

Ep #249: What Consistent Exercise Really Looks Like



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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 runners, real quick before we dive into this week's episode I just want you to know that I apparently recorded it with the wrong microphone. And my editor told me about that this morning, I'm on my way out the door to catch a flight to Texas and I don't have time to re-record it. But I did have time to just drop this quick message to you and let you know the sound is a little funky this week but the content is still amazing and I hope you enjoy it.

Hey, runners, how are you? We are loving our city life so far. Our house is awesome, our neighborhood is awesome. The whole fucking city is awesome, seriously. But you know what has not been so awesome lately? My running. And a few months ago we were out for a walk and I felt this weird twinge in my left hip. It was a brand new pain that I've never felt before and it almost felt like my joint was going to give out. Like I was not a fan, 10 out of 10 do not recommend, not super fun.

Now, I did chalk it up in the moment to wearing dumb shoes for walking around the city but it kind of kept nagging at me. And so I took a couple of weeks off of running to see if that would help, but then other parts of my hip started to chime in and it sort of got to the point that even walking was painful. And so of course, I went to my doctor who said congratulations, you've got a combination of osteoarthritis, IT band syndrome, and a hip bursitis.

Now the last two are temporary conditions and can be easily treated with physical therapy. I've actually had IT band syndrome before, I kind of sort of fell out of the habit of doing my stretches so it's not a surprise that it came back. No worries, easy fix. The bursitis really is something that needs

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some rest and a chance for the inflammation to die down and then some physical therapy to shore up the weaknesses. And I'm 100% on board with that.

But the arthritis, my friends, that is obviously a permanent condition because cartilage does not regrow itself. I already have it in both of my knees, strength training has been miraculous to handle that. So I really don't have any pain in my knees from the arthritis, not really any symptoms there. So I will take the same road with my hips.

And arthritis runs in my family, I'm not surprised. My grandmother actually had two hip replacements, although fun fact, both of those hip replacements were on the same side and the first one didn't take. I think she was in her 60s when she had the first one. It didn't take so they did it again, and the second one didn't take. There were all kinds of problems. So they said okay, you're just not going to have a hip joint.

And I know, that sounds insane. Like her leg bone was not connected to her pelvis. It made walking extremely difficult and painful for her, she had to use a walker for the rest of her life after that. And she lived probably 20 years after, God, she was in her mid-90s when she passed away. So she had to use a walker for the rest of her life, she had to have one shoe built up a few inches to account for the difference in the leg length.

And this was back in the 70s when all this was going on and I guess, I don't know, they just didn't know what else to do. But she did, she lived like that for over 20 years without a hip. It's amazing, right?

But anyway, a little off topic there, arthritis runs in my family. It's not totally unexpected that I'm having this issue. And so basically my doctor gave me some exercises to do. I've been working with my trainer to create more strength in my gluteus medius to better support my hip. And all of that was actually working great and I even started running again.

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I got a couple runs in, I was feeling pretty good, and then we moved into a three story row house. An old one with really steep stairs and, oh my God, so carrying heavy shit up those stairs for day days and days and my hip went from, I had gotten it back down to about a 3 out of 10 on a pain scale, it like shot right back up to an 8 out of 10, like so painful with every step.

And I was starting to feel really bad about it because the weather here has been gorgeous. We're in this amazing city, there are parks everywhere, and even going for a 15 minute walk has felt really uncomfortable. So I had a heart to heart with my trainer last week and I just poured everything out and there were tears.

At that point, I was pretty deep in the self-pity and I even said to her, "I don't know, maybe my running days are over." And fortunately, she is very attuned to my bullshit. She was like, "All right, let's just take a deep breath. Your running days aren't over, you've just come up against some weaknesses in your hips that need to be shored up. That is all."

She's like, "But remember, when you get all freaked out like this, you actually make it worse, right? You ramp up your stress response, which makes your experience of the pain in your hip even more intense." And so we had a long talk about how I also hadn't been sleeping very well since we moved because, A, there's a streetlight directly outside of our bedroom window and we don't have shades yet, or we don't have blackout curtains.

We don't have blackout curtains yet, so the bedroom is still kind of like, I'm still getting used to the noises of the city. So you know, kind of getting interrupted here and there when a loud car goes by. And also I've been really anxious about not being able to run and we're in this new house. And so of course, I'm not sleeping well. And when I'm not sleeping well, my body doesn't repair itself as quickly and it takes longer to heal, I start to feel more anxious. It's just sort of a self-perpetuating cycle.

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So I'm like, all right, well, I can go to work on the sleep. So I got some earplugs, I got an eye mask. And I've been working on my anxiety by paying attention to how I'm thinking about running and my body and all of that. I'm going to talk about that in a minute. But it's working, right? So the sleep, the past few nights I've gotten much, much better sleep and I've noticed less pain when I get up in the morning.

I would say over this past weekend, my hip pain was down to about a four. And yesterday, I'm recording this on a Tuesday, so yesterday was Monday. So it was maybe a two, it was like almost not even there. So I thought I'm going to try a little run. And I did a half a mile of intervals.

And remember, we talked a few episodes back about how running comebacks need to start out really slowly so you don't fuck yourself up again. And that's what I need, right? I did a half a mile. I warmed up, did a half a mile of intervals and then I walked maybe another half a mile after that, that's it. And I was like, "Okay, now we're going to see what happens."

So this morning I woke up, I felt pretty good. So it's like, all right, that's progress. But I am waiting until tomorrow before I go again because I do not want to overdo it. And the next time I go, tomorrow, probably be about a mile, no more than a mile. And then I'll go from there.

Anyway, here's where it gets super fun. So this morning, I went for a walk and I realized while I was out walking, I'm like, oh my goodness, I am having all kinds of thoughts about how this shouldn't have happened to me. It shouldn't be taking so long to rehab. It should be easier than this. It's not fair, right?

And I'm mad because I can't just go out and run a few miles like I was able to do earlier this year, very comfortably. And the problem there is not actually my hip, right? But all of my anger and my self-pity at not getting what I want. And I've been letting that fester and fester and really making it

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mean that I'm never going to be able to do all the running I want to do this year and I've just been throwing these mental tantrums.

And that realization, like me walking along and I'm like carrying my cup of coffee and walking and thinking about this, it was huge. It might not sound like much but it was very, very huge for me in the moment because I'm like, oh, I have been talking so much smack to myself about this injury, so much smack. And I coach people all the time on how to handle injuries and here I am doing exactly the same thing.

I'm falling into this pit of despair, instead of just looking at the actual facts, which are that I have an injured hip combined with arthritis and I haven't run for a few months. Those are the facts. Everything else is just my story about how unfair it is, and how much it sucks, and how I'm never going to be able to run again the way I want to, right?

I went through this exact same thing about four years ago with my knee. This is like, oh my gosh, brains So this was probably end of 2018, actually more than that, like 2017, 2018 I was struggling with a lot of knee pain. End of 2018 I said, all right, this is ridiculous. And I started seeing a new doctor because the current doctor just wanted to keep putting shots in my knee and I'm like, this isn't working.

So I went through this exact same thing and the new doctor was like, here's what's going on, right, osteoarthritis and you've got some weakness here and there and we need to do a lot of work to rebuild you. And I had the same set of thoughts, right? I was like, this is unfair, this sucks. I'm never going to be able to run the way I used to.

And then I stopped wallowing, and I got busy rehabbing. And I started going to rehab twice a week, doing all the exercises. And I actually went on that year to have one of my best running years ever. I trained for my first marathon, I blew my own mind with my first 20 mile run. And like nine

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months before that 20 mile run, I had been in the pit of despair thinking I'm never going to be running again, this is the worst thing ever.

And the only way I was able to get out of that is I had to stop thinking this is the worst thing ever, and just kind of get busy rehabbing it. So my trainer is the one who pointed this out to me, and I realized that all of the thoughts I'm having now about my hip, I literally went through all of it with my knee. And then I actually got better and I came back to run, I was just fine.

It was really powerful to recognize like, oh, the hip isn't the problem. It's all my thoughts about it that are just like a repetitive pattern that makes me feel anxious and self-pity and all of that. And like all of that is optional, okay? Now, the pain is real but it is my thoughts that have created all the suffering and the drama.

Once I saw that I was like, all right, this hip problem is just a blip, I've gotten through way worse. I got through my knees. I got through when I was on crutches for weeks with plantar fasciitis and then boom, I was able to run again. So each time I've had an injury I felt the drama in my head, the old, "Oh my God, this is it, you'll never run again." And every single time I am wrong.

So maybe, just maybe I am actually wrong about this time to. This is the whole gist of my conversation with my trainer and my thought process this morning that made me realize like, oh, my God, this is just what you do, Jill. This is just what your brain wants to do every time you get injured.

So I wanted to share this story with you, first of all, because you might be going through an injury as well and hopefully this is helpful to you. But also because I think there's a misconception out there that runners just run consistently all the time and they never have any drama about it. But the opposite is actually true. There's drama, my friends. But the difference between somebody who is a consistent runner over their lifetime and

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somebody who quits or is like a consistent runner for a few months and then stops for years and then starts again, the difference between those two people is that the person who gives up is the one who keeps believing all the stories in their head instead of taking a moment to realize oh yeah, this is just what my brain does. Okay?

The person who has that consistent runner over their life, hears the stories, and basically maybe wallows in them for a little bit, I don't know. I seem to like to wallow for a few weeks before I get it together. But they hear the stories and they say no, no, no, that's not true. Okay?

So consistency in running, this is so important for you to understand, does not mean you are perfect. It does not mean that you never take time off, that you never get injured or any of that, right? It doesn't mean that you are always a runner, every single week, every single month, every single year, okay? Because, I don't know, sometimes you might get injured. Or you might decide to be a seasonal runner and you say hey, I only run for nine months out of the year. Or maybe you take time off because you just fucking want to.

So consistency in running doesn't mean you're perfect, doesn't mean you never take breaks. It means you're in it for the long haul and you do it more often than not. And one of my favorite definitions of the word consistent that I found online is steady continuity, okay? Steady, not perfect, not flawless, just steady. And I want you to think about a boat on the ocean, okay? A steady boat isn't motionless, she's constantly in motion. She's just rolling with the waves. Okay?

And I love thinking about consistency this way. It is not fixed, it is not rigid, it's just steady and it rolls with the waves. And that gives you so much room to live your life and notice the patterns, right? And for me it's seeing how after I get injured I have a few weeks where my brain freaks out, I cry a lot,

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and then everything settles down, I get busy rehabbing it, I rebuild and I come back. Okay?

So that's what it looks like in my life. What does consistency and steadiness mean to you? What would be different in your fitness life if you created a definition that leaves room for adaptation, for ebb and flow, and all of life? I would love to know.

Now, if you enjoyed today's episode, short and sweet as it was, you're absolutely going to love the class I'm teaching on May 22nd. It is called How to Become a Consistent Exerciser. And it's a three hour live workshop where we're going to dive deep into what consistency looks like for you, including how to work on your motivation, how to get past your excuses, how to get past your brain drama. We're even going to create a personalized exercise plan for you.

Now, this class starts at noon Eastern on Sunday, May 22nd. It's a three hour class, it is \$39 to join. But if you cannot make it live, because I get it, it's a Sunday, there's also going to be a recording. So if you register for the class, about I don't know, six hours afterwards, as long as it takes the internet goblins or gremlins or elves, whatever they are, to convert the file into a format that I can email to you. As soon as that happens I'm going to send it to you and then you can watch it on Sunday night.

So you can register at notyouraveragerunner.com/workshop. Okay, that's notyouraveragerunner.com/workshop. Registration is going to be open until the morning of Sunday, May 22nd, the class is at noon Eastern that day. And again, if you can't make it live, I'll be sending out a recording later on that day.

You can register at notyouraveragerunner.com/workshop and I hope I see you there because we're really going to talk about the definition of

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consistency and how it applies to your life and what is getting in your way of becoming a consistent exerciser. Okay?

All right, runners, I want to know what you thought of today's episode. If it was helpful for you I'd love it if you would share it on Instagram, let people know. I love you, stay safe, and get your ass out there and run.

Hey, real quick before you go, if you enjoyed listening to this episode you have got to check out Up And Running. It's my 30 day online program that will teach you exactly how to start running, stick with it, and become the runner you have always wanted to be. Head on over to notyouraveragerunner.com/upandrunning to join. I would love to be a part of your journey.