

Ep #307: Hot Weather Running Tips



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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 are you? What is new and exciting with you? I will tell you, I am excited for this summer. Right now I'm recording this in the midst of all of the crazy smoke that is rolling down the east coast from the wild fires up in Canada, which has not been the most fun. But by the time that you listen to this I will be in Alaska. And then at the beginning of July I'm off to Nashville to speak on a panel at Corinne Crabtree's event about not waiting until you lose the weight to live your life and do epic shit.

And then Andy and I are off to Quebec for a family wedding and then to Illinois for a 90th birthday party. And then we've got two weekends in August with family visits in Philly. And then I've got a quick girls getaway in Cape May after Labor Day, and if everything goes according to plan we will be spending Thanksgiving in Hawaii right after the big race weekend in Philly.

And then in January we are off to the Dominican Republic. It's fucking crazy. Super fun. So please say a prayer to the travel points gods and all of that that we can swing all of these trips, that everything works out, that all of our travel goes according to plan because we are really, really looking forward to all of it.

And now in between all of that I'm actually looking for some weeknight local races to do because we're basically booked up almost every weekend for the rest of the summer. And speaking of running in the summer, the other day somebody asked me for running tips for running in the heat. And I was like, "Oh, well just check out the podcast I did on that topic." And I went to

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look it up and you know what? I couldn't find one. So I said, all right, well we need to fix that ASAP. So here we are.

And PS, if you live in the southern hemisphere right now and you are looking for cold weather running tips, check out episode 166, I have got you covered.

So, first of all, let's talk about why you should learn to run in the heat because sure, if you have a treadmill you could just run on it all summer long and not even bother going outside. And you know what? There's nothing wrong with that. If that's what you need to keep running, you just have at it. You do you, that's fine.

But I do think running in all weather conditions is an important skill for runners because first and foremost, there's no guarantee that you're going to have great weather on race day. So if you're training for a race, you've got to practice running in the potential weather you could have on race day, like the rain and the heat and even the snow depending on the time of year.

So, so many runners that I know say that they don't like the heat. And guess what? The heat is uncomfortable, I get it. I'm not a fan either. When it gets above 80 degrees, ugh, I just fucking hate it. But I still figure it out, right? And you might be wondering, is it even safe to run in the heat, or what temperature is too hot for running? And the short answer is yes, it's safe if you take precautions. But also know your own limitations and don't push yourself to run if all your signals are saying don't do it.

And as far as temperature, it kind of depends on what you're used to. Now, if you live in Florida most of the year, then for you running outside in 100 degrees might not be that big of a stretch. But if you are from Alaska, for example, and it's 100 degrees, that might be too hot for you. Like your body has not acclimated. So it's kind of relative to the climate that you live in.

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So, for me, living in the mid-Atlantic area of the United States, I mean, I don't know, if it's 95 degrees or higher I will not run. That is a no for me because it's really, really humid out here at that temperature. And yes, I could make it work, but it's so uncomfortable that I would rather either run indoors or just not go at all. And then somebody else might draw the line at 80 or 85. And, again, somebody else might say, oh, I'm good until it's 100 degrees, right?

So it all kind of depends on what your body is already acclimated to as well as other factors like the humidity and the general air quality. Like right now here in Philly, running outside is a no because there's so much smoke in the air that even though it's not humid and it's not hot, it doesn't feel good on the lungs. I tried it yesterday, it didn't work out so well. So yes, it's safe to run in the heat and humidity, but also you are the boss of you and take all of those factors into account.

Now, before we dive into the details of how to run in the heat I also want to touch on the signs of heat exhaustion, whether you recognize it in yourself or in somebody else it is very important to know what it looks like. So if you are feeling some dizziness or maybe muscle cramps and you're not somebody prone to muscle cramps, headache. If your skin feeling cold even though it's really hot out, and maybe you're even getting goosebumps and you've stopped sweating, if you're feeling nausea or extreme thirst.

If any of that is happening to you or you're running with somebody and you can see it happening to them or they're telling you, you're going to stop moving, you're going to look around for help, ask for help. Find an air conditioned spot if possible or at the very least something shady. Lie down, elevate your legs, sip cold water if possible. And again, I know, depending on where you are running not all of these things might be possible.

But mist yourself with water, if you can go near a sprinkler or use a damp sponge to kind of wet your skin down or just dump water on your head.

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Whatever you need to do to start getting some moisture on that skin so that the evaporation can start happening again. You know, that's how your body cools itself down.

If this is happening and you're like, shit, we are not in a shady area, we don't have any water, whatever it is, call 911. Just call 911. It's so much better to be safe than sorry. And definitely do it if somebody faints. If your running buddy starts to become confused or agitated or can't drink water, 911 is the number to call, okay? Because heat exhaustion is very serious stuff and if not treated it can lead to heat stroke, which is what happens when your body's internal temperature goes above 104 degrees Fahrenheit.

Now, for reference, your normal body temperature is between 98 and 99 degrees Fahrenheit, okay? Like a serious fever is over 102. So if your body is over 104, that is very dangerous territory. It can result in brain damage. It is life-threatening, so do not take chances. Listen to the symptoms that we just talked about and then follow the guidelines I'm about to share with you and if you have any symptoms of heat exhaustion take immediate action, and again, do not be afraid to call 911, okay?

I would much rather them show up and you be kind of embarrassed because actually, you're fine after sitting down for a while, than not call them and have serious life-threatening things happen to you. So please, take it seriously.

Okay, now that we have all of that out of the way, and I hope I haven't scared you off of running during the summer because you actually can do it. Let's talk about how to run safely in the heat.

So, first things first, what should you wear? Now, if possible I want you running in light colored clothes because they will reflect some of the heat away from your body. And I know you all love those black running tights, I

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love them too, they hide the sweat marks, right? But at least make sure you are running in short tights, like above the knee, instead of the long ones. And a tank top is a must, my friends.

The more skin you're able to expose the better your sweat can evaporate and the cooler your body will be because your core temperature, as it heats up outside and as you start moving your body and exercising, right, your core temperature starts to heat up. And your organs, your internal organs have a very limited temperature range within which they're going to operate as designed. And if it gets too hot, you're starting to create a situation where your organs could suffer some damage.

And so your body, the way your body removes heat from the core of you, from your internal organs in by sweating. And then the sweat sits on top of your skin and it evaporates into the air. And as it evaporates it takes that heat away. So you want as much skin exposed as possible so that when you sweat you basically have more sweat happening or more sweat that can evaporate, more exposed sweat.

And you want to be also, you know, obviously, we're not going to run naked because if you've got boobs like mine, running naked is not an option. But choose fabrics that aren't going to trap the sweat against your skin. So you want technical fabrics or wicking fabrics that actually draw moisture off the skin to the surface of the fabric and they also aid with sweat evaporation.

And these are going to be synthetic fabrics, okay? 100% cotton, a terrible idea in the heat. It does not breathe, don't do it. You will be sorry. You will just be wearing a soggy, gross shirt or whatever it is that's made of 100% cotton. So if cotton is blended with synthetics, it's usually okay, but that 100% cotton is a no.

And here's another pro tip: running in a skirt can actually feel great in the summer because, first of all, you have those little shorty tights underneath

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to prevent chafing. But then you've got the loose skirt fabric on top that sort of moves and creates a little bit of airflow. So that can actually feel really good in the summer, so I highly recommend giving that a try.

And another piece of gear that's going to be a game-changer for you is a cooling towel. It's like a little, I don't know, maybe 6-inch by 12-inch piece of wicking fabric, like super ultra-wicking. And you wet it down with cold water and then you wring it out so it's not dripping wet but it's damp with cold water. You put it around the back of your neck and it keeps your upper body, your neck and your shoulders and your upper back cool through evaporation. It's like magic. And when you're not using it, it just squishes down really small and you can stick it in your pocket.

So, cooling towels are not just for athletes. All kinds of people that work outside use them. They actually consider it to be PPE for certain trades for certain types of outdoor work. So they really are helpful. They're inexpensive. Honestly, I probably have 20 that I've gotten as freebies over the years because they're so cheap that people just give them away for free. But if you don't have one and you want to know where to buy one, just google cooling towel and you're going to find a million different options, okay?

If you don't have a cooling towel, and you have ice, put ice cubes in your bra at the start of your run. And you're probably laughing, but oh my goodness, does that feel good. Honestly, like anywhere where you will – Because your bra is going to be tight, right? That is going to be very snug fabric and there is going to be a lot of sweat underneath your bra that's not going to evaporate. So at least you can put cold things down there to kind of cool your core, all right?

And then as a last resort, if you're starting to heat or even to prevent overheating, just dump water over your head. And speaking of water, bring extra water on every run. But bring an entire bottle or have it in your car or

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something just to dump over your head because that is one way to start cooling your body down really, really fast. And the cooler your body is, the easier it is to run, okay? So bring extra water on every run.

And so let's talk about hydration a little bit. You're going to want to drink early and often on your run. And always take those small sips. No gulping. Gulping is going to make your tummy feel gross. So frequent small sips.

Summertime is a great time, like even if you're only going out for like 20 or 30 minutes, it's a great time to use a hydration pack where you can actually have like a little straw that comes out of it that sits on your shoulder. And you can just sip on that water without having to carry a bottle or grab the bottle and swig it or whatever. So hydration packs are really, really awesome for the summer.

But drink early and often. And don't forget the electrolyte replacement tablets or powders, okay? Because the more you sweat, the more electrolytes you're going to lose. And throughout the hot season, not just when you're running, stay hydrated all the time, okay? Even if you spend a lot of time indoors, because most people don't know this, you lose water when you sweat indoors. It's just you don't notice that you're sweating.

But if you're in an air-conditioned environment, AC removes water from the air. As it's removing heat from the air, it's removing water from the air, that's how it works. And so it'll just pull the moisture right off your skin so you won't even notice that you're sweating because the air conditioning is just literally ever so slowly pulling the moisture right out of your skin. And so it can dehydrate you really quickly.

So make sure you're getting extra fluids throughout the hot season even if you're indoors a lot, okay? So that's a really important tip. Make sure that you, especially if you have a job where you're sitting at a desk all day and you're in the air conditioning and you're like, oh, it's not too bad, right? Like

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it's not hot in here. Nope, the AC is going to dehydrate you. Make sure you're drinking a lot, okay?

All right, so another important thing to consider is avoiding running during peak hours of the sun, which is roughly 10am to 4pm, depending on where you're located on the planet. If you can run early in the morning or later in the evening, that's actually going to be probably your best experience as far as temperature. Because the cooler it is, the less humid it's going to be.

The less humid it's going to be, the more capacity the air has to absorb your sweat and pull the heat off your body. So lower humidity tends to correlate with lower temperatures throughout the day. So try to run in the morning or later in the evening if you can.

And regardless of whether you can or can't do that, do your best to find shade when you're running. If you can't find shade, try to run near grass or water because they won't absorb the heat or reflect the heat as much as concrete, so it will be a little bit cooler.

And, of course, please do not forget the sunscreen, all right? Using sweat proof sunscreen is probably going to be your best bet. I know a lot of people are like, well, what about my face? So I think a pro tip that I use is I don't put sunscreen on my forehead in the summer, but I put it on like my cheeks, like anything that might be exposed to the sun. But I won't put it on my forehead, and then I'll just wear a hat.

Actually in the summertime, I'll probably wear a visor because that still allows some of the heat to escape off the top of my head. But it does give my face a little bit of protection. It keeps the sweat from dripping into my face. It keeps the sunscreen from dripping into my face, because I keep my forehead protected with the visor, and so I don't actually have to put sunscreen on it. So that's your sunscreen pro tip.

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And now this is the one that nobody likes, but my friend, when it is hot and humid you need to slow the fuck down, okay? Summer is not the time to set a PR. You might run a minute or even two minutes per mile slower than usual, and that is okay. It does not mean that you are losing fitness. It does not mean that you're getting weaker. It does not mean that anything has gone wrong. It is literally your body's reaction to the heat and humidity, okay?

Your body is balancing the task of keeping your core temperature at a safe level with keeping you running. And so that means that you're not going to have as much energy for running because your body is like, hold up, if you run too fast, the core temperature is going to spike and we can't keep up with that. So just trust that once the temperatures start to cool down, your pace is naturally going to start to pick up again. It is, it's going to be amazing.

But when it's super hot, your safety is more important than setting a PR. And one thing I know for sure after training thousands of clients is when you train throughout the summer, especially the heat of the summer, for a race in the fall, you're going to watch yourself get faster over that last month or two of training because suddenly you're running in temperatures that are more conducive to running, okay?

So I promise you it's going to work out. You're going to run slower in the summer, it's totally fine. It's actually advisable, all right? So your safety is more important than anything else.

And finally, there's no shame in a little treadmill game, right? If it really is too hot for comfort, just run inside. That's fine. It still counts, especially if it means the difference between running and not running. And it's like you can figure out a way to get maybe some of your runs outside and then you can do the rest of them on a treadmill if you need to. It's totally fine, okay.

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All right, so we've talked about the logistics, there's just one more thing that might get in your way this summer, and that is your brain. Your beautiful, amazing pain in the ass brain, which is going to tell you that it is too hot and that you're going to be miserable. And the circumstance here is the weather. It's the number on the thermometer, the humidity, whatever, right? Everything else is just an opinion.

So you've got the data of the weather, and then you have all of your opinions about it. And you can decide that you don't want to run outside in the summer but make it a decision, right? I'm choosing to run inside because I want to be more comfortable. I'm choosing to run inside because I have asthma and the heat really aggravates that, right? It really makes me feel uncomfortable and triggers an asthma attack.

I'm choosing to run inside because I'm super sensitive to the heat and I know that I'm going to get signs of heat exhaustion if I run outside in the heat. Choose it. Those are decisions. Those are owning it like these are my circumstances and here's what I'm doing with it versus saying, oh, it's too hot, I have no choice. It's not fair, right? Like throwing that pity party because you think you can't run outside because of the weather. It does not feel good. It does not feel good.

Taking care of yourself is your highest priority. And I want you to make those decisions appropriately, but pull the pity party out of it, okay? Because I promise you, if you're feeling sorry for yourself, running is going to feel awful, right? Whether you're outside or on the treadmill or if you decide not to run at all. The pity party is not helping anybody, all right?

The bottom line is that running in the summer is just like any other running. Summer is just another season. You get the right gear, you take the appropriate precautions, you make your decisions, you get your thinking straight and then you just get your butt out there or you get your butt on the treadmill, right? Just like you do any other day.

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So the bottom line here is, I guess there's two bottom lines. The real bottom line is that there's a way to make summer running work for you. Whether it's running shorter runs, whether it's running slower. Well, it's always going to be running slower. There's lots of gear you can get. You can choose to run indoors if you want to. You can choose to make running your off-season.

A lot of people in the north, like the really cold northern parts of the world, or at least North America and so forth, in the winter are like, you know what? This is my off-season. I'm just not going to run. I'm going to choose other activities or I'm just going to rest. You can choose to do that too, but make it a conscious decision and not just a like, oh well, I guess I can't run now because it's hot outside. Choose your thinking around it so that you get the result that you want, okay? All right.

Now, if you are just starting out on your running journey I do want to encourage you to sign up for my free 30 day running start training plan. It is perfect for anybody who is new to running or maybe coming back into it after some time off. Just go to notyouraveragerunner.com/startrunning to sign up. [Notyouraveragerunner.com/startrunning](https://notyouraveragerunner.com/startrunning). If you know somebody who could use it, make sure to tell them about it. And I hope that it works for you. I know it's going to work for you because it's awesome. All right?

Okay my friends, I love you, stay safe, get your sweaty ass out there and run and I will see you next week.

Real quick, before you go, if you enjoyed this episode, you have 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.