

A smiling woman with blonde hair tied back, wearing a white tank top, is stretching her leg outdoors. She is holding a black running shoe with a blue stripe. The background is a blurred orange wall and greenery.

# ***RUNNING***

# ***101***

HOW TO GET STARTED  
& STAY MOTIVATED

TERI HUTCHEON  
A FOODIE STAYS FIT

## RUNNING 101

Hi there!

I'm soooo happy that you want to learn more about running, whether you've never run a mile or are inspired to dust off your running shoes. I've been running for 20 years (CRAZY), and I vividly remember the first time I ran more than 5 miles - I was 15. Since then, I've run two marathons, three 24 hour relay races, 20 half marathons and countless 5Ks and 10Ks.

I always love hearing from other runners, and over the years, by way of my blog [A Foodie Stays Fit](#) I've received countless running questions via email and social media. That has created loads of tried and true feedback that - until now - has been floating around without a nice tidy home.

So to make things easy peasy (so *you* can get to running), I've compiled my top tips to the top questions and created this here e-book, geared for newbies and those looking to re-energize their running.

Inside, you'll find advice on getting started, my favorite gear, fueling advice, injury prevention tips (that I've learned the hard way) and tips to stay motivated.

My hope is that this guide moves you forward faster and ignites a long-term love for running.

If at any point you have questions, don't hesitate to reach out in whatever way suits you best.

Happy running!

Teri

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## CHAPTER 1: GETTING STARTED: TIME TO GEAR UP!

### *Let's get some shoes!*

**The first thing I tell people when they want to start running is to get fitted at a running shoe speciality store** - not Dick's or some big box general sports store. You need a store that specializes in running, filled with employees who are runners themselves. When you go, be sure to take in an old pair of flat shoes that you regularly walk in. This helps the store clerk analyze your stride.

**They'll also likely analyze your gait by watching you run, assess any injuries (or risk of injuries) and help you pick a shoe to accomplish your specific goals.**

**The best way to find a running speciality store in your area?** Ask another runner. If you don't know any runners, see if you have a Fleet Feet in town, a national franchise. (That's where I go in Winston-Salem.)

If you REALLY, truly do not have a running speciality store in your area, there are a couple websites online to help you determine the right shoes for you. [Brooks Running](#) has a good tool as does [Runner's World](#). But again, I highly recommend going in person if you can - even if it's a bit of a drive. Your running shoes will make or break your experience, and the right pair will help you avoid injuries or severe discomfort when running. Expect to spend around \$100-\$180. It's an investment well worth making since they'll typically last 300-500 miles. Oh, and expect to buy a size that's bigger than your regular shoe size - you want about a thumbs width (or about half an inch) between your longest toe and the end of the shoe. (I go up a half or full-size from my regular shoes.) Your feet will swell a bit when you run and this will also help prevent black toenails and/or losing a toenail!

I have multiple pairs of running shoes, including Adidas Bostons, [Nike Zoom Elites](#), and [New Balance Zantes](#) and rotate them depending on the type of run I'm doing. But what's right for me may not be right for you.

**So I repeat: go to a running speciality store.**



## *Let's get dressed*

While your running shoes are the most important piece of equipment, quality clothes will help your experience be more enjoyable during your runs as well. You don't need anything fancy, but you will quickly find out why paying a little extra for a **sweat-wicking shirt and synthetic socks are worth the extra dough** (versus using an old cotton t-shirt and cotton socks you have lying around).

Here's why: **Wicking material helps keep you cool and won't get weighed down with sweat** (trust me, a soaked cotton t-shirt will feel heavy and you'll be way hotter or colder than necessary). Wicking material also helps prevent chafing and blisters. Which brings me to socks. Do not forget about wicking socks. Yes, they are more expensive - expect to pay \$10-\$15 for a single pair - but your feet will thank you later. [SwiftWick](#), [Feetures](#) and [SmartWool](#) are favorite brands of mine.

**Another must-have for all you ladies is a good sports bra.** Expect to spend \$10-\$65, depending on the level of support you need. If you're an A or B cup, you can go with a lower-support bra. C-D and beyond need something with more support (look for something that says high-impact). This [Brooks HotShot bra](#) is amazing - it says low-impact but I wear it whenever it's clean (and I'm a 32C). [Oiselle](#) and [Champion](#) have great options too.

For everything from shorts to capris to tanks to t-shirts and jackets, my first choice is the sale section from Oiselle. (Insider tip: If you sign up for Oiselle's emails, you'll also be notified of Oiselle Factory sales where you can get even better deals!) I also really like the [Zella brand from Nordstrom](#).

### **Other nice-to-have's (but not must-have's)**

- **Spotify or Pandora Paid Subscription**

Nothing is worse than hearing a commercial when you're right in the middle of an intense interval or pushing at the end of a run. A paid subscription kills all the commercials so you only hear your music. **I've had a monthly subscription to Spotify for over seven years and have NEVER regretted it.**

- **A GPS-Enabled sports watch**

I have the [Garmin 235](#) which is I cannot live without. It tracks mileage, pace, heart rate, elevation, splits and lots of other stuff. I connect it to [Strava](#) so I can track all my runs, weekly mileage and see how I'm progressing or troubleshoot aches and pains. It's expensive but Garmins NEVER die. (Sometimes I wish mine would die so I could upgrade.) I've had three Garmins in the past 15 years and the only reason I got new ones was when I lost one.

- **Strava account**

Speaking of [Strava](#), I'm a big fan. It's an online training log, but it's also a social network for runners and cyclists. I log all my workouts in there, including yoga, CrossFit and anything else I do to work up a sweat. The training log is amazing because I can look back at trends over weeks and months to help identify problems in my training (e.g. oh, I ramped my mileage up too quickly and that's probably why I have plantar fasciitis) or remember what worked well (how did I taper for the Boston Marathon?). I like that it tracks my splits and compares my runs on the same route over time.

I also love Strava for the social network. Many of my closest friends were first running friends and then those friends move away. I like feeling connected to them by seeing their runs, and when I'm lacking motivation, a quick scroll through Strava usually helps me get out the door.

- **Bluetooth headphones**

I'm a big fan of bluetooth headphones so I don't have to deal with cords getting hung up, especially when I have [lots of layers in the winter](#). I LOVE [my Apple AirPods](#), but in the humid, extra sweaty summer, I need earhooks to keep them in so I turn to [these](#).

- **Comfy post-run shoes**

A comfy pair of shoes to change into after a long run feels ahhhhmazing after a long run. I am obsessed with my [Ugg slippers](#) in the winter and my [Birkenstocks](#) in the summer. (Sometimes I even take my Birks with me if I'm driving to a trail to wear for the car ride home).

- You can see all my running gear here: <https://www.afoodiestaysfit.com/shop/running-gear/>

### *Let's get running*

Now that you've got the right gear and are laced up in the right shoes, it's time to get to it. When getting started, I recommend you start slow and keep it easy. Keep your focus on time, not distance or speed. And remember it's okay to walk!

**In the beginning, focus on a run/walk ratio and then work to improve on that.**

- Start with 1 minute of running, 2 minutes of walking on your first run. This ratio helps you ease into it.
- Once you feel comfortable doing this for 15 minutes, work up to 2 minutes of running and 2 minutes of walking.
- Then progress to 3 minutes of running and 2 minutes of walking.

You get the picture. The goal is to gradually make your periods of running longer than your periods of walking.

If you're looking for a training plan, there are so many good options online, some free and some paid. Some reliable resources include:

- [Runner's World Training Plans](#)
- [Strava Training Plans](#)
- [Hal Higdon](#)
- [Coach Jenny](#)
- Your library! See what running books they have with training plans!

If you're looking for a running coach, shoot me an email ([afoodiestaysfit@gmail.com](mailto:afoodiestaysfit@gmail.com)) and I can recommend a few based on your goals!

## CHAPTER 2: Fuel Appropriately: Get your snack on!

### PRE-RUN

I went through a phase where I had NO energy on my runs in the morning. Then it dawned on me that somehow, I'd gotten out of the habit of a pre-run snack. Some people can roll right out the door with just a little water and coffee in their system, but my body doesn't usually like that.

**Try to eat something with carbs at least 45 minutes before you head out for a run. Aim for about 200 calories** but if your stomach is especially sensitive, you may want to choose a snack with a little less. As you get in the habit of eating before runs, it will get easier to increase the calories. Most importantly, listen to your body – you know it better than anyone!

Here's what I do pre-run:

- I drink a FULL glass of water as soon as I wake up.
- I drink a cup (or two) of coffee
- I have a small snack with a hit of easily digestible carbs, usually a banana or a couple dates
  - If I have at least 30 minutes to digest, I'll add almond butter or peanut butter to the mix. Otherwise, I stick to just the banana/dates. [Tailwind](#), which has calories and carbs for fuel, is another go-to if I just don't feel like eating solids.



Between waking up and heading out the door, I typically take about 30-45 minutes - which means I wake up EARLY before my runs. My body and brain just needs that. But, some people can't or don't want to do that (which I totally get) and waking up 45 minutes early for the sole sake of eating sounds terrible. So, if you would rather sleep as long as possible, roll out of bed and run, and try a super simple snack.



[Honey Stinger Waffles](#), dates, raisins, or even something as simple as a spoonful of honey are all good options. It's better than leaving on an entirely empty stomach.

**Pre-run snacks that will digest quickly:**

- Banana
- Dates
- Raisins
- Unsweetened applesauce (the pouches are especially convenient)
- Piece of toast with honey
- A spoonful of honey (yes, please)
- Small bowl of cereal (I really like Mesa Sunrise)
- Honey Stinger Waffle
- [Tailwind](#)

Avoid high-fat and high-protein foods. You're looking for super simple carbs.

If you have a longer window before you run, you can eat a heftier meal or snack. I really love oatmeal or toast with + peanut butter + sliced banana, cinnamon and sea salt on top. Just remember if you eat a bigger meal with more complexity (i.e. carbs + protein + fat), you'll want to eat about 1.5-2 hours ahead of your so your body has time to break down the fuel for use. Otherwise, you'll feel sluggish and your gut may hurt.

**Pre-run snacks if you have more time to digest:**

- Banana with peanut butter
- Oatmeal with raisins + almond butter
- [Dates stuffed with almond butter or tahini](#)
- [Chocolate Oat Energy Bars](#)
- Slice of [gluten-free banana bread](#)
- An [RX Bar](#)
- [Sweet & Salty Energy Balls](#)
- [S'more Coffee Plz Energy Balls](#)
- Rice cakes with peanut butter, honey, and sliced banana

**A note about coffee:**

While I tolerate it just fine, most people do *not* respond well to coffee so soon before a run. (Remember, I wait about 45 minutes between drinking coffee and running.) Most people will experience GI distress from coffee and may end up blaming it on the food they ate before the run – instead of realizing that it's likely the diuretic properties of the coffee causing the problem. And that may make you want to omit food before an early run. Try omitting coffee before you omit food. (Just don't omit food, mmmkay?)





If it's hot out, I also like to drink a [Nuun](#) before I run for electrolytes. The tablets dissolve in a cup of water in about the amount of time it takes to put your shoes on.

The key for me is to just listen to my body, pay attention to how my run goes and learn from it. Try different foods to see what settles best and give yourself enough time to digest! It may take a little practice to get your stomach used to having food pre-run (especially if you run early in the morning), but it's worth it.

And if you just really, honestly, truly can't put anything solid in your stomach before you run (and you know because you actually tried and experimented with multiple snack options), try a drink mix. [Skratch Labs](#) makes an [exercise hydration mix](#) that dissolves in water that gives you carbs and electrolytes. You could drink it before you head out for your run or carry it with you.

#### **MID-RUN:**

Until you are running more than 45 minutes, you shouldn't need to fuel mid-run. You have enough in your glycogen stores to fuel you. (Glycogen is a form of blood sugar that the body stores in muscles for

future use. When energy is needed on a run, glycogen is quickly used to give the body the fuel it needs for the activity.) So while you may not need fuel for shorter runs, make sure you plan for some water stops ([or carry a water bottle](#)) if it's hot, and perhaps take in some electrolytes if it's extra hot and/or humid. I really like using [Nuun tablets](#) in my water since I like the taste and they give me electrolytes!

If you're running more than 45 minutes, you will need to fuel. Plan to intake carbs every 45-60 minutes of your run and take in water with your fuel as well.

My favorite mid-run fuel:

- Dates (I put them in a plastic baggy)
- [GU Energy Gel](#) (I like the Vanilla and S'mores flavors)
- [Skratch Lab Chews](#)
- [Honey Stinger Waffles](#)
- [Honey Stinger Energy Chews](#)
- Unsweetened applesauce pouches (they fit in most running shorts pockets)

Try a few different brands and formulas since you may prefer one type of texture over another. Your local running store should have a wide variety.

## **POST-RUN**

Within 30 minutes of your run, have a snack with a ratio of 4:1 carbs to protein. A good option is two pieces of toast with some scrambled eggs, or a peanut butter and jelly sandwich works great, too! Eggs and sweet potato with blueberries is one of my favorite combos!



Don't wait too long to refuel after a run, especially a long or intense effort, since your body needs to start the repair process. Having carbs as part of your recovery to help restore glycogen stores is critical, and the body assimilates it best in the immediate 30-45 minutes post-run.

Speaking of carbs, DON'T SKIMP ON CARBS. [Read more here.](#)

If you're looking for more help and a deeper dive on sports nutrition, [click here](#) to sign up for the waitlist for my Nutrition for Athletic Performance course. My good friend, Christian Behrens, is a Sports Dietitian and Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist, with experience working with professional, collegiate, and Olympic athletes. We've partnered up to share a deep dive on nutrition to help you run and feel your best.

## CHAPTER 3: RECOVERY

Oh, recovery. It's one of those things that I pretty much ignored until I hit my 30s and suddenly my body DEMANDED it. Recovery is key to running happy and healthy and keeping injuries at bay. People love to talk about their training - long runs, intense speed work, total weekly miles -- but what isn't quite as glamorous is all the work that happens *off* the road. (Or at least *should* happen!)

Why is recovery so dang important? Recovery is what allows you to improve, to get faster and most importantly, stave off injury. Yes, you need to put in the miles and push yourself to improve, but you if you don't recover from your hard efforts (or even the medium efforts that add up!), you aren't allowing your body to adapt. Your body needs downtime to process the stress it experiences from training. Recovery also helps ensure that you're not under-fueled, over-fatigued or on your way to an injury or sickness. Plus, your immune system gets taxed with training and if you don't recover properly, you'll be more susceptible to sickness, which will put a hamper on your training. No thanks!

People often talk about overtraining, but I really think under-recovery is the bigger culprit. If you do recover, you can push harder, go longer, and get faster. If you don't recover, your body simply won't let you push into a higher gear. Aim for contrast - hard efforts, easy efforts. Intense work, intense rest.

There are four main areas of recovery that I focus on each week:

### 1) Stretching & Mobility

Lengthening your muscles and working out tight kinks will keep you moving fluidly. And moving fluidly is so important to keep your gait natural and injuries at bay. Stretching for even 5-10 minutes after every run will make a difference. And also try to get a few sessions in with a [foam roller](#) or [lacrosse ball](#) throughout the week to work on extra tight spots. (Google the best ways to use them depending on what area is bothering you.)

If I'm tempted to skimp on stretching, I remind myself that it's better to cut my run a mile short to allow time to stretch than skipping it altogether. Depending on the workout, you likely won't benefit *that* much from one extra mile, but you will benefit from stretching for 10 minutes.





## 2) Sleep

Sleep!!! We're talking 7-9 hours a night. I know, 9 hours is probably unrealistic but definitely do not skimp. Turn the TV off early. Put your phone in another room. Heck, cut a mile off your run if it helps you finish your day earlier. Grab a book and try reading before bed. It can help you fall asleep quicker, and it makes you smarter!

## 3) Rest

In addition to sleep, rest includes not overdoing it with workouts, both with running and with cross-training. Cross-training is fine (and a good thing to keep you strong!), but you need to time it appropriately. Don't expect to do a killer Crossfit workout the day after a hard interval workout. And don't expect to always have a good long run two days after a hard cycle class. Delayed Onset Muscle Soreness ([DOMS](#)) is a real thing.

Don't forget that you need complete days off without any workouts. If you get antsy, dedicate your rest day to mobility and stretching or a good yoga class. Or take your dog on a long walk. Or get a good running book and curl up in your favorite spot outside. Or do some meal prep with healthy pre-run snacks (see chapter 2!).

## 4) Fuel/Hydration

Eating a healthy diet is also a key part of recovery. Be sure to review the fueling chapter and make sure you're taking in food after your workouts. And remember - everything that goes in your body impacts your training. Junk food = junk miles (and this goes for junk drinks too).

### Other recovery tools:

- Take an [epsom salt](#) bath
- Put your legs up the wall post-run for 5 minutes
- Wear [compression socks](#)
- Use an [R8 Roll Recovery](#)

### Signs of inadequate recovery:

- Constant fatigue
- Increased moodiness and irritability
- Grumpiness
- Prolonged or intense muscle soreness
- Loss of motivation
- Changes in appetite (increased or decreased)
- Legs feel excessively heavy and tired

If you have at least 50% of these symptoms that can't be attributed to anything else, take a few days off (or more) for a mental and physical reset. Once your motivation comes back and your mood improves, you can start to resume your workouts. Be careful not to jump back in too quickly.

## CHAPTER 4: RUNNING SAFETY

**I can predict with 95% accuracy if someone is a runner by how they drive.** I feel like runners have a sense for where there might be blind spots in the road where a runner could be and they also learn popular running routes and drive more carefully through there. The more you run, the better driver you'll be and help keep other runners safe. That's solid logic, right? Of course, there are runners who are terrible drivers, but if you start to pay attention when you run, you can help keep runners safe when you're behind the wheel.

Of course, you should always take precautions when you're pounding the pavement because obviously not everyone is looking out for runners all the time! And, some drivers are downright aggressive towards runners.

- **Never assume the driver sees you.** If in doubt, just wait until the car has gone.
- **Never assume you can outrun a car.** If you're wrong, you lose.
- **Run against traffic unless it's a curvy road** where you could get pushed off the road by someone taking a tight turn.
- **Try to look around bends for oncoming cars** as early as you can so you know if you'll need to stop. Be especially cautious around yellow lights when drivers have a tendency to gun it.
- **If it's dawn or dusk, wear reflective gear!** ([This is my favorite reflective vest](#)). I also have [knuckle lights](#).
- **Be aware of your surroundings, even if you need to pull your earbuds out.** This is especially important if you're in an area you're unsure of, e.g. traffic patterns, sketchiness, etc.
- **If you run solo, please be careful.** Trust your gut. Tell or text someone to let them know when you are leaving, how long you are running for, the general area you'll be running in (or the exact route if you know it). Then text them again when you get back. If it's dark, please be EXTRA careful and run well-lit streets, routes where other runners will be out, and maybe even run with pepper spray. Scary stuff can happen anywhere – but be smart. Since I often run with my phone, I use the tracker feature with Strava Premium so Tommy can see where I am mid-run, and the Find Your Friends feature on iPhones works too.

## CHAPTER 5: TO RACE OR NOT TO RACE? | That is (often) the question.

Here's a secret: sometimes I find it really hard to get motivated to run if I don't have a race on my calendar.

**My trick: I set a weekly goal in Strava and the incentive to meet that goal definitely gets me out the door.** Now while I won't always hit my goal — life happens, I crave other workouts, my body needs a break, my mind needs a break — it's a good way to motivate me without the structure of a training plan. Just as the body needs down periods in a training cycle, so does the mind.

That being said, most beginning runners are usually curious about racing - and sometimes intimidated. But -- I mean this -- you do NOT need to be intimidated by racing. Every single race I've run had a first-time racer. You don't need to worry about your time (unless you want to) and you don't need to worry about how you'll stack up against others (unless you want to). Runners are so supportive and if you tell anyone there that it's your first race, I guarantee they'll be excited and encouraging. We've all had a first race!



Having a race on the calendar is great motivation to stick to a training plan or to push yourself to a new level, whether it's a faster pace or higher mileage or getting out the door one more day a week. Be sure

to give yourself plenty of time to properly train for a race, no matter the distance. Whatever training plan you follow, don't try to cut it short and don't skip too many runs. If life gets in the way too often, pick a different goal race or an easier plan and start the plan over.

And remember, racing should be fun, and however you define fun is fine! Sometimes I just enjoy the energy and excitement of a race and other times it's for me to push myself to see if I can set a new personal best.



## CHAPTER 6: MOTIVATION | HOW TO LACE UP & GET OUT THE DOOR WHEN YOU DON'T WANT TO.

**Some days you're totally into running. Other days, you're ...well... notsomuch.**

I totally get it - and after 20 years of running, I still experience those slumps. But over time I've found some go-to things that help me stay motivated, no matter if I'm training for a big race or just trying to meet my weekly mileage goal.

### **/ HAVE A BIGGER WHY //**

For me running is much more than a physical workout. I've run to challenge myself. I've run to clear my head. I've run to heal heartbreak. I've run for the pure joy of running. I've run to manage stress. I've run to feel like myself. I've run to be by myself. On days I don't feel like lacing up I remember that I almost always feel better and more at ease after I'm done. Some days, that alone time is enough motivation. Here are some of the top 10 things that motivate me to run.

### **10 THINGS THAT MOTIVATE ME TO GET OUT THE DOOR FOR A RUN**

**10. Running helps me think through problems or big decisions.** Whenever I've had a major life decision, I go for a run before making a final choice. And when I'm stuck with something I just can't figure out, like how to manage something at work or with family, going for a run usually sparks some insight. My brain solves problems when it's not forcing the issue.

**9. Running lets me think about nothing at all.** When I'm overworked or stressed or burned out, sometimes the best thing for me is to go for a run without my watch and without my headphones. The problem doesn't go away, but it feels more manageable after giving my head a little space.

**8. Running helps my GI problems.** I've always had a finicky stomach and I've learned over the years that my gut is happier when I run. I think part of it is related to stress; stress makes my GI issues worse and running decreases my stress. Therefore, for me, running = improved GI function.

**7. Running makes me feel REALLY great when I'm done.** And even better is the feeling after a REALLY GREAT run that I almost skipped.

**6. Running lets me experience and appreciate mornings.** I love mornings. It's, hands down, my favorite time of day. I used to be an evening runner and have transitioned to an AM runner since moving to Winston-Salem 10+ years ago, and now I *love* running in the mornings, particularly outside. I love the quiet. I love the feeling of getting a whole part of the day that others are missing, like I have a secret world to myself. I love the morning light and the soft sunrises. I love starting my day with fresh air. I love the peace that mornings bring, and I wouldn't experience that nearly as often if it weren't for running.



**5. Running helps me push my body past its limits and learn what it's capable of.** I never ever thought I'd run a half marathon below 1:55, so I still get giddy thinking about my current PR (1:33). I never thought my body could move to the tune of a 6 minute pace and I've done track repeats in the low 5s. I wrote "Run the Boston Marathon" on a life goals list for a financial and future planning class I took in college but didn't think it'd ever *actually* happen. And then [I ran the 2018 Boston Marathon](#), in some of the toughest weather on record, and re-qualified for the 2019 race. The body is an amazing thing and capable of so much - and running helps me learn that, over and over.

**4. Running helps me celebrate other's accomplishments.** I love running races with friends, loved ones and even strangers and seeing their faces after a race. Whether you call yourself "fast" or "slow" or a "mid-packer" you got out there and pushed yourself. And there is something so awesome about that.

**3. Running helps me make friends.** Seriously, nearly all of my closest friends in Winston-Salem have come through running. It's an instant bonding topic, "Oh you're a runner? Me too!"

**2. Running helps me develop tighter-knit friendships.** Some of my very best friendships were formed over runs. There's something hard to describe about running friendships...but for me, I become a bit more vulnerable and open and talk about things I normally wouldn't talk about.

**1. Running gives me a sense of identify and helps me feel like me. And I like knowing that I'm a runner even on days I don't run.**



#### OTHER TIPS TO STAY MOTIVATED:

**Get a running buddy!** They'll keep you accountable when you feel like skipping a run! Your running buddy doesn't have to be local, but it does have to be someone who won't coddle you and tell you to skip a run, that it's okay, that you can skip today...and tomorrow, that you deserve that extra drink, that you deserve to sleep in. Yeah, you probably do deserve all that - but you also deserve to stick to your goals. And if that buddy doesn't help you stick to your running goals, they're not the right running buddy for you.

Find a friend you can text when motivation is running low who will encourage you to get out the door and will follow up to make sure you did -- or, even better, will meet you for a run! I have two great running friends that I text on the regular for motivation - one is in Florida and one is in California. They're both a long ways from Winston-Salem, NC but their support is invaluable.





**Find a local running group or a training group.** It sound intimidating, I know. The key is to find one at your same level. Ask the speciality running store when you get your shoes.

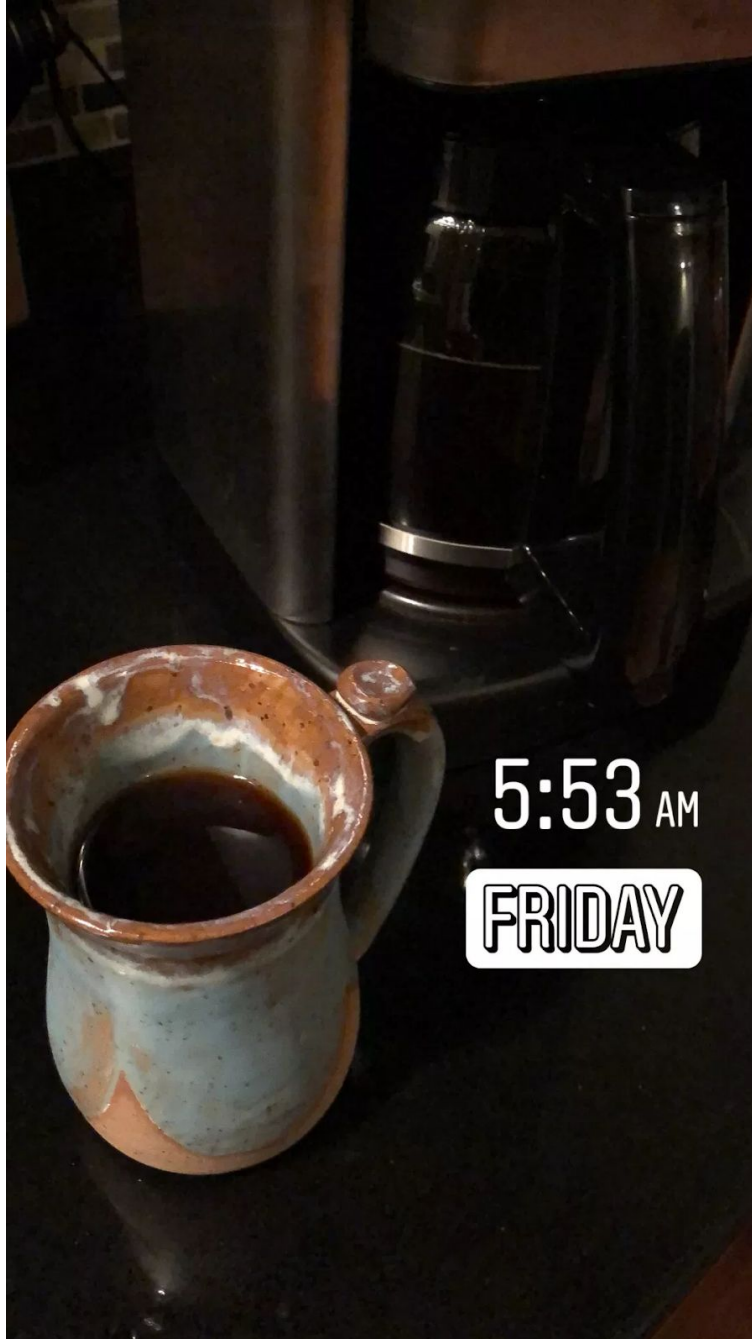
**Use social media.** If I'm feeling meh about running, I'll go look at some of my favorite runners I follow on Instagram, whether they are a real life friend or not! Seeing their run for the day and the post-run glow they have reminds me how great it feels after a run.

**Use Strava.** I am always motivated and inspired seeing the runs that my friends have logged that week! And, I don't want to be left out of the fun or fall short of my weekly mileage goal!



## CHAPTER 7: BECOME A MORNING RUNNER

I get up nearly every day sometime between 5:15 and 5:40 to run or to work. (I do my best work, including writing blog posts, early in the morning so I try to catch up on that when it's an off day or short run day.) While I sleep in 1-2 days a week, "sleeping in" still means a 6:30-7:00 wake-up time. And sleeping in is almost always done intentionally to get extra sleep to help me recover from hard workouts.



One of the most-asked questions I get on Instagram is something along the lines of “How do you get up so early?!” or “I want to be a morning person! How do I do it?” or “How do you get out of bed?” or “I want to be a morning runner! How do wake up early to run?”

**My short answer is, I JUST DO IT.**

That’s the bottom line – you just HAVE to do it. I do have five tips that help, but when it’s all said and done, it comes back to this: don’t hit snooze, get up when your alarm goes off, and don’t get back in bed. Sorry folks. No magic potion (well, coffee is kind of magic) and no secrets. But, how about some tips that make it little easier to get up early, hm?

- **Go to bed at a consistent time.**

If you go to bed and wake up at drastically different times, your body doesn’t really know what to expect. And your body *likes* a routine. It will start to produce melatonin (which makes you sleepy) at the same time every night. Your body will also get used to waking up at the same time, and while you may still need an alarm (I do!), it will be easier because your body is used to it. There’s all sorts of science behind that, which I can’t really explain (there are smart scientists who can, so google if you’re interested), but know that there *are* chemicals/hormones in the body that will work in your favor if you let them.

- **Set your alarm and leave it in another room.**

I use my phone for my alarm, and I leave it in the bathroom after I finished **my nightly skincare routine** and brush my teeth. If it’s next to my bed on my nightstand, I *will* hit snooze. So I removed that option. I have to physically get out of bed to shut it off. And, since **I love my husband** and I’d like to him to keep loving me, I can’t just let it keep going off for 5 minutes.

- **Put a visual reminder of WHY you are getting up next to your alarm**

I put my current training plan and running clothes for the next day next to my phone so when I turn off my alarm, I have a visual reminder of *why* I want to get up (rather than hitting snooze and getting back in bed, which I’ve done a couple times – it’s never worth it). That visual cue helps a LOT. And it’s also part of my evening and morning routine, which leads me to...

- **Follow a routine at night *and* in the morning**

People talk about an evening routine as it relates to making it easier to fall asleep, but I think it’s important to help you wake up early as well. I firmly believe a morning routine is just as important as an evening routine. Your body and mind are very likely tired first thing in the morning and if it can go through some things on auto-pilot, it helps.

I usually head up to our bedroom to wind down around 9:30-9:45 and start my nighttime routine. Electronics keep me up and TV especially gets me worked up, so it’s super important for me to get away from that about an hour before I want to fall asleep. (Tommy, on the other hand, gets sleepy watching TV so he stays downstairs to wind down watching the news or a documentary. What is it with guys and documentaries? Anyway.)

***My evening routine:***

- take out my contacts + wash my face
- floss + brush my teeth

- get my running clothes out + plug in my Garmin
- set my alarm, plug in my phone and leave it the bathroom
- read for 15-30 minutes, do our nightly Q&A when Tommy comes upstairs, read for 5 more minutes
- drink a little water, put my mouthguard in, earplugs in and eye mask on (YEP, I'm that person)
- Turn my lamp off (sometimes Tommy will stay up later to read, but the eye mask makes that a-okay)

It's literally exactly that same routine, every single night, even when I travel.

### *My morning routine:*

- get up, drink a full glass of water, put on my glasses, get my phone, carry my running clothes downstairs
- get coffee (Tommy preps the coffee the night before and it starts on a timer 15 minutes before my alarm so it's ready when I get downstairs)
- sit on the couch for 5-10 minutes, easing into consciousness while snuggling my dog, Maizey, and watching the sun start to rise
- put on my running clothes while eating a pre-run snack and drinking another cup of coffee
- go upstairs, put in my contacts, pull my hair back and kiss Tommy goodbye (who is usually getting up as I leave to run)

Nearly every single morning starts the same way. And I honestly look forward to mornings because I'm not forcing myself to get dressed right away or head out the door in 10 minutes to run. Yeah, that means I have to wake up earlier but that to me is less brutal than needing to function immediately upon waking up. (I had a MUCH easier time waking up and getting out the door to run in 15 minutes when I was in my early-to-mid 20s! No more!) I love the morning snuggles with my Maizey, drinking coffee in silence and watching the horizon turn red and orange as the sun thinks about waking up too.

When I travel, I try to follow this same routine. In fact, I tried to follow this as much as possible [the morning of the Boston Marathon](#) to help ease my nerves.

### **Have a WHY that's important enough to you**

This will be personal, but you need to identify WHY you want to get up in the morning. For me, it creates more time in the evenings to spend time with Tommy, relax, run errands, walk Maizey, and cook dinner. I also know that my most productive time is in the morning so if I have a lot of work to do or a blog deadline, I take advantage of my magic morning hours when I can *crush*

work. I also really love the peace and quiet of the mornings, where it feels like I have the world to myself.

Whatever your WHY is, identify it and then create a visual reminder, whether it's your running shoes, a sticky note with a written reminder that you put on your alarm, or a picture of your family. Then, when you're tempted to hit snooze, you'll be reminded of WHY you're doing it. And for me, that's enough.



## CHAPTER 8: RUN FASTER | 7 TIPS TO INCREASE YOUR SPEED

I get asked weekly on Instagram how I run so fast - it's taken me YEARS of work!

I wouldn't say I was born naturally fast – I've worked hard to reduce my race times (my first half marathon was 1:57 and my first 5K was 25:56) and my training runs were in the 10-11 minute mile range from about age 14-25, until I started to focus on increasing my speed. In 2012, I beat my [5K PR](#) (current PR 20:24 – 2013), beat my [half marathon PR](#) (current PR 1:33 — December 2016), qualified for the Boston Marathon in 2017 with a 3:28 time, placed in my age group at multiple races, and even [won a race in the women's division](#). (Wow, that boosted my self esteem just typing that out!)

There are seven factors that I think contributed to my increased speed....they aren't ranked in order of importance, but if I had to pick just two that I felt were significant impacts on running faster, I'd say #1 and #5.

**1. I ran with runners who were much faster than me.** A lot of the time, it sucked running with them. I was frustrated that their "easy" pace was killer for me and embarrassed when I had to ask them to slow down or just go on without me. But my ego is such that I worked my butt off to keep up as best I could and, eventually, my easy pace re-calibrated. My easy pace used to be a 9:30 – 10:00 min/mile and now my easy pace for longer runs is around 8:15-8:30 min/mile and for shorter runs, 7:50 – 8:00 min/mile.

**2. I lost weight. (nearly 20 pounds from my highest weight)** I didn't really do this on purpose to be honest. I know, I hate it when people say that, but it's the truth for me. I've never been the type who lost weight when stressed (in fact, I usually gain weight when stressed because I dip into emotional eating) but I guess I reached my tipping point for stress – and apparently I lose weight under extreme levels of stress. I do NOT recommend the stress diet. Stress aside, I think that cutting out dairy and wheat and starting yoga also helped with my weight loss.

**3. I stopped getting injured as frequently.** You can read more about that in chapter 11!

**4. I ran intervals (usually on the treadmill).** I started running intervals on the treadmill mostly because I kept getting bored on the treadmill. And then I noticed how much my "fast" speed on the treadmill started improving and it motivated me to keep pushing the pace. You don't have to do anything formal: just warm up for 10+ minutes and then start alternating between running fast and running very easy or walking. I typically do 30-60 seconds fast and 30-90 seconds recovery. You can see some more of my interval workouts [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#). I also really enjoy intervals at the track now!



**5. I learned to deal with discomfort from pushing the pace.** I really don't like discomfort while running. I used to have the motto that I run because I enjoy it and if I push too hard, I won't enjoy it. And that motto was fine for a time. But then I wanted to get faster and that motto can't apply when working on speed. I chant mantras in my head (like, "the faster you run, the faster you finish"), imagine how good it feels when I beat my PR, and channel any stress I have into the discomfort.

**6. I felt the high of beating PRs and placing in my age group, which helped with #5.**

**7. I got older.** I've read before that women reach their peak in running from about 28-38. It might be a coincidence and I'm not sure of the science behind it, but it seems to be happening.

Increasing your running speed takes patience and smart work. Remember, I've been running for 20 years and racing for over 10. I didn't cut nearly 30 minutes off my half marathon time in 6 months. Not to say that you can't, but don't be discouraged if you cut just a little off at a time - that's how it goes for most runners! Celebrate the little wins and every improvement!

## CHAPTER 9: RUNNING IN THE COLD

As you may know, I grew up in Utah. While not the coldest state in the country, I've definitely experienced some very chilly days. And contrary to what my family thinks ;), North Carolina does get cold. We don't get in the single digits as often as they do, but the cold here is bitter...I think it must have something to do with the humidity. It feels like a damp cold that cuts to your bone...I swear 30 degrees here feelers MUCH colder than 30 degrees in Utah.





I've been running for over 20 years, in Utah, in NC, and while traveling for work and play which means I've dealt with all kinds of weather, including freezing temps, [pouring freezing rain](#) and multiple feet of snow in my days (oh heavens I'm getting old...I just wrote "in my days"...).

**Here are some tips to keep running comfortably through the cold months.**

**1. LAYER LAYER LAYER:** Wear multiple tops and multiple bottoms. As you warm up you can shed layers if necessary. Layers help keep you warmer than one heavy piece of clothing and also help with wicking sweat. (Until you figure out what layering options work best for you, I suggest running in loops near your house so you can ditch layers at home if necessary, assuming you don't want to carry your excess.)

**Here are some good guidelines for dressing for cold weather running.**

- **30 degrees:** 2 tops, 1 bottom. Long-sleeve base layer and a vest keep your core warm. Tights or maybe shorts if you prefer to be cooler.
- **10 to 20 degrees:** 2 tops, 2 bottoms. A jacket over your base layer and wind pants over the tights.
- **0 to 10 degrees:** 3 tops, 2 bottoms. Two tops (fleece for the cold-prone) and a jacket. Windbrief for the fellas.
- **Minus 10 to 0 degrees:** 3 tops, 2 bottoms, extra pair of mittens, 1 scarf wrapped around mouth or a balaclava.
- **Minus 20 degrees:** 3 tops, 3 bottoms, 2 extra pairs of mittens, 1 balaclava, sunglasses. Or, stay inside.

If it's below zero, I ain't running. But major kudos to you if you do. Just be smart about it and check with other local runners for how they dress. And make sure someone knows where you are planning to run and when you'll be back.

You can [see cold running gear I recommend here](#).

**2. AVOID COTTON:** As we reviewed before, cotton absorbs sweat and holds onto it. And what happens with cotton when it holds onto all the sweat? You end up in soaking wet, heavy clothes and your body temp drops mid-run. *Bad bad bad*. Another reason to always opt for wicking material. Read the labels if you aren't sure to make sure it says something to the effect of helping to pull sweat from your body and evaporate. Note: all my layers from tip #1 are technical tops.

**3. INVEST IN A GOOD RUNNING JACKET.** It's worth every penny. When it's miserably cold outside, you'll have a good outer layer that wicks sweat away from your skin, helps break the wind and most importantly, keeps your core warm. [Backcountry](#) has great options.

**4. KEEP YOUR HANDS AND HEAD WARM.** While you need to ensure your feet are warm enough (there are great wool running socks available), I always notice (and am miserable) if my hands or ears are cold. When in doubt, put on gloves and a beanie. If you do get too hot, you can take off your gloves/beanie and tuck them into your waistband or just carry them.

When I run in really cold temperatures, I wear heavier gloves. If it's around 30 degrees or warmer, I'm usually fine with some cheap gloves. I buy a bunch of gloves at the dollar store and use them during the colder months. (They are also great to have for race days when you are freezing at the starting line but warm up during the race. They were cheap so just ditch them at a water station.)

My earband and beanie are fleece. Fleece is cheap and pulls moisture away relatively well. If you're running in really cold temps often, you should probably spend money on a good, technical material beanie.

**5. WARM UP ON A TREADMILL.** If it's really cold, sometimes I'll go to the gym to run on the treadmill for the first mile, then layer up and head out for the rest of my run.

**6. REMOVE YOUR WORKOUT CLOTHES IMMEDIATELY AFTER YOUR RUN.** Your clothes will still get sweaty, even if it's technical gear, and you don't want to stay in wet clothing as your body temperatures starts to come down after your run. Helloooo beginning stages of hypothermia. Trust me – I know from experience.

**7. RUN WITH A FRIEND.** Running in the cold can be miserable. Having good company makes it much more enjoyable. And they'll get you out there when you really don't want to.

**8. DON'T BE STUPID.** If road conditions aren't good (e.g. after a storm or when ice has formed), be very wary of cars, especially around curves or when coming to a stop. Even if plows have cleared the roads, be aware of how much space you'll have (or not have) on the road; piled snow makes the lanes much narrower and will probably cover up any shoulder of the road that you usually run on. You may need to change your usual route to take the roads less driven to avoid playing chicken on coveted asphalt space. And if it's simply too cold, too icy, too dangerous, run on a treadmill, take a cycle class, foam roll, or enjoy a cup hot chocolate on the couch and call it a recovery day.

**9. OTHER TIPS/NOTES for running in the cold.**

- There's not as much daylight in the winter months, so **be sure to wear reflective gear** ([this is my favorite](#)) if you are running in the dark, dawn or dusk.
- If your schedule allows, **run in the middle of the day** when there is more warmth. Lunch break runs are great during the winter months.
- **Don't expect to run your best.** You might be slower. It may feel harder. Cold temps can do that. But you get a gold star just for being out there.
- **Don't forget to drink.** You might not feel thirsty, but you still need to hydrate before and after running. And hydrate and fuel during the run if you're out there for 60+ minutes.
- Know your body. **If you just don't feel right, call it a day and head inside.** Shivering, dizziness, sudden anger/hostility...don't try to be unnecessarily hardcore and try to push through it. It could be hypothermia.
- **I LOVE the tool from Runner's World called "[What Should I Wear?](#)"** You enter in your weather conditions, and it will tell you what to wear. Brilliant!



## CHAPTER 10: THE TREADMILL LIFE | TIPS TO ENJOY it MORE

I did multiple 18-20 mile runs on the treadmill leading up to the 2018 Boston Marathon and even did a 22 miler on the treadmill at one point when the roads were way too icy to run on!

Whether I'm doing a long run or a 5 miler on the treadmill, I always get asked by friends, family and blog readers how I don't get bored on the treadmill. While I almost always prefer outside miles, I enjoy indoor miles a little more with these five tips.

### 5 Tips to Beat Treadmill Boredom

#### 1. Bring good entertainment, e.g. playlists, podcasts or TV shows

I feel like most articles about "how to not get bored on the treadmill" have 5 tips and one is a podcast, one is music, and one is a TV show. In my mind, those are ALL the same tip since they're just a form of entertainment. And it totally varies what type of entertainment I'm in the mood for every time I hop on the treadmill. I have my go-to playlists, and I also really like using the Discover or Artist Radio playlists on Spotify. Sometimes I listen to podcasts. I rarely watch TV when I run these days, but when I was *Nashville* junkie, I *only* watched episodes on the treadmill.

Whatever you're feeling, go for it. And if you start to listen to a podcast and you're still bored, try music. You're not stuck with whatever you started with, and it's easy to pause and switch it up. I often utilize both music and podcasts throughout a long treadmill run. And sometimes I end up turning it off altogether.

#### 2. Alternate miles between zoning out & problem solving

Sometimes I want to zone out on runs and sometimes I want to work through problems. If I have anything longer than 8 miles, I go to the treadmill with a sticky note of things that are on my mind with a game plan to dedicate miles to them. I typically start with one mile zoning out to music to get me going, then I turn down the music a little and dedicate mile 2 to thinking through a problem. Then I go back to blasting music and zoning out. Then, I move onto the next problem for the next mile (or pick up where I left off thinking about the first one!). Having dedicated blocks to work AND relax helps it feel like less of a slog because I give myself the freedom to zone out vs. feeling like the entire run has to be a "productive" one. But, having a list helps keep my mind busy with other thoughts if they start to drift into the "oof, I've been on here for a long time" territory.

#### 3. Incorporate Intervals & Pace Changes

I LOVE the treadmill for interval work since it really helps push me. (Note: I don't think you should do ALL your interval work on the treadmill. Be sure to hit the track for some speed sessions so you learn to push without the help/threat of the treadmill belt.) But, if you aren't on a specific training plan or you never do intervals, use the day(s) that you need to hit the treadmill to add in some intervals. You can see some of my interval workouts [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

But, what if you have a long run you need to do on the treadmill and running intervals really aren't a good idea? I still like to include some pace change just to give the legs a little variety. Sometimes that is 1-2 miles mid-run at 15-30 seconds faster per mile, followed by 15-30 seconds per mile slower for a mile. Sometimes I plan to do a light progression and very gradually increase the pace (starting very easy!) and then decrease the pace as a long cool down. Just do *something* to mix it up so your legs aren't running the exact same pace for 1.5-2 hours. I also play with the incline a little bit. Think about it – when you run outside, your pace and the terrain is rarely exactly the same throughout the run. You adjust for hills, you adjust for traffic, you adjust with your running partner. All of that is variety that you lack on a treadmill, so try to add it back in.

#### **4. View the treadmill as a reward**

While I don't always look forward to the treadmill, I definitely don't dread it. I try to think of it as a reward where I can truly relax. When I run outside, I can rarely zone out for long stretches. My mind is constantly assessing and evaluating, "Is that a pothole? Is that black ice? Am I safe? Should I turn off my music so I can hear what's happening around me? What's my plan if someone came at me? Is there a car coming? Can I beat that car? Ugh, it's so dark. UGH, tree limb! Agh, did I hurt my ankle? Should I stop? Wait, I think I'm okay. Ooooh boy, I'm glad I didn't roll my ankle." And so on. There are just so many variables when running outside, especially when it's dark and/or rainy and/or cold. I'm not complaining, but it's the reality that your mind HAS to be assessing a lot when you're out on the roads, especially as a female. So, I look to the treadmill as an opportunity to actually zone out and not think about all those things.

And, when it's cold, think about how nice it is to run in shorts and a tank top when it's 10 degrees (or worse!) outdoors. Oh, and I NEVER call the treadmill a "dreadmill." Never, ever. Positive thinking folks. Positive thinking.

#### **5. Run next to a friend**

Last year, my friend Kate and I were training together a lot and headed out for an easy Sunday run. We got about half a mile into the run, and were both MISERABLE. It was raining and the wind was awful. I can't remember who suggested it, but we decided to turn around and run on the treadmills in my gym. We still chatted like we would outside and she was able to run faster than I was since I just wasn't feeling it. This is a tip I rarely get to take advantage of since most of my running friends aren't members at the gym I go to but if you have the option, it's a nice one. (It's an especially great option if you and a friend run different paces!) Note – pay attention to the vibe around you at the gym. People chatting nonstop on the treadmill might be super annoying in some gyms, so use common sense and manners. Kate and I were the only ones in my gym the few times we ran side by side so it was fine.

**Bonus tip: Build some grit and mental toughness.**

When it gets boring or frustrating, EMBRACE it. Let yourself feel that. Part of being a runner — especially a long-distance runner — is getting comfortable with discomfort, both physical and mental. Use the treadmill as an opportunity to build some mental toughness and prove to yourself that you CAN push through, even when it's boring.

And don't forget to take your [water bottle](#), [nuun](#), [tailwind](#), [gu](#), [electrolytes](#), [earbuds](#), whatever else you'd typically need on a long run to the treadmill. And enjoy how nice it is to just to set them down and not worry about circling back to get them or carry them with you. Another reward of the treadmill!

## CHAPTER 11: IT HURTS! | TIPS TO HELP PREVENT INJURIES

As a runner, you'll probably at some point deal with running injuries which can be extremely frustrating and disheartening. I've been there. I've cried from pain during training runs and during races. I cried even more from the frustration. I gimped around with ice packs on my knee after races, so frustrated knowing that I could have had a better time *if only* I hadn't been injured and had to slow due to pain.

Here are some of the things I've learned that help me prevent injuries and help speed recovery.

### 1. Yoga

My first injury-free race came in 2008, six months after I starting practicing yoga. I was amazed. In 2007 I had run multiple races with severe pain (despite a prescription for prednisone to help with the injury + regular cortisone shots) and was under the care of an ortho and a PT. Despite their treatments, I was still running with pain. I started yoga and my IT band issues went away.

*Moral of the story: My doctors weren't looking at me holistically. Yoga addressed a root issue that I didn't know I had and my doctors didn't address: severely tight muscles and heel striking. (Second moral: find a good doctor!)*

### 2. Not running through pain.

When I was training for my first marathon (which I ended up not running because of – surprise! – running injuries), I was very very hard on my body and mind. If I had to walk part of my 18 miler run because of pain, oh well. I needed the mileage! If it hurt, I tried to ignore it and keep running. I needed to run for X minutes, no less! Besides, no pain, no gain right?? Wrong. I feel discomfort all the time when running these days if I'm pushing the pace. But it's discomfort, not pain. If I feel real pain, I stop running.

*Moral of the story: There is a BIG difference between discomfort and pain.*

### 3. Not running everyday.

I used to believe that a workout wasn't a "real" workout unless it involved running. Sometimes I still struggle with this belief. The elliptical feels too easy, cycling involves too much sitting, I don't get my heart rate high enough during weight training, and does yoga even burn calories?? But part of overall fitness is being strong in many aspects and all workouts improve different parts of your body and mind. I have learned that when I run everyday I start to get injured. Yeah, that sucks but it's true for me.

*Moral of the story: Accepting the reality that running everyday puts too much stress on my body has helped me start accepting other forms of workouts. And the more I let myself enjoy other workouts, the more I realized that they are not inferior. Just different.*

*[For the record, I don't, in general, think running everyday is bad as long as you don't ignore other important parts of your overall health and fitness, and as long as it doesn't hurt you like it does me!]*



#### 4. Listening to my body.

Instead of pushing through pain, I acknowledge it and take a few days off (more if necessary) until the pain goes away. I do an extra yoga class. I spend more time on the bike and less running. Two weeks of reduced/no running is much better than dealing with bigger issues down the road for much longer.

*Moral of the story: LISTEN TO YOUR BODY! Trust your gut instinct on whether or not you should keep running. Learn to trust yourself.*

#### 5. Warming Up & Cooling Down

Warming up your muscles and joints help your body prep for running and will help minimize injuries - and make your run feel better. Cooling down helps return your heart rate to a resting rate and helps lactic acid start to move out of your muscles, which will lessen soreness and stiffness. I usually do a few leg swings on each side (side to side and forward and back), some walking lunges, standing hip circles and some squats to loosen everything up.

#### 6. Stretching and mobility work

I've started to realize the importance of stretching and mobility as I've gotten older in my ripe ol' mid-30s. In addition to yoga 1-2x a week, I need to stretch my muscles after every workout and foam roll/use a lacrosse ball on extra tight spots throughout the week. It takes time and it's not the most fun, but once I start, I usually enjoy it. It's the starting part that's hard! If you're new to foam rolling or using a lacrosse ball, google those topics. There are lots of great videos online! I also love my [Roll Recovery](#).



## **7. Needling and scraping**

I've been seeing a physical therapist for needling and scraping for the past couple of years when there are tight spots that I can't work out at home. Needling is somewhat similar to acupuncture but it's done by a PT and the needles are thinner and longer. And scraping is like REALLY intense foam rolling that someone else does on you with a hard plastic or metal tool. It feels great. ;) I have a post coming soon about this so keep an eye on [my blog](#).

## **8. Massage**

I firmly believe regular massage is hugely beneficial for recovery and to help prevent injuries since you can only hit so many areas at home with a foam rollers. The key is to find a good one - ask local runners in your areas for suggestions, and if you don't feel like you're getting the results you want from the massage sessions, try a different therapist. It takes usually a couple attempts to find one that's a good fit.

## CHAPTER 12: WHEN RUNNING FEELS AWFUL → Tips to make it more enjoyable

I often hear from new runners or from people who want to be runners that it just doesn't feel good. That they get tired very quickly. That they can't catch their breath. I've been there. I remember how that felt when I started running 20 years ago, and to be honest, sometimes I still have those days. So how do you go from that misery to loving your runs?

PATIENCE. GRACE.

I know, it's not sexy. But like anything, it takes time to improve at running so that requires patience. And if you're someone who likes to be good at things (and who doesn't?), it requires giving yourself a little grace to let yourself *not* enjoy running for a bit. But in the meantime, here are some tips to make it more enjoyable as you start to put in the miles:

- Take walk breaks! There is no shame in that! Walk when you want, or do it at set intervals. Try running for 3 minutes and then walking for 1. Then, after a few weeks of that, increase your running time to 5 minutes and then walking for 1 minute. Gradually increase your running time until you reach your goals.
- Focus on time, not miles. Rather than trying to run x amount of miles, set a goal to run for 15 minutes. Then increase it to 20 minutes. You can focus on miles later. When I'm not enjoying my runs as much as I should, I try to take the emphasis off miles and definitely off pace, and just run for time. (I do this when I'm not in training and when I'm training for a race! Distance isn't always the most important thing about a run. In fact, sometimes it's the least important thing!
- Remember that heat and humidity can make even the most advanced runners feel awful. Give yourself more walk breaks if the weather is hot. [This blog post](#) and [this one](#) have more suggestions for managing hot runs!
- Evaluate your training. When was the last time you took a rest day? Does your body need a break? Yes, there will be hard days where you just have to slog through. But, if you are overtraining, all of your runs will start to feel bad. [This is a good resource](#) to know if you're dipping into the overtraining zone. (And I believe overtraining is really more about underrecovery!)
- Are you properly fueled? See chapter 2! Without enough carbs and calories in your system, your runs can feel *terrible*.
- Be kinder to yourself. Evaluate your own negative self talk. I talked about [that in this post](#).
- Stop comparing. If you follow anyone on Instagram who makes you feel inferior rather than inspiring, unfollow them! Everyone is at a different point in their running journey. Follow runners who encourage you to improve, not discourage you or make you feel like you're not good enough, fast enough or don't run far enough. You don't need to have a specific reason for why they don't make you feel good and it's likely not intentional on their part - but that's not the point. The point is to find inspiration around you and there's plenty of that to be found!

**Conclusion:**

You're off and running!

I hope you found all of this information helpful and that it inspires you to hit the road (or treadmill) more often, and most importantly, enjoy it more!

I hope you'll connect with me on Instagram (@afoodiestaysfit) and tag me in your pre and post-run photos so I can see how you're doing! Use the hashtag #AFSRunning so I can keep up with you and run with you virtually. You can also join [my private Facebook group](#) that I just started for runners like you - ask questions, share successes and use it for accountability!

And remember, running should be fun!





*Note: This e-book is not intended to prevent, diagnose or treat any injuries you have or may have. I'm simply sharing my experience and what I've learned through personal research and treatment. Please see a doctor for any concerns you have since everyone is different.*