago.

And then you can get right back into it once you've let everything rest and recover. And again, how long should you take it easy? Well, for a half marathon, it's maybe going to be a week or two, depending on how hard your effort was on race day. For a marathon, it might be up to a month.

I mean, I've had clients, they really went all out at their marathon, and it took them four weeks before kind of resting - it's not that they weren't working out. It's not that they weren't running, but there were no hard efforts in that timeframe. And then after about a month, they were like, okay, now I feel normal again, now I'm ready to bring myself back to my normal effort level.

Always, always listen to your body. Okay my friends, I hope this was helpful for you. If you're 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 anybody who's new to running or maybe coming back into it after some time off.

And all you have to do to sign up is go to notyouraveragerunner.com. If you know somebody who could use it, please make sure to tell them about it.

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

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And that's it for this week. Alright my friends, I love you. Stay safe. Get your ass out there and run and I will talk to you next week.

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 to join. I'd love to be a part of your journey.