

## Ep #227: How to Get Started Again After a Break 2.0



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Jill Angie**

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## Ep #227: How to Get Started Again After a Break 2.0

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, what is up with you? It's almost 2022, my brain is a little broken thinking about that. So I don't know, are you excited? I'm excited. December, January is one of my favorite times of the year, that sort of transition. It's not really about setting resolutions. I'm not so much of a new year, new you kind of girl. But there is something very magical about January 1st.

I can't really explain it, maybe it's that I love the idea of using a 12 month period as a container for evolution. And January to December is a very convenient 12 month period. And I'm working on my ultimate deadlift goal to deadlift my body weight.

One of my 2022 goals is to get myself from the 100 pound deadlift, where I'm at right now, to 200 pounds. And I'm working with my trainer to make a plan for that, we're getting all the right equipment figured out. And honestly right now I'm stuck at the 100 pound mark, not because my body won't lift more, but primarily because our apartment doesn't have a ton of room.

Oh my god, there are so many kettlebells and weights and things in the dining room. So we're trying to get kind of creative, and Andy and I are going to be moving to a bigger place in May. We'll have more space and then I can get maybe a trap bar, some bumper plates, and really go to town.

But for now I'm sort of limited by the equipment that I have because I don't really want to take my virtual trainer to the gym with me. So my next step is

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to get either two 60 or two 65 pound kettlebells so that I can deadlift 120 or 130 pounds. I'll be doing that in the next couple of weeks.

And so basically my first goal for 2022 is to be deadlifting 130 pounds by the end of January. I'm like, what? I'm so excited about this. And this type of heavy lifting is actually really new to me. I've totally weight lifted before, I've done strength training kind of off and on through my whole life, but never with the goal of like just seeing just how much weight I can move.

And I am really enjoying learning what my body is capable of. And also I'll be spending next year kind of figuring out how I'm going to balance all of this heavy lifting with my running because I'm also, full disclosure, I'm toying with the idea of training for the Philly marathon in 2022 as well.

So I'm having conversations with my trainer about that, like do these two goals work together, yes or no? And then I'm kind of going to make a plan from there. But that is enough about me and my 2022 goals. We are here to talk about you. And this week I am revisiting another previous podcast episode, number 75, which is about how to start running again after a break.

And this is a very common question, whether it's a 10 year break or a 10 day break, it can be a little confusing. Especially, you know who you are. If you're telling yourself some bullshit stories about why you took a break, like, "Oh, I'm a quitter," or "Oh, I always do this to myself," or "Oh, I've lost so much fitness." Just all of those things are simply bullshit stories.

Or sometimes you might be coming back from an injury and you're thinking I really don't want to overdo it and get hurt again. And so that can hold you back a little bit as well. So if you want to restart running and you're hesitating to do it, here's the deal, here's the real talk. The best way to start again after a break is to just fucking start.

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We don't want to overthink it. I mean, you can for sure take a few minutes, make a plan. Don't overthink it, just start. And I'm going to give you some guidelines on how to make that plan today. But seriously, the longer you wait, it's not going to get any easier.

It's not going to get any easier. It's just going to get more uncomfortable and more difficult the longer you wait, assuming you have been cleared by your doctor. If the case is an injury and you've been cleared by your doctor, waiting longer isn't going to make it easier. And for sure if you stopped running because you had some bullshit stories in your head, that's definitely not going to get any easier the longer you wait.

So let's kind of talk about where do you start after you have taken a break from running. Now, depending on how long your time off was, you might need to ease back in kind of slowly. Make a plan for reentry. But again, delaying it's not going to make it any easier. So don't say like, "Oh, I need to take two weeks to make my plan." No, no, I don't know, 10 minutes. 10 minutes to make your plan, that's what I'm going to give you.

And also, by the way, if you haven't exercised in a week or two, that's not really taking a break, that's just missing a few workouts. Just get right back where you left off, there's no need to, "Oh, do I need to make anything up?" Or "Oh, do I need to take a step back?" No, if you haven't exercised in a week or two, you missed a few workouts, that's all it is, you're just going to start right up where you left off.

But if it's been a month, maybe you want to scale back to the distance you were running three months ago, and build back up from there. If it's been six months or more, yeah, you might need to be a beginner again. And that's okay, it's kind of fun to be a beginner. It's kind of fun.

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So don't worry though, whatever the time off is, your fitness is going to come back pretty quickly. Let yourself start over if you need to. And that's really all there is to it. I mean, it does not have to be complicated.

If you've taken some time off due to injury you're, of course, going to listen to your doctor or your physical therapist on when it's okay to start again, what you can do. You're going to follow her instructions to the letter especially if she's giving you homework exercises to do. 100% you're going to do those. If I could see you, if you were in front of me I'd be looking into your eyes and saying, "We're going to follow the instructions to the letter, right?"

But if you've taken time off due to life circumstance, or maybe you even planned on a break. I do this every year, I take about two months off of running on purpose because I don't know, it just feels good to me that I run all year long and then at the end of the year around November or December I just kind of take some time off.

And maybe I'll go out for a run here and there if the spirit moves me. But I like to do other things and then in January I'm like, "All right, let's start again." But maybe you simply fell off the wagon, whatever it is, you get to let yourself be a beginner again.

Now I know all of that sounds really easy. And guess what? It is. It is, actually starting running again is easy. It is uncomplicated, it is simple. It really is but it can also be a little uncomfortable. So if you're asking me the question, "How do I start again, after a break?" Nine times out of 10 it means you're all up in your head about it. You're creating confusion because you do know how to start, you just start.

So that's really what we're going to focus on today, is getting into your head and figuring out why you are getting in your own way, instead of getting your running shoes on and logging some miles.

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So in my experience there are three reasons that people don't get back in the saddle right away. The first one is it's hard and you want it to be easier. And the second one is it's hard and you want it to be easier. And the third one is it's really fucking hard and you want it to be easy, damn it.

Seriously though, every single reason that somebody has given me for riding the struggle bus when they're trying to get back to running comes down to this, you want to snap your fingers and be right back to where you were before you stopped.

And this goes for anybody. Whether you stopped due to injury, or illness, or circumstances beyond your control, whether you just lost your mojo for a while, whatever it was. It's not how it works, my friends. You're not Thanos, you can't just snap your fingers and get a result.

But the good news is, being on the struggle bus is just a thought. Remember a few episodes, gosh I can't remember the exact episode, but it was right around episode 70-ish when I told you that body flaws are literally just a thought in your mind and not an actual thing.

And this is true. Body flaws are just a thought in your mind. There's no such thing as a body flaw. There's no such thing as a perfect body. There's no such thing as a flawed body. We're all just bodies. That's it. So body flaw is just a thought in your mind.

Struggling is the same thing. The circumstance here is that you haven't run in X number of weeks, or months, or years. That's our circumstance, the number of days on the planet that we haven't gone running. And then you have all the thoughts about it.

Like, "I've lost so much fitness, I'll have to start all over again. I'll never get back to where I was. It's so much harder this time around. I don't want to

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get injured again.” All of the thoughts, I'm sure some of them sound familiar.

And you've had all of these thoughts, and you believed them. We believe our thoughts. We mistakenly put a lot of trust into our brains, the veracity of the thoughts in our brain. Because when you think the thought, “I've lost so much fitness, I'll have to start over again,” you feel defeated.

And when you feel defeated, you either don't start again, or you do start but you come back to the Facebook group and you kind of whine about how hard it is. And everybody jumps in and says, “Yes, you're right, it is hard. Poor you, hang in there.”

And they confirm your shitty pity story about how much you're suffering. And you start in with how you're never going to get back to where you were. And you just feel so defeated and overwhelmed. And what do you do? You give up. And then a month goes by and you're like, “Oh, I got to start running again. I've lost so much fitness.” And the whole cycle starts again.

So here is the best advice I can give you when it comes to that cycle. If you've been in it, and you know if you have. When that starts to happen to you, here's what you're going to do, you're going to stop it. Stop it. That thought that you're thinking, “Oh, I have to start all over again because I've lost so much fitness” is not helping you get back to fitness.

I mean the truth is, yeah, if you take off several months, your fitness will decline. And you won't be able to do as much as you did before until you build it back up again. Those are facts. But when you focus on it and how hard that feels, and how unfair it feels, how overwhelming it is, it is not serving you in the slightest bit.

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Let me say that another way. Even if it's true that you've lost a bunch of fitness, it does not matter. Because what you're doing is arguing with reality. You're saying this is reality, it's not fair. And that makes you feel awful. And when we feel awful, we do not take the actions that get us the result that we want. We whine, we half ass things, we give up.

So stop arguing with reality. You took time off from running, for whatever the reason was. And by the way, please stop beating yourself up for whatever reason.

If you took time off from running because you just woke up one day and you're like, "I don't really feel like it." And then you had that same morning, morning after morning, you just kept saying, "I'll do it tomorrow. I'll do it tomorrow." And the next thing you know, three months have gone by. Okay, that's what you did. We're not going to beat up about it. We're not going to focus on how lazy we are. Again, lazy, also just a thought, not factual.

So your current fitness level is your current circumstance. You can tell yourself whatever story you want to about it. So let's stop telling stories about how much it sucks, how unfair it is, how hard you're going to have to work to get back to where you were. Let's just stop. No more stories.

Also, the first time you started running, my friend, I promise you it was just as hard as it is right now physically. The physical effort, just as hard. Maybe even harder. And you huffed, and you puffed, and you sweated, and you struggled and it was a fuck ton of effort.

But that first time you didn't have the mean thoughts in your head about how much fitness you've lost. So you weren't making yourself suffer. You had thoughts like, "Oh wow, I'm doing this. Oh wow, maybe I can be a runner." And when you think those thoughts you feel optimistic, you feel excited, you feel motivated and you take action, like continuing to run. You

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just get down to business and do your miles day after day, week after week till it got easier.

So it was just as hard back then, the only difference is your thoughts about it were much different then. And that is the secret sauce. When you spend time focusing on what you don't have, you don't move forward. You stay right where you are, which is miserable and full of self-pity and arguing with reality.

So when I say you need to start at the beginning after you take a break, I mean more than just where you were physically. I mean mentally too. What were the thoughts you were thinking when you first started running? Were they things like, "Oh my god, am I really running?" Or, "Wow, after two weeks I can really feel this getting easier." Because those thoughts are going to make you feel excited, not defeated. You're going to be inspired to see how much further you can go.

So when you go back to the beginning with running, tap into the beginner's mindset of curiosity, of excitement, of accomplishment. And for those of you that are sitting out there right now saying, "Oh yeah, but it's hard to do that when you've already gone through it once." Well, guess what? That's another thought. It's not true. It's not a fact. It's just a bullshit story you're telling yourself because you don't want to do the work.

Hey, maybe when you've already gone through it once, it's actually easier because you know what to expect. So I know that this is some tough love. I know it might not be easy for you to hear right now. But I promise you, it is essential to getting you back on your feet.

It is not the circumstance of not running for a while that is hard to deal with. It is the shit show in your brain that is the actual problem. All right, I'm going to say that again, the circumstance of not running for five weeks, 10 weeks,

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whatever, is not the problem. The circumstance of not running is not the problem.

It is whatever story you are telling yourself that is what is truly causing problems for you. So what can you do about it? You're like, "All right, I got all these shitty thoughts, Jill. Now what?" Well, first of all, spend some time every single day doing a five minute thought download.

Do you remember Episode 224, it was two, three episodes ago where we talked about the self-coaching model? I want you to go back and re-listen to that one if you need to. Then grab a notebook and a pen, set a timer, write for five minutes about all the terrible things in your life, everything that's keeping you from doing what you want to do.

And then look at it and ask yourself, "Is that really true? Could somebody else look at my words and come to a different conclusion?" 98% of the time, yeah, the answer is yes.

Now, once you've got all those thoughts in front of you, I want you to decide what result are you getting when you think them over and over again? So if you're continually thinking it's so hard to get started again, what's the result that you're going to get from thinking that over and over again?

Is it that running is going to be easy? No. It is that running is going to be really hard. If you keep thinking it's hard, it's going to be hard. That's what she said. I just couldn't resist.

Anyway, I just read a study that took a bunch of people, some men and women, and they did some genetic testing on them to look for this gene that made them predisposed to having a harder time with endurance

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exercise. And so they're like all these people, we're going to test you to see if you have this gene that makes endurance exercise harder for you.

Everybody got the test, there was no control group or whatever. Everybody got the test. They told everybody the results, but they lied. The people who had the gene were told that they didn't. And the people without the gene were told that they did. And what do you think happened?

The people that thought they had the gene had a much harder time with exercise. And the people that thought they didn't had an easier time. Okay, so legit circumstance, I've been tested for this gene that says I'm going to have a harder time with exercise. I've been told I don't have the gene, even though I do have the gene, exercise is easier for me. That is the power of your thoughts. Isn't that mind blowing?

So if you believe that it's hard to get started again after a break, guess what? It's going to be harder. So we got to decide what you want to believe. That's where you need to decide ahead of time and practice it.

And when I say practice, I mean, write that shit down every day. Read it into a voice memo in your phone, listen to it on the way to work. Repeat it over and over again while you're running. Say it to yourself constantly. Because the way we start to believe thoughts is we think them multiple times. And by multiple I mean probably hundreds and thousands.

So here's some thoughts to get you started. I'm so glad I'm able to run again, this feels amazing. It's fun to be a beginner again. Running is only as hard as I make it and I'm choosing for it to be easy. You could just say running feels easy. You could also say this is part of the journey and every runner goes through it. Or you can come up with your own.

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But whatever thought resonates for you about your running that creates the emotion of excitement, joy, optimism, motivation, whatever emotion is going to keep you back at running again, we want to be thinking thoughts that create that emotion. All right.

And seriously, practice those thoughts over and over again, even when you're not running. Because in the beginning, and probably in the middle, and maybe even a little bit at the end, your brain is going to want to slip back into old habits. Your brain is going to want to throw a pity party, and you're going to need to keep redirecting.

And that's normal. It's how brains work. Brains like routine, so when you've created the routine of feeling pity, feeling self-pity, or feeling overwhelmed, your brain is like, 'Oh okay, this is a thing we're going to do a lot. I'm just going to go automate that so that you don't have to put a lot of effort into it.' Brains like routine so it takes a little bit of effort to get them to change to a new routine, that's where the practice comes in.

So the choice is yours, my friend, you can put on your pity party hat and you wallow, or you can get started again and you'll be back to where you were in no time flat because that is how rebel runners behave.

Now, if you got something out of today's ass kicking I want you to know that I actually do this for my clients on the regular. Tough love is my specialty. I actually told one of my clients, she was telling me that the treadmill was boring. And she didn't want to run in the cold, but she's like, "The treadmill is boring. I hate the treadmill." And I was like, "The treadmill is not boring, my friend. The treadmill is just a piece of metal, you are boring."

And it was said with love. But I'll tell you what, she figured out how to not be boring on the treadmill and ran I don't know, like three miles or something the next time. And she's like, "Wow, look at that. It actually wasn't that bad."

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So tough love is my specialty, it's always said with love. If your tendency is to quit when things get hard, you're going to need somebody on your side that's going to give you that tough love. Not somebody who's going to be like, "Oh, you poor thing." That doesn't help you. It doesn't help you for somebody else to join you in the pity party.

Tough love, there's no judgment in tough love. Everyone struggles from time to time, everyone falls down. My job as a coach is to help you pick yourself back up and get going again, not to wallow. I don't expect perfection from my clients. But I do expect them to give their best effort, whatever that looks like, and then come to me when they're having a hard time.

So, in January I am going to be opening up the Rebel Runner Roadmap. If you are trying to get back to running right now, that's going to be exactly where you want to be. But that starts on January 18th.

In the meantime I'm going to be kicking off 2022 with a seven day free challenge that is going to give you that kick in the pants you need. Every day for a week, from December 29th to January 4th, I'm going to be giving you little steps to add to your running routine so that you can establish that runner identity, get off on the right foot, restart, reestablish your runner identity, if that's where you're at.

So you can sign up for the free challenge at [notyouraveragerunner.com/challenge](https://notyouraveragerunner.com/challenge). You can also go over to the show notes and click the link there. So [notyouraveragerunner.com/challenge](https://notyouraveragerunner.com/challenge) or go to the show notes. And what we're going to do, December 29th to January 4th, in this challenge is we're going to get you up and running. Okay? All right.

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Rebels, I hope this has been a helpful episode for you. If you liked it, please share it on Instagram. Let people know how awesome it was. And I love you, stay safe and get your ass out there and run.

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.