

Ep #279: 5 Easy Steps to Kick-Start Your Fitness Routine



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With Your Host

Jill Angie

[The Not Your Average Runner Podcast](#) with 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, so I'm here this week with a really fun episode, in my mind. And this episode is for anyone who wants to start exercising, whether it's running or something else. And it's not just for people who are absolutely brand new to exercise. It also applies to you if you used to exercise and then you stopped for one reason or another and you want to start again. Or if you've been trying to get into an exercise routine and you are just struggling to make it happen.

And, again, this applies to any kind of exercise, not just running because there are so many benefits to regular exercise of any kind because it boosts your mood, it gives you more energy, it helps keep your bones strong, improves flexibility. And yeah, you even get a little bit of fun out of it sometimes. I get a lot of fun out of exercise. It doesn't need to be a chore, you are actually allowed to enjoy it. You are allowed to make it fit into your life. And by the way, that will make it a lot easier to stick with it.

So if you're ready, let's fucking go, all right? Now, the first thing, the first step, and I'm going to give you five steps. I should have made that clear before, I'm going to give you five steps to creating an exercise routine that you can actually stick with.

Step number one, before you do anything else, I want you to define in advance what exercise means to you, okay? Because guess what? You

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actually get to decide for yourself, which makes it much easier to remain consistent if you create the plan that works for you.

And I know there are a lot of experts, and I'm using finger quotes around experts, out there with tons of data and studies saying things like, well it has to be at least 30 minutes of cardio five times a week. Or you have to get your heart rate into the aerobic zone for it to make a difference. And I know these folks mean well, also, I'd like to add that there are many conflicting studies that say just the opposite.

So if you're just starting out with exercise, let's just ignore that advice for the moment because it can be completely overwhelming. And you can end up thinking, well, if I can't do 30 minutes five times a week, or if I can't get my heart rate into the aerobic zone, then what's the point?

And the point is, right, all of the other benefits that we get out of exercise like, again, improved mood, and improved flexibility, and a little bit more energy. And that doesn't happen when you cross the line from 29 minutes a day to 30 minutes a day, right? Like your body isn't keeping score like that. A little bit of exercise can have a huge impact.

And the other thing I want to address is sometimes the word exercise itself can actually be a little triggering. Like if you go to the doctor or if your doctor tells you at every single visit that you need to exercise more and lose weight and you're like, "For fuck's sake, Doc, can we just talk about this rash on my arm and not get into a whole big thing about my weight?" Right? If everywhere you go in your life, people are constantly telling you you need to exercise more, then it can become a triggering thing, okay?

So if you need to use a different word to describe it, I want you to feel free, right? Like you could say movement, or activity, or even play, right?

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Because play, physical play is exercise. You really do get to decide because the experts, the finger quote experts are not in charge of you. You are.

So I want you to create your own definition in a way that works with your life and your body and your preferences. Okay, you got it? It's all about you. And you might decide that your version of exercise is getting your feet moving on purpose every day, whether that's walking or running or dancing or something else.

You could also decide that it counts as exercise if you break a sweat, right? If you go outside and sweat beads happen, boom, exercise. You could make that decision for yourself. Maybe exercise for you is when you deliberately move your body in a way that feels fun, right? Like dancing for example. If you're like looking for a definition, you could use those, the ones I just gave you as inspiration or you can kind of brainstorm on your own.

I know, I'll give you my definition of exercise, walking to my favorite coffee shop a few times a week. It takes about 15 minutes each way. And even though I'm not getting my heart rate up very high, I'm moving my body on purpose, okay? So my definition of exercise is moving my body on purpose.

And when I do that, like 15 minutes each way to go get some coffee. I get to trade a joke or two with the barista. I usually pet at least one dog because there's a lot of dogs in my neighborhood. I get some fresh air. I say hi to the other humans who are out there doing the same thing.

And when I do this, on most days, right, four or five days a week, I find that I sleep better, I'm in a better mood, I have more energy. And for those of

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you who are like, “Well of course you have more energy, because you just got coffee,” I drink decaf. So it really is the exercise.

And again, I'm not out there power walking, right? Like this exercise for me is just walking at a comfortable pace. Like maybe a brisk walk on the way there, and maybe a little more leisurely on the way back so I don't spill coffee all over myself, right? But it's moving my body on purpose, right? That is my definition.

And there are days where moving my body on purpose looks like running. There are days where it looks like strength training. And there are days when it looks like walking to my favorite coffee shop and back. And sometimes there are days when movement for me looks like just going on a cleaning frenzy or, you know, putting away all of my winter clothes and getting out my summer clothes, or vice versa, right? Like it's moving my body on purpose.

So I want you to take some time and create your own definition of exercise or movement or activity that you will use as a guide as you create a routine for yourself. And actually, while we're talking about the word routine and things that might kind of like trigger us to be resistant, some people don't like the word routine, right? Because you're just like, “Oh God, I hate a routine. I hate feeling trapped. I hate all those things. I hate feeling like I have to.”

And we could definitely do a lot of coaching around feeling like you have to and all of those things, and I've got podcast episodes for that. But you could also just change the word. So exercise doesn't have to be a program or a plan or anything rigid. It can be spontaneous, okay?

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You can say I want to move my body on purpose three times a week. And then decide in the moment, is it going to be a walk, or a dance party in your living room, or a Peloton ride or even, again, a 20 minute cleaning frenzy before your in-laws come over, right?

The point here is you get to define all of it for yourself, okay? Other people might have opinions on what you should do, that's fine. They get to have their opinions, but you're in charge of you. You get to decide what makes sense for you, for your life, for your body. Okay?

All right, step number two is to ditch the all or nothing mindset, okay? You know who you are, those of you who have this. It's that belief that it has to be done a certain way or it's not worth doing at all. I just did a whole podcast about this last week, episode 278. I was teaching a tool called the minimum baseline, so make sure you listen to that.

But seriously, if you believe that there's a right way and a wrong way, that it has to be perfect, you are setting yourself up to fail because life happens, my friends. And if you decide that exercise is only five days a week for 30 minutes, okay, and then one of those days you only have enough time for 20 minutes. So you're like, "Well, fuck it, I don't have time for the whole thing so I'm just going to skip it," you're only screwing yourself over, okay?

So I want you to let yourself be imperfect, let yourself mess it up, just let yourself be a fucking human. It's okay. Nobody is watching you, nobody is grading you, your body is going to be just as happy with 10 minutes of movement as 30. All right, seriously, there is no atomic clock inside you keeping track of the exact number of minutes that you've exercised each day and taking points off for only doing 20 instead of 30, right? That is not a thing.

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All your body knows is like, yay, we got to move today and it felt good. Imagine your body is like a puppy who just wants to have zoomies on a regular basis, right? Puppies don't worry about their heart rate, or their step count, or any of that shit, right? They just like to run around and wrestle, and then eat some and sleep some, right?

And some days they might run and wrestle more. Some days they might eat more. Some days they might sleep more, and it's all good, okay? So bring that kind of energy to your exercise and I promise you will feel amazing. Okay?

All right, so step three is to think about things you like to do or you are interested in trying. All right, so if you like dancing, put that on your exercise activity list. You want to try rock climbing? Awesome, put that on the list too. And by the way, rock climbing is a great strength and confidence builder. But all forms of activity are okay.

So the goal is to get you moving your body regularly. Again, regularly is you get to define, right? Regularly doesn't necessarily mean seven days a week without fail. You get to define what regular means, okay? But things like walking, cycling, yoga, cleaning, kayaking, it all counts. It's all moving your body, therefore it's all exercise.

You know what my exercise was yesterday? I walked to the train station, five minute walk, took the train downtown. And then I spent an hour walking around downtown doing a little Christmas shopping, checking out some new shops. And then I walked back to the train station, took the train home and walked home. All in all, I got about 90 minutes of walking, I felt great, right? It's movement, it's exercise, I did it on purpose.

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So the more you like the activity, right, so if you want to combine your walking with your Christmas shopping, right, or your holiday shopping, or if you want to combine your walking with taking your dog out. The more you like the activity, the easier it's going to be to stick with it. If you hate yoga, don't do yoga. If you don't like playing tennis or volleyball, no worries, don't play tennis or volleyball. Pick something else. Don't make it more difficult for yourself.

But I will say this, oftentimes we think we don't like an activity because we either have a preconceived notion about what it should look like or we have a belief that we're not good at it. And we don't like to do things that we're not good at.

So, for example, people tell me all the time that they hate running. And it's usually because they don't understand what run/walk intervals are, they think they have to run straight through or it doesn't count as running. Or they're trying to run way too fast for their ability. Or they think that it's only running if they're doing 5Ks seven days a week, right?

And so they make it too hard for themselves and then they give up. When they could just try running a little bit differently, like how I teach it in Run Your Best Life, and they might actually find that it's really fun. So make sure you understand why you don't like an activity before you cross it off the list completely. Because just because you're not good at something doesn't mean you can't still do it and have fun.

By all definitions in the fitness world of running, I am not good at running, right? I'm kind of slow, I'm not kind of, like I'm really slow. And I don't necessarily love doing it every day, right? I only do it maybe three times a week. I'm not really technically good at running. It doesn't mean I can't still do it and have fun with it and teach other people how to do it too, okay? So

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understand why you don't like an activity before you cross it off the list completely. But if you really don't like something, you don't have to do it.

All right, number four is to start small, but think long term. And what do I mean by that? Well, first of all, pick something that you can do right now without any drama, without any struggle, and something that's going to be sustainable over a long period of time.

So for example, if you're not working out right now and you're deciding that your exercise plan, because somebody told you it has to be 30 minutes a day of cardio, right? So you're like, okay, well, I'm not working out right now, but I'm supposed to be doing 30 minutes a day of cardio. So I'm going to either run or walk for half an hour every single day. That's probably too big of a jump for you. Okay, if you're doing nothing right now.

And even if you manage to white knuckle it through the first couple of weeks, it's probably not going to be sustainable at that level for very long. And that is not to say that 30 minutes a day isn't a fine goal. There's nothing wrong with that goal. But I want you to start where you are right now, not where you think you should be, okay?

And again, make sure you listen to episode 278 from last week about the minimum baseline because it's going to help you reframe your thinking about this. Because when you want to create the habit of exercise, jumping all in with both feet is a great way to ensure that you quit on yourself in a few weeks, all right?

And I'm not being a Debbie Downer here. I'm not saying like, you know, think small. I just want you to remember every other time that you've tried to create an exercise routine for yourself. Did you start out trying to do it all from the very beginning? Were you like, "Okay, it has to be all the things,

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I'm going to start out with all the things and I got to be perfect." And if you did that, how did it work out for you, right?

You're probably listening to this podcast because you've tried that before and it didn't work out so well and were like, "Okay, what's the secret? What am I missing?" So I want you to start small, which I think is different than thinking small, right? Like I'm not discouraging you from setting big goals for yourself in the future. But I want you to start out small and work towards them, okay?

So start small now, think sustainable over the long term. What is something you know, you can stick with, without any drama for the next year? Right, for the next year. Because a lot of times we think, "Okay, well, I could do this for a week or two." But we don't think about like, am I going to be able to continue doing this a year from now?

So what is that amount? Is it 10 minutes of activity? Awesome. Okay, if you're like, "Yeah, I could do 10 minutes, three times a week. And I'm pretty sure I could keep that up for a year," then that's where I want you to begin, okay?

And again, remember that you get to define what your exercise routine looks like. You are in charge, I cannot say this enough times. You're in charge. Other people can have their opinions on what you should do, that's fine. You can listen to them, you can think about them, but ultimately you get to decide.

All right, so here we are at number five. I can't believe we're at number five already. And number five is to find support, all right? And that's not necessarily somebody who's going to come and get you out of bed in the

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morning and kick you out of bed and say you got to go do your exercise right now.

I just mean, maybe it's a workout buddy, maybe it's joining a group class at a gym where there are people that you're going to see regularly and you can kind of like make a connection with them. It might simply be telling your best friend about your plans. And just I want you to make sure you have somebody in your corner.

Even if it's an online friend that you've never met in person. Just make sure you've got somebody to talk to, both when you are struggling with it and when you're succeeding, okay? So I want you to have somebody that you can be like, "I'm really having a hard time today." And also somebody that you can be like, "You're not going to believe what I just did, I am such a badass, listen to this." Okay? So you need both.

Talking it out when you're struggling, talking it out with someone else is super powerful because what it does is it gets your thoughts out of your head and lets you see your thinking more objectively. And this is one of the things that we do a lot in Run Your Best Life. We coach on those sneaky little thoughts that hold us back things like, I'm not doing enough, or I already messed up this week so I should just wait and start over on Monday.

You know you've had those thoughts, okay? And when you're thinking them quietly to yourself, they seem very true and very right. But when you say them out loud or you type them out, right, maybe in a Facebook group or something for someone else to see, you're like, "Oh, okay, well, that doesn't really make sense does it?"

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And then in Run Your Best Life, all of my coaches are trained to help you clarify your thinking so you can actually get the hell out of your own way and start doing what you want to be doing, okay? So that's step five.

And before we close up, I want to just go through the steps one more time, all right? And number one is to define what exercise means to you, because you get to decide. Number two is ditching the all or nothing mindset, right perfectionists? Like let yourself be human, there's no need for perfectionism in exercise.

Number three is to think about things that you like to do or that you're interested in trying. Number four is to start small, but think long term. And number five is to find that support, okay? All right.

So real quick before we go, I want to let you know that I just released an awesome class called How to Become a Consistent Exerciser. It is a masterclass in how to identify your excuses, how to get past them, and how to create that exercise plan for yourself that serves you.

And when you register, you actually get instant access to the class because I know everybody's busy this time of year and I wanted to make it as easy as possible for you to get it. It's only \$19 to sign up and that's because I've just decided I'm going to remove all the barriers for you, okay? So you're going to head over to notyouraveragerunner.com/exercise to join the class.

All right, that's notyouraveragerunner.com/exercise. We'll also have a link in the show notes. I want you to run over there and grab it because this will be a game changer for you.

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All right, my friends. I love you, stay safe, and get your ass out there and run. 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 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 to join. I would love to be a part of your journey.