

## Ep #278: My Best Hack For Staying Consistent



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**Jill Angie**

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Welcome to *The Not Your Average Runner Podcast*. If you've never felt athletic but you still dream about becoming a runner, you are in the right place. I'm Jill Angie, your fat running coach. I help fat women over 40 to start running, feel confident, and change their lives. I have worked with thousands of women to help them achieve their running goals and now I want to help you.

Hey runners, how's it going? So this week we are going to be talking about one of my favorite motivational tools of all time, I use it almost every day. And I have another ask your fat running coach question for you this week. And finally, I want to tell you about a cool class that I am teaching soon on how to stay consistent with exercise and how you can get in on that class. So we've got a lot to cover.

So first, let's dive into the ask your fat running coach question, which comes from Eva. And Eva wrote in to ask about how to maintain her mental and physical strength while she recovers from an injury. And specifically, she's concerned about losing her endurance, cardio fitness and motivation while she recovers from plantar fasciitis.

And this is a great question and I get asked this question in some form or another frequently, so I'm excited that you wrote this in, Eva, so that I can answer it today. And here's the thing, I mean, the truth is you will definitely lose some of those things while you recover. It is very normal and natural for that to happen because your activity level is going to be somewhat reduced.

But that doesn't mean you have to do absolutely nothing. So I want you to check with your doc on what strength training you can do, maybe even check in with a physical therapist. And, actually, targeted strength training will help with your recovery and it'll help with preventing this condition from coming back in the future.

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And then also ask what cardio can you do, because you could do maybe the elliptical, maybe ride the bike, maybe go swimming, maybe try some rowing. There are actually plenty of ways to keep your cardiovascular system in shape that don't involve running or walking. And if you start running again, or when you start running again, you will definitely have to build up some of that sport specific endurance, but that's fine. Everyone goes through this with an injury, okay?

The real issue here is not how to keep your fitness level while you recover, it's what you're telling yourself about it. And right now you're making it mean that it's a big problem, and that something has gone wrong, and that you're probably going to lose all your fitness and your motivation because you're taking time off from running. But really, plantar fasciitis is often simply a result of glute weakness, or poor shoes, or some other kind of muscular imbalance.

And the condition is here to tell you that you need to make some changes so that you can continue running, okay? So plantar fasciitis and other injuries are not like, "Oh my God, where did this come from? This isn't fair." No, an injury is here to tell you where you need to do some work so that you can actually be a stronger runner and be a runner for as many years as you want to.

So I like to look at running injuries as, "Okay, here's a weak spot that I need to shore up," and not, "Fuck, I got injured and it's not fair," right? Because when you think that way, right, if you're like, "Oh, it's not fair, why me? I'm going to lose all my fitness," you're going to feel frustrated and overwhelmed and kind of in that space of self-pity, right? And you're going to spend your entire recovery time suffering and moping around, instead of figuring out what you can do to make sure that you fully recover and set yourself up for success for when you start again, okay?

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So I want you to to kind of shift your thinking about injuries as, “Oh my God, this is the worst thing ever,” to, “Okay, this was always going to happen because of how I've been running. And this is teaching me that I need to maybe change up my strength training and my shoes and maybe something else so that I can restart running and do it healthfully.” Okay? I hope that helps.

Now, my friends, I want to talk about this awesome tool that I have for you that's going to help you stay consistent with running. And actually it's going to help you stay consistent with whatever you apply it to. And it's called the minimum baseline. And some of you might know what I'm talking about, and some of you might be like, “What the heck is that?” So let's get started.

Think about the last time that you had a run scheduled. And maybe imagine that it was in the morning, first thing in the morning, and the alarm goes off and you think, “Oh, hell no.” You're like, “There's no way I could possibly run three miles today. I'm tired, it's cold, I don't have time. I don't have any clean workout clothes. I'll just go tomorrow instead,” right?

We say all these things and the next thing you know, you've totally justified skipping your run. But of course, the problem is you're going to do the same thing tomorrow. You're going to have the exact same conversation in your brain tomorrow and it's going to be just as hard. You are not magically going to feel like running tomorrow, I promise.

And it keeps happening, right? Day after day after day, the next thing you know it's been a week. And then it's been two weeks. And then you can add on to that story that it's going to be so hard because you haven't gone for two weeks. And then it's a month and, well you get the picture, right?

Here's the thing, my friends, we get good at what we repeatedly do. Our lives, everything we do in our lives is basically just a bunch of habits, even if we don't realize it. And a habit is simply something that we've done so

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often that it's basically on autopilot, right? Like putting your seatbelt on when you start up your car. You don't even have to think about it, you just do it automatically.

It's a motion, you're used to it. Or saying I love you when you hang up the phone with your sister, right? It's just a habit. Ask me about the time I accidentally said it to my boss when I hung up the phone, that's how habitual some things are, okay?

Now, other habits that can be on autopilot are things like criticizing your body when you see yourself in the mirror, or hitting a snooze button instead of getting up when your alarm goes off, right? Those are also just habits. And the reason you do these things isn't because you're lazy or because you have no self-confidence, it's simply because you've repeated them over and over and over again until they become automatic, that is all.

Habits are neutral. This is so important to see and understand. Habits are neutral and then we label them as good or bad or something that we want to quit or something that we want to start doing, right? But habits are not good or bad, they're just neutral. They're just the actions that you're taking, they're the things that your brain has automated because it likes to be efficient.

Your brain just wants to put things on autopilot so that it can get busy worrying about other matters that require more brain power, okay? So the problem is, once you've gotten into the habit of skipping your run, once you've done that repeatedly so that you're really good at skipping your run, if you want to change that you have to create a new habit. You have to reprogram yourself, and that is what the minimum baseline does.

So here's how it works, first of all, you're going to decide the absolute minimum amount of something that you know you will do. That there will be no drama in your brain about it, okay? No argument in your head. It is just if

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you say you're going to do it, there's no resistance. It feels easy. It's like yeah, it's as good as done, okay?

If you say, "I'm going to do this," your brain is like, "Okay, well, that's easy." Because for many of you, when you think about getting up and say there's three miles on your training plan, your brain is like, "Fuck, no. Okay, we're going to have to get dressed, and then we have to warm up, and then we have to run for 45 minutes at least. And we got to stretch, and we're going to be all sweaty, and then we've got to take a shower afterwards. That's going to be hard and uncomfortable, and I'm tired and I'm bored and really, like, just stay in bed. Let's just skip the whole thing, okay?"

But if you said, "Hey brain, we're going to do 10 minutes this morning and we're going to come back and shower. And then you can spend that next half hour dicking around on your phone if you want to, right? Scroll through all the Instagram reels you want, all you got to do is 10 minutes. It's going to be super easy, you probably won't even break a sweat." Your brain is like, "Okay, well, that doesn't sound too bad. All right."

So you go, you do 10 minutes. And then you actually feel pretty good once you've started. And most of the time you might even end up doing two miles, I don't know, 20 minutes, maybe three miles, maybe more. Who knows? But once you get out there, once you get started and your brain is not arguing about the getting out of bed part, it's easy to stick with it, okay?

But if you don't want to stick with it, if you get 10 minutes in, you've already given yourself the out. You've said my minimum baseline is 10 minutes, boom. At 10 minutes, you can go back home, you can get off the treadmill, you can do whatever, all right? And you've checked the box for the day. You have created the habit for the day of going to your workout and you get to feel really awesome about yourself.

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And that really is all there is to it, okay? But of course, it's a simple tool but there are some common mistakes people make with it. So we're going to talk about that next. The first mistake is when you're setting up your minimum baseline your brain is going to say 10 minutes is not enough. It's not enough to improve my fitness. It's not enough to train me for this race. I'm supposed to be doing at least 30 minutes or 45 minutes, and it's not going to help me get faster or stronger or whatever.

Your brain is going to tell you it's not worth the time. I know this is exactly what you're going to think because your brain is a perfectionist and actually, it does have a valid point here, right? Because 10 minutes really doesn't help you get closer to that half marathon or that 10k or 5k, or whatever it is, right?

Fitness wise, it doesn't move the needle all that much. That's not wrong, okay? But the point of the minimum baseline is not about your physical fitness, that is what you need to remember here. The point of the minimum baseline is to help you create the habit of keeping your training commitments, of showing up for yourself, of getting out of bed when the alarm goes off instead of hitting the snooze, okay?

Your body might not feel the training effect of 10 minutes of running, but your brain will feel the effect of going through the routine of getting up, putting your workout gear on, walking out the door, getting on the treadmill and adding to the habit. And that is the point of the minimum baseline. That's literally the whole fucking point.

It is not about your training in the moment, it is about creating the habit of starting your workout. And for those of you who work out after work, or at lunchtime, right, or after dinner even, if your habit is to find excuses to drive by the gym or spend the evening on the couch instead, then the point of the minimum baseline still works for you, right? It is to help you break that habit

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and then actually drive to the gym and do your workout or actually get on the treadmill after dinner, even if it's just five fucking minutes.

The point of the minimum baseline is to help you create the habit of showing up for yourself. So that is why we choose something that is so minimal your brain will not argue about the amount of effort it's going to take, okay?

Because creating and maintaining the habit of running on your scheduled days and of strength training on your scheduled days, right, is like half the battle. Maybe 80% of the battle, okay? Of actually saying today is the day I said I was going to strength train, today is day I said I was going to run and actually getting up and doing the thing.

That habit, that creation of I am a person who gets up and starts is what the minimum baseline is about creating, okay? Because when doing your scheduled workout is a habit, right, when you become the person who just gets up and starts, you're no longer wasting all the time and energy arguing. You just fucking do it, okay?

Now, here's where it gets a little tricky, and if you've been sort of like mentally dozing off throughout this podcast, if I've been lulling you to sleep you need to sit up and pay attention right now. Because I know you think you get this concept. You're like, "Yeah, yeah, yeah, minimum baseline, just do the minimum amount my brain won't argue with." But I promise you, the next thing I'm going to tell you is critical to making it work for you.

If you don't do this particular thing, it is not going to work. So pay attention, sit up. You're going to want to set your minimum baseline, this is what you're going to want to do, you're going to want to set your minimum baseline to be what you think is the minimal acceptable amount of exercise to keep you feeling fit or satisfy something in your brain that says if it's not 30 minutes, it's not worth doing.

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Okay, that's what you're going to want to do. You're going to want to set your minimum baseline to where you think your brain will say, "This is an acceptable amount of exercise to feel like I'm making progress."

And honestly, every time I teach this there's always at least one person in the class who says, "Okay, okay, I got it. My minimum baseline is four times a week for 30 minutes." And I have to do a huge facepalm because this is the opposite of a minimum baseline. This is a perfectionist fantasy, because if you really were able to do four times a week for 30 minutes without arguing, you would be. You wouldn't need the minimum baseline tool because you already have the fucking habit.

Okay, so let me repeat that. If your minimum baseline actually was four times a week for 30 minutes, if that was the amount of exercise that your brain never argued with, you would already be doing it. And if you're not doing it, your minimum baseline needs to be a lot smaller.

In fact, it needs to be so freakin' small that you will just think, "Okay, that's not hard, that's not a problem, I can do that. Anybody could do that." And that might just be five minutes, all right? Because again, the point of this is not about your fitness. It is about building the habit of starting. Building the habit of showing up, that's your minimum baseline.

Now, over time, when you have executed that minimum baseline flawlessly for a couple months with no exceptions, when you don't have the argument in your brain at all, and maybe you've gone out quite a few times without drama, then you can increase it a little bit, all right?

My minimum baseline right now is just 10 minutes. And every single time I think, "Okay, all I got to do is 10 minutes." And I almost always end up going for at least 30 minutes. But for that first 10 minutes there's a lot of bargaining happening in my brain because I'm deciding, am I going to stop at 10 or do I keep going, right?

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So I always know I'm going to make it to 10 minutes. But honestly, until it's at about nine and a half minutes, I don't know if I'm going to keep going. Every single time. But by the time I get to 10 minutes, I'm starting to feel good and I want to keep going.

And I know this is how it works and I still have these thoughts. So the minimum baseline is magic because it gets me out the door thinking, "Oh, this is going to be easy because I can just go home after 10 minutes," right? I walk out the door thinking this is easy, and I trick myself every damn time.

All right, I hope this makes sense. I really want you to give this a try. If you're struggling with sticking to your training plan or just creating a consistent exercise routine for yourself, I want you to give it a try. And I want you to know you can actually apply it to anything, it doesn't have to be exercise, you can get creative.

I often do it with the dishes. So if we've cooked a big meal and the kitchen is a mess and it's my turn to do the dishes, my brain will be like, "Nope, too much. You should do none of them because it's just going to be too much. You're tired, you're full, you want to go to sleep, whatever, do it tomorrow. It's going to take forever."

And so what I tell myself is you just have to get up and put three things in the dishwasher. And I legit use this as a minimum baseline technique to get the damn dishes done all the time. I say, "Okay, you just got to get up and put three things in the dishwasher." And I get up and I put away the three things, and the next thing I know the kitchen is clean, okay? Because once I'm standing and putting shit in the dishwasher, it seems dumb not to put the rest of the stuff away.

But I don't know that when I'm making the decision to clean up the dishes. I just tell myself just three things, that's it. So you really can use the minimum

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baseline idea for just about anything, but you have to know what your drama threshold is, okay? And your drama threshold is the amount of running or time or whatever it is that your brain just short circuits and says no fucking way, we can't do this, all right?

And I'm not talking about the short circuiting when you think about training for a marathon and you have to run 18 miles at some point, right? I mean, like on a daily basis, what's your drama threshold? Is it 30 minutes? Or do you think like, "30 minutes, oh I can't do it, it's too much." Or is it 20 minutes? "Oh, I can't do it. It's too much." Whatever amount that your brain argues over, right? The smallest amount that your brain argues over, cut it in half, okay?

So if your brain argues over 20 minutes, your minimum baseline is 10 minutes. If your brain throws a hissy fit over 30 minutes but not over 20 minutes, I want your minimum baseline to be 15 minutes. I want it to be half of your drama threshold, okay? All right, give it a try, let me know how it goes.

And before we go, I want to tell you I'm going to be releasing an awesome class next week called How to Become a Consistent Exerciser, all right? This is a fucking amazing class and it's going to help you get set up for success in 2023. I'll be dropping the link on Instagram on December 12th, so it's just a few days from when this podcast drops. So make sure you're following me over on Instagram at [notyouraveragerunner](#), and I'll be dropping a link over there. And of course I'll have the link on next week's podcast as well. And that's it for this week, okay?

All right my friends, I love you, stay safe, get your ass out there and run. And I will talk to you next week.

Real quick before you go, if you enjoyed this episode you have got to check out Run Your Best Life. It's my monthly coaching program where you will

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learn exactly how to start running, stick with it, and become the runner you have always wanted to be. Head on over to [runyourbestlife.com](http://runyourbestlife.com) to join. I would love to be a part of your journey.