

Ep #234: 6 Ways to Have Your Best Race Ever



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 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. So can we talk about January? It is still January when I'm recording this. It's been January for about seven months now, can you relate? I love the first couple days of January because it's fun to see the new year every time I have to write down the date. But after that I'm like, all right, can we just fast forward to March and all the green stuff that finally you know peaks out of the ground?

I swear this has been the longest January in the history of Januarys. Pumpkin spice lattes are sold out. All the good holiday sales are over. There's no races. All of our favorite beach restaurants are closed for the season. I pretty much love every other month of the year, but February and January could just suck it.

But anyway, I have had a lot of requests lately to do an episode on race day prep and getting over race day fears. So guess what? We're going to do exactly that today. You ready? Here we go.

So let's set the scene, you've been training your ass off for weeks. The big day is getting close, you're getting nervous, especially if this is a brand new distance for you. So I want to cover like the week leading up to the race and the night before, even a little bit about the morning of race day itself.

And there are a few things that I think are really important to consider during that last week of training. Things that you should be doing and things that you should be thinking to get your mind in the right place. So I've compiled a list of about six things and we're going to dive in.

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So one of the cardinal rules of running is never ever, ever, ever try anything new on race day. Your training period is not just for building up the strength and endurance to cover the distance, it's also for trying out race day strategies such as what to wear and how to eat.

So the number one thing to do that week leading up is a dress rehearsal for the big day and try out all the stuff that you've been testing, all in one place. Now you're going to do it the weekend before, it'll be maybe a three to five mile run. It's not going to be the full distance unless, of course, your race is a 5K.

You're going to run with the clothes, the gadgets, the hydration, the nutrition that you're planning to use on race day. And the nutrition might not be totally possible if your race is a 10K or longer, but you can approximate. You're going to do the run/walk intervals, the same time of day, everything, right? Everything that you need to address so that any potential issues are going to come up before the race instead of during the race. All right?

And by now you've done enough trainings, you know which outfits are your favorites. The ones that make you feel fabulous, they don't require you to like constantly be adjusting them to keep them in place. So this is what you should be wearing on race day, right? It's an outfit that's not going to distract you and frustrate you, but instead will boost your confidence, remind you that you're a real runner.

So I'm going to suggest you prepare a good weather outfit and then a not so good weather outfit. Maybe longer tights or a rain jacket and gloves. Make sure that you've tried them all out in an actual run. And on your dress rehearsal date check the expected weather for your race day a week later and then wear the outfit that you're most likely to need.

Now, on the day of your rehearsal, you're going to get up at the time you need to for your race, do all the things that you would plan to do that

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morning like drink water, have some coffee, eat your breakfast, poop, all the things, okay? Remember, you may have to accommodate drive and parking time. And you might even on your dress rehearsal think about driving to where the race will be just to get a feel for traffic at that hour. And then you can do your short run in the general area of your race.

But whatever it is, get up at the time you think you're going to need to to get to your race on time. And then follow that routine but don't start the actual run until it's the actual race time. So that dress rehearsal is going to mimic the space of time between when you get up and when you actually start running. And then after you're done, make notes of what worked well and what didn't and adjust accordingly. Okay?

So the reason a dress rehearsal is so important is not just so that you can work out the logistics, but also so you can get to work on your thoughts about your race. A dress rehearsal helps you calm down that fear of the unknown. It puts you in control, says well, this is what my plan is. And if this doesn't work, I'm going to do that. All right, you have plan B, plan C, and all the things. So make sure that your dress rehearsal kind of takes everything into account of what I'm talking about today.

And I also want you to use the dress rehearsal as a visualization exercise. What do you want to be thinking throughout your whole race? What are some go to mantras that are going to help you on race day? Decide all of that in advance and practice not just what your body will be doing, but what your mind will be doing.

Item number two is your pre-race self-care. And I might talk about number two and number three, there's actually a number four too. I've got a lot of information to give you today. It's like loosely gathered into these various items.

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But number two is your pre-race, self-care. So no matter what distance you're doing, I want you to take extra good care of yourself in that week before the race. Okay? Keep yourself hydrated, eat the highest quality foods you can, and prioritize your sleep. Your workout intensity also that whole week should be pretty low.

All right, no tough workouts for at least a week before so that you have plenty of energy on race day. And the longer your race is, the longer amount of time you should dial down the intensity of your workouts. If your race is a half marathon, you're probably going to want to taper, we call it a taper, for two weeks. If your race is a marathon, three weeks of like really kind of ramping it down.

What you do in the days leading up to your race is actually arguably more important than what you do even the night before. Because most people sleep like shit the night before a big race. This is normal, right? It's no need to panic about it. But if you've been prioritizing sleep and hydration and fueling all that week, you're going to be in great shape on race morning even if you didn't sleep great the night before.

And nothing new on race day also means no new fuel sources, no new hydration sources. If you trained with plain water and Clif Bars, race day is not the time to try Gatorade and Gu packets, okay? If you've been training on an empty stomach, race day is not the time to try eating toast before you run. And conversely, if you're used to eating before a long training run, now is not the time to skip it, okay? And if you normally have coffee before a run, race day is definitely not the day to go without it, okay?

Now, the night before your race I want your self-care to be as on point as possible, right? Fuel yourself with really high quality nutrition, maybe even avoid alcohol or keep it to no more than one drink. And unless you have been doing it the night before every long run throughout your training, there

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is no need to suddenly carb load with a huge plate of pasta. Just do what's been working for you, nothing new.

Number three, this is a big one, make sure you have all the information. And I'm going to talk about the information that I think is really important for you. Now, for most races you're going to get your information from a combination of the race website, informational emails, and your race packet.

Make sure you review everything carefully. There's often information in there that's critical to your success on race day, like specific race rules or maps on where you should park your car. So I always check my spam for that week just to make sure there's nothing that accidentally got put in there that's really important.

And if this is not your first race ever, some of these things are going to be a little redundant. But it's still good for you to hear kind of this review. If it's your first race ever, this next section is really important for you.

Now, your race packet, this is simply a bag of things that the race people give you. You got to have it before you start the race. Most of the time you're going to pick it up the day before. Some races will allow you to pick it up the morning of, sometimes they'll even mail it to you the week before. All of that information, you will have found that out when you signed up for the race.

But the race packet contains your race bib, safety pins, your timing chip, if there is one, we're going to talk about that in a few minutes. It may also include a course map and other instructions. It almost always has a bunch of coupons and random stuff from sponsors like sometimes you get lucky and there's free chapstick. Yay!

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And you may get your race shirt in your race packet. But most likely you'll have to pick that up at a separate table after you pick up your packet. But either way, you're going to get those at roughly the same time. And also, make sure you know what information you need to bring with you when you pick up your race packet. Do you need ID? Do you need a driver's license? Do you need an email receipt?

Can someone else pick up your race packet for you if you're not available? Like this is important information. Can you pick up other people's race packets if you're doing it with a bunch of friends, and only one of you wants to go? So make sure you understand all that information and what the requirements are.

And you will probably pick up your race bib at a race expo if it's a big race. So a race expo is, you know, you can pick up your packet, your race shirt, do a little shopping. They're fun, sometimes you can get good deals or fun samples. So if your race has an expo, make sure to plan a little time to spend there because it's fun.

Race bib, this is runner jargon for your race number. Okay, everybody in the race has a different, unique number. That's how they track you. And you're going to wear it pinned to your shirt or to the leg of your tights facing forward. They will give you safety pins when you pick it up. So if you don't have fancy clips or anything else, no worries, they always give you safety pins when you pick up your race bib.

So you're going to pin the number on your shirt so that you can be seen when you're running. And if they're taking pictures, which they probably will, they'll be able to identify you from your race number. And if something happens to you, they'll be able to identify who you are and get your emergency contact information. So it's really important that you wear it. If you're not wearing it, you will not be allowed to run the race.

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Now your timing chip, okay, this is a little device that is usually glued to the back of your race number or in some cases you're going to tie it onto your shoelace. What happens is it detects the exact time you cross the start line and the exact time you cross the finish line to determine what is called your chip time. It's your official time it took to run the race.

So don't worry, if it takes you a few minutes to get over the start line after the gun goes off. No problem, the timing chip will account for that, okay? When you get your results after the race you'll have a clock time and a chip time, and the chip time is what you want. That's the number you're interested in.

Now, if it's a small race, like 100 people or less, you might not have a timing chip. But if it's bigger than that, you probably will. Now one more thing to note, if your timing chip is the kind that goes on your shoe, they're probably going to ask for it back at the end of the race.

Most of these are like, I don't know, they do it sometimes with triathlons, like you'll have a timing chip that goes around your ankle. But it's very rare to have the kind of timing chip that you have to give back. But just be aware that that's a possibility. Read through your race packet because if you don't turn it back in, you might be charged a fee. So just be aware of that.

You also are going to want to look on the website for where the aid stations are located. And these are basically tables that are set up along the course with volunteers. And those folks are just handing out water and other sports drinks, sometimes bits of fuel like Gu packets. For a 5K there's usually going to be at least one maybe two, for longer races there will probably be three or four. If it's a marathon it may be up to like 10.

And as you're passing the aid station, a volunteer will hold out a cup to you. Make sure you ask is this water or Gatorade so you don't get any surprises. Because if you have a bad reaction to Gatorade or Nuun or some other

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electrolyte replacement and you think you're getting water, you're going to take a huge swig of it, it's not going to be good. So they usually have both available, make sure you ask what it is if it's not obvious.

Okay, race rules will also be in your race packet, or in your emails, or on the website, maybe all three. They're very important to read over, okay? So if you want to run your best race, it's critical for you to know the rules and logistics for that particular race because they're all different.

Sometimes they don't allow headphones, sometimes there's a cut off time. It's important to know the cutoff time for sure because is that going to be the difference between getting picked up in a van if you fall behind? Or if you miss the cutoff time are you still going to be allowed to finish but it'll be on the sidewalk instead of the street?

If you can't find this information, email the race director and then I also like to look at past year's results and see like okay, there's a cutoff time of four hours. But plenty of people were finishing at four and a half hours. I'm probably good for this race. Okay?

Also, make sure you know the weather policy and the Covid policy. In other words, what's going to happen if the race is canceled due to inclement weather or local Covid pandemic restrictions? Now most races aren't going to be canceled unless there's thunder and lightning, or hail, or it's like 110 degrees outside and it's a health hazard for running. But if you want to know ahead of time look up the rain date, find out if there is a rain date. If the race is canceled due to weather, what is the refund policy. All of that stuff.

And also know what time you need to be at the race start. Because often the race might start at 7:15 but they expect you to be there by 6am so you can visit the porta potty, and park, and listen to any pre-race announcements. So make sure you know what those times are.

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Find out if headphones are allowed on the racecourse. Most of the time race directors will say that they're discouraged, but they don't outright disallow them. Or they might say, hey, you can use bone conduction headphones like Trekz, but you can't use the in-ear kind like AirPods.

So you got to know for sure. If you are someone who's used to running with music and your race completely disallows headphones, you got to be mentally prepared for that. Because if you get caught with them, you could get disqualified.

Now another thing you're going to want to know, this is all just information that you're going to want to figure out ahead of time. Where are you supposed to park for this race? And do you have to have cash or credit card to pay if it's not free?

I got caught unexpectedly once not having cash on hand for a race, this was several years ago. And the race was about an hour and a half from my house, I drove up there that morning and we just assumed there would be free parking. It was not free. Well, there was free parking, but it was a few miles away from the start. And the parking near the race was \$10 cash only and we had no cash. So we had to figure out really quickly what to do.

And then you're getting stressed out because you're like, oh my god, I'm going to miss the finish. I'm not going to be able to park my car. So avoid all of that silliness and just figure out ahead of time. Always make sure you've got cash and a credit card just in case.

Now, speaking of driving, also, you're going to want to find out if there are any road closures, okay? And if so, do those closures affect the route you'll be driving on to get to the race? Because you don't want to be leaving for your race and then find out that all the roads on that side of town are closed and you can't even get there, right?

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So really, it's a great thing to do during your dress rehearsal to start researching all of that information and planning out exactly what you're going to do on race morning. And if you don't find the answers to any of these questions, just email the race director or post the question on the race's Facebook page to make sure that you get an answer.

All right, that's the basic information you should be gathering no later than the week before your race. And I know it's a lot, eventually it will become second nature. If this is your first race, you're like, "What the hell have I signed up for? This is way too much." It will absolutely become second nature, I promise.

All right, so number four, I want to talk about race day etiquette. So now we're getting a little closer into the mental stuff. Race day etiquette is pretty important if you want to have a stress-free race.

Now, first of all, unless you're running like a six or an eight minute mile, which if you're listening to this podcast you're probably not, I want you to place yourself towards the back half of the starting pack, and maybe even all the way in the back. And then off to either the left or the right side, preferably the right side because just like in driving slower traffic stays right. Although if you're in a country that drives on the left, then cede yourself off to the left because that's going to be your mental convention.

But there's two reasons for this. The first, it's really good race etiquette to make sure that you're not in the way of faster runners. There is nothing wrong with being slow. Nothing at all. I'm a super slow runner, I'm proud of it. But think of it like a highway, the flow of traffic gets interrupted when a slower car is in the wrong lane. And we all know what that feels like. Being behind the slow guy in the fast lane, you're like, dude, hit the gas, I got places to be, right?

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So everybody gets backed up behind that person, it gets very frustrating. So make sure you're respecting that and you kind of start out, again, towards the back of the pack. It doesn't need to be all the way in the back if you don't want to.

I prefer to start almost dead last because it's way more fun for me to pass people as I'm running the race than it is for me to get passed. So that's my little mental trick. But again, everybody's got their own way of doing it.

So after the race starts out, after everybody has crossed that start line, the pack is starting to thin out, then you can run in the center of the road if you want to. And just make sure there's plenty of room around you to pass. But until that happens, stick to either the left side or the right side, preferably the right side. And then, again, as soon as it thins out if you really prefer to move into the center, you can do that.

Now speaking of passing people, when you pass somebody you got to let them know where you are. All right? If you're coming close to them, like if you're within a foot of somebody, nothing is more annoying than having somebody suddenly appear three inches away from you when you weren't expecting it. Especially if you've maybe got a headphone in, you're like focused forward, and then boom, all of a sudden somebody is right there. It's very startling.

And I'm a flailer so if somebody comes up unexpectedly on me, I'm like, wah! My arms go out and I could accidentally give somebody a black eye. So be aware, don't come up on somebody, especially if they're listening to music, too closely. Make sure you pass people with enough room so they don't get freaked out.

And the preference, at least in the US, is to pass on somebody left. And then as you're passing just say, on your left, and they might have headphones in, they might not hear you, but at least you're saying it.

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And just let them know there's a human back here. Don't freak them out so they start flailing around. And along those lines, don't follow other people too closely, don't run directly behind somebody because what if they're an interval runner too and then they stop to walk and then bam, you're going to run right into them. Okay? That's not fun for anybody.

So etiquette wise it's actually your responsibility to avoid running into people in front of you, just like in traffic, right? If you're driving your car, if you follow too closely and the guy in front of you stops short and you hit him, it's your fault, right?

The police are going to come and they're going to be like, oh, following too closely. You're the one who's going to get the ticket. Even if he stopped unexpectedly, even if he stopped for a dumb reason, if you're following too closely and you run into somebody, it's your fault.

So if you're an interval runner you can consider putting your hand up if you're stopping and there are lots of people around. But also just don't run right on somebody's heels, it's rude. It's not cool.

If you're running with friends, please don't run more than two abreast. And I mean, three at the very most if it's a really, really, really wide road. But it is so frustrating when you're running and there's a line of like four or five people in front of you. And you got to run all the way to one side or the other to get around them because they're just hanging out and talking or whatever.

Be cognizant of that, don't block a significant part of the road just because you want to hang out with your friends and talk. Okay? It's a race, I can't stress that enough, other people are running as well. So again, two abreast is fine. Three abreast sort of pushing it, more than that you're just kind of being a jerk. Okay, so don't do that.

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And by the way, every time you have to run around people and kind of like stop going straight and run a few steps in one direction or the other, you're adding a little bit of distance on to what you're running. So for those of you who are like, "Oh, I don't understand I did a race and it was a 5K, but my Garmin says it was 3.3 miles."

Well, part of that is because you have to weave in and out of people and that does start to add up over time. So the less that you can contribute to people having to weave in and out, the easier everyone's life is. Okay?

Now, let's talk about the aid stations. At the aid station you're going to take your water or your Gatorade and keep moving. All right? Start walking, if you need to as you come up to the aid station. Grab your water, keep walking, keep running, whatever. And then when you're going to drink, just pull over to the side a little bit. Get out of the main area so that other people can continue to grab their water and keep going.

Don't try to drink and run, you're going to choke, I don't want that to happen. And then of course, somebody is going to run over and go, "Oh my God, are you choking?" And then the EMT gets involved and I don't know, it's a whole big thing, right? I'm being silly.

But seriously when you're approaching the aid station, they reach out, they hand you water, grab the water, keep going. And then after you get past the clump of people, then you can pull off to the side while you're walking and drink.

And also, in general it's okay to throw your water cup on the ground if you're in the immediate vicinity of the aid station. Because afterwards they'll just grab all the cups. I mean, there will be trash cans, but most people are throwing them on the ground. So it's not rude to throw it on the ground.

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But if you're like a quarter mile down the road and then you're throwing your trash out on the ground, don't be that person. Either wait until you see a trash can, carry it until you see a trash can or – Yeah, carry it until you see a trash can, that's the answer. Okay, so you can throw it on the ground when you're in the immediate vicinity of the aid station. But after that hold on to your trash.

Speaking of pulling off to the side and stopping so that you can drink, let's talk about selfies. Okay, if you want to take a selfie while you're running, which is awesome, I'm all for this, get out of the way of the other runners. Okay, step off to the side so nobody's running into you. Unless you want a picture of somebody running into you, in which case go for it. But that's also kind of a dick move.

But yeah, get the fuck out of the way so you're not impeding anyone's progress and then take all the selfies in the world, I'm all for it. Just in general, I want you to be compassionate when you're out running and realize that everyone else has the same goal, they want to finish, they want to feel great.

Sometimes people are going to do dumb things if they're not paying attention. And this doesn't make them terrible humans, just normal humans. It doesn't mean that they're rude, they're just focused on themselves and not thinking about other people around them.

You've probably done the same thing in your life by accident, done something that pissed somebody else off. So just assume the best of others, right? There's no need to yell. There's no need to get angry. Just be like, "Excuse me, pardon me," right?

You don't need to mutter under your breath like, idiot. Okay? Just don't be that person because you know what? When you're complaining about other people in your head, you're the one who feels bad, not them. You're the

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one who's suffering. So just if somebody does something stupid, you can be like, "Oh, excuse me, sorry, can I get by?" Move on, let it go. All right?

Now, when you do get close to the finish line, if you are crossing with other people, try to leave some space in between you, okay? Because first of all, if you don't, you're going to have strangers in your race photos, and so will they. But if you're sprinting for the finish line and you're going to be passing somebody that's ahead of you, but you're like, "Oh, I'm going to pass them before I get across the finish line," don't throw your arms out so that you're blocking their face, right?

I always like to throw my arms in the air like woo-hoo as I'm crossing the finish line. But make sure that you're not blocking somebody else's face when you do that. I had somebody do that to me once and I was like, really? It was a great race finish and someone's fucking hand was in front of my face. I was so annoyed.

So be aware of that, okay? The cameras are going to be taking pictures of you, but they're also taking pictures of other people as well. This isn't your private workout. So just be aware that other people might want a nice race photo as well. And, again, this is a benefit of running towards the back of the pack because you're less likely to have 10 people crossing the finish line at once. There might only be a couple of you, it gives you plenty of room.

All right, item number five, this one's short and sweet, the porta potty. Okay, arrive early enough for two last minute Porta Potty visits. Just trust me on this. At least two. One of them is going to be legit, you're going to have to pee. And then the other one is going to be your bladder being nervous and you're going to think you got to go, you're going to stand in line, you're going to get in the porta potty and nothing's going to come out and you're going to say, "Oh, I guess I didn't really have to go." Right?

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But at least it gave you something to do instead of just standing there looking around at other people letting your thoughts get all crazy, right? And it sort of puts your mind at ease, like, okay, I've emptied the bladder, I've emptied the tank. I'm good to go. Right?

Now, number six, this is really, you know, we've talked a lot about all the things you should be doing. But number six is your mind and this is really where the rubber hits the road. Meets the road? What's that saying? Everything we've talked to up to now is to give you the best chance of success. But even if you do it all perfectly, if you get all up in your self-doubt, all up in your inner mean girl, your race is still going to suck. So here are some things to remember.

Number one, you are here to have fun, this is not punishment. Remember that when it feels hard. Don't take yourself so fucking seriously. You're going to finish this race, you're going to feel awesome about it. Just drop all the drama at mile eight about how your legs feel like lead. It's just going to make you feel worse, right? Drama helps nobody.

People will cheer for you. They may say things like, "Don't stop, you're almost there." Right? You're going to stop for a walk interval and they'll be like, "What? Why are you stopping? You're almost done." Right? They're not trying to insult you, they're not trying to be condescending. They're trying to inspire you. It might not be the way you want to hear it. That's okay.

Don't waste any mental energy being mad at people who are literally standing there taking time out of their day cheering you on just because they don't say it the way you think they should. You need that mental energy to run, so just keep moving. Let it go. All right? Appreciate the people with the funny signs, the ones that are high-fiving you, go all in on those folks, ignore the others.

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I want you to think of your race as a catered workout where people are handing you fuel, water, cheering you on, clearing the roads, giving you a medal at the end. It's like you get to feel like a princess because the entire world is out there to make it easy for you to run that distance. Okay?

Now, the night before the race it is completely normal for you to feel nervous. I mean, you're going to be a princess tomorrow, right? But that doesn't mean that princesses aren't nervous the night before their coronation, right? But your goal for this race is simply to feel amazing, finish, be proud of yourself.

Really, don't care what your finish time is does matter. It really doesn't matter whether you set a PR or whether it was your slowest race time ever, right? It doesn't matter if you came in first or last, you ran the distance. And I just want you to be super proud of what you did.

You trained for this race, you showed the fuck up, you finished it, you earned it. Okay? Please, please, let's stop beating ourselves up because, oh, it didn't go the way I wanted to. Right? It's okay, there's always another race and let's just decide that this one was amazing.

Now, you're also going to be tempted, your brain is going to tell you when that start gun goes off that you should just run as fast as you can because everybody else is doing it. You're going to have thoughts like, "Oh no, people are going to think I'm giving up if I walk too soon." Other people's opinions are none of your fucking business. All right? Just tattoo that on your arm.

Other people's opinions are none of your fucking business, especially strangers who have no vested interest in whether you succeed or not. Okay, so when that gun goes off, I want you to use the intervals that worked for you during your training runs. Start them from the very beginning because guess what? That's how you trained.

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If you trained on all of your long runs to run the first mile without stopping and then do intervals, then fine, that's what you're going to do on race day. But if you trained during your long training runs to start those intervals from the second that you started your Garmin, that's how you're going to run your race. All right? Because it helps you manage your energy so that you don't have to crawl across the finish line.

I don't care if everybody thinks you're crazy now, now is not the time to sprint out of the gate and try to run the first 10 minutes. It's going to tire you out very quickly, you won't have anything left to give in the last mile, and then you end your race not feeling great about yourself. So as soon as you cross that start line, I want you to do your intervals from that very moment.

And a lot of people are going to be running. Okay? So you're going to start running, maybe you'll go 30 seconds, maybe a minute, whatever. Your beeper will go off and you'll say, "Okay, it's time for me to walk, but everybody else is running. I'm so excited." You're going to think you know, I'm just going to run through the first interval, maybe the second one.

And I want to tell you, if you're a run/walk interval runner, this is a mistake. I can't stress this enough. I hear so many stories about people who they just felt so amazing and energetic in the beginning, they ran the first mile like two minutes faster than usual. They ran through all their walk intervals and by the end of the race they were totally dragging. And they don't understand what went wrong.

And what went wrong is they started out way too fast and they did not follow their routine. They trained to run the entire distance with run/walk intervals. But they didn't run the race that way because their brain was like, "Oh, I don't want people to think a certain way about me." Okay?

So I want you to make sure you follow the training you trained with. Start out slow, manage your energy, save something for that finish line sprint.

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And other people's opinions about your race performance, none of your business. Okay? And I'll tell you what, sprinting across the finish line makes some damn good race pictures. So I want you to look happy, and energetic, and badass for those photographers, not tired and defeated.

Now, other people are going to be running near you, don't be afraid to talk to them. A lot of times people have a scowl on their face when they're running, especially if it's like the middle of the race, they're trying really hard. I always look mad when I'm running. Honest to God, I always look like I'm just so pissed off.

And that doesn't mean I'm actually mad, or angry, or frustrated. I'm just concentrating or I'm just all up in my own thoughts. So you see somebody you can still say like, "Hey, you're doing great." Or, "Wow, look, we're running about the same pace." A lot of times I love to compliment somebody's outfit.

If I see somebody wearing a great outfit I'm like, "Oh my gosh, I love your tights. I love your top. Where did you get it? They look amazing." Because when you talk to other people, it gets you out of your own head long enough to break up that inner mean girl chatter and you realize like, oh, actually, this is supposed to be fun.

So, speaking of other people in the race, people are going to pass you. All right? Unless you start dead last, like I love to do, there's going to be people behind you that are faster than you. It's normal. It does not mean you're too slow. It doesn't mean you're not a real runner. It doesn't mean anything about you at all, right? They run their pace, you run your pace. Everybody's doing their own thing.

So comparing your pace to somebody else's kind of dials down your happiness a little bit. So I want you to remember to stay in your own lane, run your own race. There's always going to be somebody faster than you

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who passes you. There's always going to be somebody fatter than you. There's always going to be somebody older than you. There's always going to be somebody pushing a double fucking stroller that's going to leave you in the dust. Right?

I want you to look at that person as an example of what's possible, rather than some kind of evidence that you suck. Okay? I mean, I did a half marathon one time, I got passed by a woman on crutches. I mean, come on, she was on crutches. She still passed me.

Now, she was actually a pretty accomplished athlete who had apparently broken her ankle about two or three weeks before the race and was like fuck it, I'm going to do it anyway. And she did. She did it in memory of a friend of hers who had just passed away. But still, right?

And so I didn't look at her and go, "Oh, my God, a woman on crutches is faster than me." I was like, "Wow, that is amazing." Right? Don't look at people like that as evidence that there's something wrong with you, or that you're not good enough. Look at them as evidence of what's possible, okay? And remember, first place, last place, you're still running the same distance.

Now, when you see a photographer, speaking of the scowl on the face, keep your eye out for the photographers. They're not always at the finish line. Sometimes they're along the racecourse too. I want you to smile and wave. Okay? And for some reason, I always do this sort of doofy thumbs up thing. So I have some race pictures where I look like a real idiot. But I'm smiling.

But that moment of smiling, again, it gets you out of your head for a moment. And then, of course, your photo memories of the event are going to make you smile because you'll remember that moment when the photographer took your picture. Okay?

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Now, one final mental rule that I have for myself in any race, and steal this rule, because it will change your life. All right? And that rule is no whining. Now, that is partly for anybody that I'm running with, right? My friends know this rule. I'm like, nobody likes a whiner, stop it.

But mostly that rule is for my own brain. Because when you start whining in your head, "Oh my god, this is so hard. My legs are so tired. Is this race ever going to be over?" Right, you ruin everything for yourself. Yes, it's hard. Yes, your legs are tired. So what?

You signed up for this, my friend, you wanted to do this. You had really good reasons to want to do it. So let yourself have the experience instead of just complaining about how hard it is. When is it going to be over? I'm so miserable. Like just stop it.

I want you to decide in advance like, yep, it's going to be hard, I'm going to be tired, I'm also going to have fun. I'm not going to whine my way through it so that when I finish I've like basically suffered for the past six miles or 13 miles, right? Allow yourself to have a whining free race. Decide in advance to be proud of yourself for all the work you put in, for how you showed up for yourself, for the accomplishment.

Whatever your finish time, whether it was hard or easy. Let yourself be amazed at yourself. Right? If I could leave you with one last thought, I just want you to walk into this race saying I'm going to spend the next however many hours being amazed at how awesome I am. Okay?

All right Rebels, I hope this has been a helpful episode for you. If you liked it, please share it on Instagram, leave a review, let everybody know. I love you, stay safe and get your ass out there and run.

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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.