

Ep #280: My 2023 Goal: 4 Parts and 4 Tools



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With Your Host

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 you doing this week? How are you? It is almost the end of 2022, it's been a crazy ass year for me and I'm sure for all of you. But I'm already looking towards 2023 for my own training and my own goals. And I thought that this week would be a great chance for me to talk about what my goals are and what my plan is so you can see the process that I use to plan and maybe borrow some of it for yourself. So I hope that sounds like fun.

But first, before we do that, we're going to take a moment to answer an ask the fat running coach question. And this question comes from Michelle and she asked, "Hey Jill, I have been trying to start running for weeks and I'm struggling to get into it. I really want to like it, but every time I try I'm completely out of breath after 30 seconds and I have to walk for a few minutes until I can try again. And after a couple rounds of that I get discouraged and I just give up. Help, I want to be a runner so badly."

So first of all, thank you for reaching out, Michelle. This is not an uncommon issue to have and I'm very glad you asked it because there's a lot of folks who are going to benefit from the answer. Now, first of all, I want to make sure that you are warming up before every run. And what I mean by that is walking for at least five minutes before you start your first running interval.

And the first mile or so of every run, you know, in general it doesn't feel that great, this is kind of across the board. Because your body is still getting into it, right? If you go from a complete stop to running, your body is like, "Wait,

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what is happening?" Right? So it takes maybe 15 or 20 minutes for your body to actually be in that kind of nice comfortable zone of where it feels like you can maintain the effort.

So knowing that that first 15 or 20 minutes doesn't always feel great, if you do a five minute walking warm up you kind of hasten the process of, that first 15 minutes or so turns into like the first 10 minutes or so that doesn't feel great, right? And those first few intervals are going to feel a lot better. So always make sure that you're walking for at least five minutes before you start your first running interval because it is going to make the first 10 to 15 minutes of your run feel better.

Now, the second thing we need to talk about is your pace and your timing. So if you're completely out of breath in 30 seconds, you're doing one of two things, or both I guess. You're either running too fast for your current fitness level, you're running too long for your current fitness level, or you're doing both, okay?

So I want you to try slowing down a little bit so that you can actually run for 30 seconds without feeling absolutely awful. And also so that you can recover with a one minute walk instead of a two or a three minute walk, right? So at the end of your run interval you shouldn't feel like you're going to have to walk for a long time to recover. You should feel recovered within 60 seconds or less and ready for that next interval.

So if you're pushing yourself really hard for 30 seconds and then it takes you several minutes to recover, you're either running too fast or 30 seconds is too long, or it could be a combination of both. So first, start by slowing down a little bit and see if you can comfortably run for that 30 seconds at a slower pace and recover within a minute.

If you've slowed down as much as you can and 30 seconds still feels too hard, I want you to try running for 15 seconds, okay? Because the goal is to

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get yourself to a place where you can consistently run a set amount of time, whether it's 15 seconds, 20 seconds, 30 seconds, whatever. To get yourself to that place where you can do that at a comfortable pace and recover within a minute or less and get right into the next interval. Okay?

So give those three things a try. Make sure you're doing a full warm up, slow down your pace. And then if 30 seconds is still too hard at your slowest pace, try running for 15 seconds instead of 30, okay? Because I want you to get to that place where you can do a one minute recovery and get right into that next interval.

And once you find that sort of routine that works for you, if you stay consistent at it, you're going to find that that 15 seconds is going to turn into 20 seconds and then into 30 seconds. And then you'll be able to run faster during that time period with the same amount of effort, okay? Everyone starts somewhere, and make sure that you're starting in a place that makes sense for your body and you can go from there. Okay? All right. I hope that was helpful to you, Michelle.

Next, I want to talk about running goals. Okay, I mentioned this earlier, my running goals for 2023, well I mentioned several weeks ago that my running goal for 2023 was to train for the Philadelphia marathon again. And not just train for it, but also apply everything I learned from 2019, which is the last time I trained for it, to this round.

And one of the things that I learned from that training was for me, going from zero running to a marathon in nine months was not a good idea, was not a great idea. When I started training it was February 2019 and I was just coming off of an injury. And I hadn't been running for a few months, and I had gone through a lot of physical therapy, you know, I got cleared to run, I was really strong, I felt amazing and I was like, hey, let's just go for it. Let's see what happens.

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And I did all the training and I made it through all the training without further injury and so forth. But I was a lot slower than I wanted to be. And some of the longer runs, specifically the 18 mile run was a real struggle. And I think my 14 miler was pretty hard too. So some of those long runs were a struggle. And I felt like yes, I did the training, but I didn't necessarily feel as strong as I wanted to going into that race.

And then on race day itself, it was sleeting and cold and wet. And I was soaked to the bone, including my running shoes, my socks and everything were completely soaked before we even lined up for the race. It was crazy. So within a few miles, my feet were all blistered because I hadn't done any really distance training in the rain. I think the longest I had run in the rain during my training was probably three miles.

And so my feet were getting all blistered, and I hit the half marathon mark at around four hours, because about 10 miles I was like, I can't run anymore, my feet hurt so much. And so I finished another three miles walking, and I was just done, I was just done. And, you know, I wasn't ready for that kind of environment so I pulled myself off the course at 13 miles.

And the race does have a six and a half hour time limit. So I knew I wasn't going to finish 26 miles within the official time limit, but that wasn't really a concern for me because I knew they weren't going to pull me off the course and that they would actually keep the finish line up until the last person finished. They do that every year, it's a great race.

But when I kind of came close to that half marathon point I realized I wasn't down with spending another four hours out in the sleet when my feet were in pain. So I called it and I said, you know, halfway there I'm pulling myself off the course. I was extremely happy with that decision at the time. And I still am, right? I know I did the right thing.

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So the weather was a big, big part of it. And so one thing I learned is I need to seek out more opportunities to do long training runs in the rain. But for sure, a big part of the issue with my training is that I didn't have a solid base under my feet before I started building mileage. And yes, I had been a runner. I mean, at that time I'd been a runner for about 21, 22 years. And so it wasn't like I didn't have a lot of experience running, but it had been a few months since I had been running because I was injured.

And so when I started in February to train for this race in November, I really didn't have, you know, I didn't have any mileage base to work from. So I had to like build that mileage really fast, which was kind of a mistake because I didn't have the endurance, stamina, or honestly the mental stamina, really, that I wanted to have. And again, it's simply because I didn't have as much time on feet since I only gave myself a nine month runway.

So, you know, live and learn. And again, one of the things I said was the next time I train for this race I'm going to apply what I learned. And I realized, well in 2022, yes I've been running but it hasn't been a ton, right? It's like reliably about twice a week, never more than three miles. I've been focusing a lot more on strength training and my deadlifting goals, working on making my body really strong. And I just, honestly I haven't been feeling the urge to run long distances and so I just haven't.

And I think it's actually, for me it's very helpful and healthy to not always be training for an endurance event because while I love doing it, it's not something I want to be constantly doing. And so it felt good really for the past couple of years to just kind of like take a break from that.

But what that means is if I train for the Philly marathon in 2023, I'm putting myself in a similar situation as 2019, right? I have more of a base now than I did in 2019, but not much more. And so I'm changing my goal. I'm

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changing my 2023 goal, instead of running the full marathon in 2023, I'm going to train for that in 2024, okay?

And instead, this coming year I'm going to train hard for the Philly half marathon, which was my first ever half marathon. It's one of my favorite races ever, I've done it a few times. And I'm going to train hard for it, okay? Because I don't want to just show up and finish this race, I want to slay it.

The first time I ran it was in 2013 and I finished in three hours. And I felt amazing, felt amazing. I had so much fun but at that time, of course, I was 10 years younger, right, and probably 60 pounds later than I am right now. So I'm not expecting in 2023 to finish it in three hours, right? Which is about a 13 minute mile pace.

But I think I can do it in three and a half hours, which is about a 16 minute mile pace. And that means I'm going to have to train hard, I'm going to have to be super focused on it this year, which I'm excited about. Okay, I've had my break and I'm like, I'm ready to get back in the “saddle” for my 2023 training.

Okay, so that's my big goal for next year, to finish the Philly half marathon in November in three and a half hours. So I've got 11 months almost, yeah, 11 months to work on it. This is December, right? Good Lord. And so as I build out my personal training plan and my success plan, and start executing it, there's five things that I'm going to be focusing on. So that's kind of what I want to talk through with you today.

And the first thing is to, obviously, build a solid running base so that I am comfortably getting at least eight, maybe 10 miles a week of running on my feet instead of my current five to six miles a week. And so that means getting consistent with running three days a week and then getting those runs to three and maybe even four miles each.

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And this phase starts immediately, right? It starts basically now, here at the end of December I am currently in this phase. And it's going to last until May of next year. So about five-ish months or so.

And while I'm creating that consistent base at that sort of low mileage, I'm also going to be concurrently working on phase two, which is getting my pace at or below a 16 minute mile. So I'm going to be adding in drills and sprints into at least, you know, one run a week, maybe two runs to kind of work on my foot turnover and my power. And I'll be working with my trainer, of course, to keep building on the strength gains I made in 2022.

And if you did not see my post on Instagram this week, I exceeded my goal of getting to a 200 pound deadlift at one rep max, because now I'm like literally doing sets at 200 pounds. I'm like literally lifting a 200 pound weight multiple times as part of my deadlift workout. So I've kind of blown that out of the water.

And I'm kind of like by the end of 2022 I think, we're going to do another one rep max test and I'm like fingers crossed, actually not fingers crossed, I fucking know I can do this. My goal is 235 pound lift with a secret stretch goal that I have of 250 pounds. But I'll be super happy with 235 because it was two years ago that I set a goal to be able to lift 200 pounds and now I can like do sets at 200 pounds. I'm like so stoked about that.

But anyway, that's neither here nor there. For the next five to six months one of the ways that I'm going to be helping build my speed, you know, kind of like decrease my pace to at least a 16 minute or below is by doing targeted strength training and then adding drills and sprints into my workouts.

And so what that will look like is often I'll go out and maybe do a two mile run. And then I will do another half mile or so, maybe half mile to a mile where, again, I'm doing some drills and some sprints. And then I'll either

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finish with like maybe half mile like easy intervals or I'll just be done. But I'll be adding those into the workouts that I plan because I still only want to run three days a week.

So phase one and phase two are going to happen concurrently. Phase one is building that solid running base and phase two is working on my pace.

Now, in June I'm going to start building my mileage for the race. And so that gives me almost six months to go from that long run, I guess that's more like five months, to go from that long run of three to four miles to a long run of 10 to 11 mile else.

And during this time I will actually be restructuring my strength training routine so that I'm a lot less focused on lifting heavy and more focused on maintaining the strength I've already built and maybe shoring up any imbalances or like movement issues that I've got. And again, I'll be working with my trainer on that.

And I'll also be planning my training runs so that I'm giving myself at least 48 hours between my second strength day of the week and my long run. So I want to be as rested as possible so that I'm protecting those long run days.

And finally, I am going to be coaching myself. And I just realized, this is only four things and not five things. So apparently, I can't count. Thing number four that I'm going to be working on is coaching myself a lot, okay, when all the doubts and the fears and the worries come up. Because I'm human and even though I've trained for tons of half marathons and finished them, I still have unhelpful thoughts pop up and I want to make sure they don't get in my way. So I'm going to be spending a lot of time coaching myself through all my thinking.

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Now, let's dive into the tools that are going to be supporting me through this process. And the most important running tool that I will be using is not a piece of gear, it is the CTFAR model that I refer to frequently on this show, okay? I use it to coach myself through all my thoughts and emotions. And it works really well.

So if you're not familiar with it, check out episode 224, which is all about how to use the model to coach yourself. I think the title might even be how to coach yourself. So if you haven't listened to that one, make sure you go check it out because I'm expecting that thoughts are going to come up about my pace and about how it's been a couple years since I've done any distance training. Maybe even some concerns about how to do long distance endurance training conveniently in the city.

And the usual stuff that comes up all the time about not wanting to put my shoes on and go. And I'm actually pretty good at handling that, but I'm still going to need to be prepared because it's been a hot minute since I've had to do a long run. It's been, I think my last race I was training for, I was training for a half marathon in 2020 when everything started getting shut down. And so my last really long run would have been over two years ago, it would have been in 2020.

So the CTFAR model is my number one tool, it should be your number one tool as well. And then the second tool that I'm going to be using is a very simple Google spreadsheet. And the Google spreadsheet or an Excel spreadsheet, whatever your favorite is, I like Google because I can access it on all of my devices.

But I use it to plan out my training because, first of all, it's easy to move things around, it's easy to tally up my planned weekly mileage. And once I have it the way I want it, then I transfer all the workouts to my calendar, and I get to check them off on the spreadsheet when they're done. That's so fun. Checking things off is like such just a joyous activity, for me anyway.

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So the way I have my Google spreadsheet set up is I put the days of the week, Monday through Sunday across the top and you might start your week on Sunday, whatever. Just wherever you start your week, put that across the top. And then the week, the first day of each of those weeks goes down the side. And I put any events that are going to interfere with my training and any races that I have planned into the sheet before I put any actual training runs or strength workouts in, okay?

Oh, and I actually forgot to mention the very first thing I do, I put the days of the week across the top and then I put the race date, I mark that in the spreadsheet first thing, okay? So I know that I've got enough weeks in there and so forth. So I'll give myself like, well, I think for this I'm giving myself like an 11 month spreadsheet.

But depending on how much time you have before your race, start by putting your race in and then build out your long runs from there, right, working backwards from race day so you can see when you need to actually be starting that mileage build. And then make sure that you've got any events that are going to interfere with your training, right?

Like any vacations or maybe on Saturdays you have to take your kid to soccer all day and so you know, okay, I can't be training on Saturdays. And so make sure that you've got all of those things and any races that you've already signed up for into that spreadsheet before you start really putting all your workouts in so you can kind of see, this is what I have to work around. Then you're going to work backwards from race day to build out your long runs, okay?

And I always allow a rest week in between my long runs where I'll do more of a baseline number of miles to give my body a break. So for example, I'll give myself a three week taper. So from race day I count back three weeks and then that's going to be my longest run of the entire training. And then I'll count back two weeks from that and then I'll, you know, subtract a mile

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and have like a one mile shorter run. And so I keep doing that every other week, right. My long run is shorter by a mile.

And then on those off weeks, my long runs are anywhere between three and five miles, okay? So I give myself sort of a break in between where I'm still running, but I'm not running as far.

And once I have all my long runs planned out, and I usually plan mine out for the weekends, I fill out the rest of the week with two shorter runs and two strength workouts, and often I do those on the same day. I'll do the run in the morning and the strength in the afternoon. And then maybe I'll throw in some cross training and yoga.

And then I use that spreadsheet to tally up the total miles I'm going to be running each week to make sure everything looks, you know, safe and reasonable. So that's my second tool, is my spreadsheet. And again, I highly recommend the Google spreadsheet because it's so easy to share it across devices.

And then the third tool that I'm going to be using is my running watch, okay? And I have a Garmin Forerunner 245 and, of course, I use the associated Garmin Connect app that comes with it. And my Garmin, I love my Garmin because it cues my run/walk intervals, it tracks my miles, pace, elevation, cadence, heart rate, points out when I might be over training and also where I'm making improvements.

And it also shows me my mile splits. So I can see whether I'm maintaining my pace throughout the run, or if I'm running out of energy. And I also use it to track the miles on my shoes, so I know when it's time to get new ones.

And there also are lots of cool safety features with a Garmin. It emails Andy when I leave on a run, shows him exactly where I am. If it looks like I'm

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running in like a weird way or something it'll just be like, hey, you know, are you, it kind of like, one time I was running back and forth in front of my phone to get some video and my Garmin thought that I was being chased. And it tried to send like an alert to Andy. I was like, no, no, I'm good, I'm good. But it does have a lot of like nice safety features like that.

Now, if you don't have a Garmin, there are plenty of other watches that can accomplish the same thing that are completely functional, Apple Watch Coros, C-O-R-O-S, Coros makes a good one, Polar makes a good one, I think there's a bunch of Android watches as well that they're going to give you similar stats as the Garmin.

Or you can download a free app like RunKeeper or Strava, right to your phone, which is going to give you most of the same information. It might not give you a heart rate unless you wear a chest strap, but in general the rest of the information it gives you is great.

And as far as like safety features, if you don't have a Garmin or if the watch that you wear doesn't have the safety things, I think the Road ID app will do some tracking for you as well if you want to make sure people know where you are when you're out running.

Now, the final tool that I'll be using is my sleep tracker. And so rest and recovery are very important parts of training. And high quality sleep means I can recover more efficiently and have more energy for my runs. And the sleep tracker that I use is called an Oura Ring, it's O-U-R-A, Oura Ring. And, again, it comes with a really nice app and it monitors my sleep. So I know things like my resting heart rate, and how much deep sleep and REM sleep I got, and how restless I was, and my blood oxygen levels.

And I actually love the Oura ring because, first of all, I don't like having something on my wrist while I sleep because I just, I don't know, it just

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catches on the sheets, I don't love that. So I like the ring. But there are lots of other devices that will give you similar data to kind of track that stuff.

And so the reason it's so valuable to understand the quality of your sleep is, you know, if your sleep is, first of all, if you have high quality sleep, you're going to recover better and you're going to be better prepared for your next workout. But it can also help you decide if you're over training, right?

So my Oura Ring, always, you know, the night after a really, really hard workout my Oura Ring will always like notice that my, like usually it takes longer for my heart rate to drop down the night after a hard workout. Or if I have eaten too close to bedtime, again, I'll like notice that in my resting heart rate and so forth.

So you can actually get a lot of great information about your daily habits and about the impact that your workouts have on your sleep so that, you know, sometimes my Oura ring will be like, "Hey, you should probably take it easy today because yesterday was a hard day for you and you need to prioritize your sleep." So I really, really love the Oura ring. I think it gives me a lot of really great information.

Also, it doesn't track your exact body temperature, but it tracks the deviations from your average body temperature. And it's so funny because when I had COVID, I looked at my Oura Ring data and it like, really it was spiking the whole time I had COVID. It was like, "Hey, are you sick? Because your body temperature is higher and your heart rate is higher." And so it knew, it knew I was sick, right, just from the data from my finger.

So it's a really, really powerful tool. It's not a cheap tool, so that's something always to be considered. But if you prefer even not to use a device, you can still track your sleep from the perspective of how much time you're spending in bed versus when you fall asleep and when you get up. Like are

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you getting up a lot during the night? How do you feel every morning when you wake up, right?

The point of collecting this information is to notice trends over time, in particular how your running is impacted by your sleep patterns. And then where it's possible, making adjustments, right? Maybe it's going to bed earlier, maybe it's avoiding alcohol the night before a long run, maybe it's avoiding the blue light from your phone, right, whatever it is.

But everyone's body is different, of course, so what works for your body might not work for somebody else. And that's why it's important to pay attention to your own data, so that you can draw conclusions and adjust.

Okay, so the four tools that I'm going to be using, again, are the CTFAR model, my Google spreadsheet, my Garmin Forerunner, and my Oura Ring, okay? Those are going to be the things that support me throughout this training journey.

So, my friends, that is it for this week. That is my plan for my 2023 goal. I will be checking in here every so often to let you know how it goes and whether I've made any adjustments to my plan. And before we go this week, 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, get past them, and then create a workout plan that serves you. And when you register, you actually get instant access to the class because I know everyone'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 because I want to remove all the barriers for you, okay?

So if you want to join this class, just head over to notyouraveragerunner.com/exercise. All right, that's

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notyouraveragerunner.com/exercise. And again, you get instant access to it and it is going to help you. If you are struggling with staying consistent with your workouts, this is the class for you, okay? All right my friends, I love you, stay safe, and 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 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.