

# This Mother

May - June 2011

“I feel like it’s the one part of life you can have control over, and it’s a great stress release for me.”

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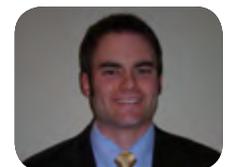
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This Mother Can Run

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# Sidelined

There's nothing worse than an injury for a runner, but there are ways to make the most of your downtime.

If there's a four-letter word in running, it's injury. We all dread it and hope to prevent it. In spite of our best efforts, however, sometimes we do get sidelined. And that's when things can get ugly.

I just came off of a three-month layoff from running due to an ITB (iliotibial band) injury. It was really quite debilitating. At first I took time off from running. When it didn't improve, I dropped weight lifting for my lower body because that seems to irritate the band further. Then I stopped riding my bike for the same reason.

In spite of it all, nothing helped until I saw a great applied kinesiologist who fixed me up. At my darkest hours, I was pretty tough to live with, I know. But I tried to manage as best as I could and keep the impact of my injury from impacting those I love and care about. Here are some guidelines on how to get through an injury, should one take you out of the game.

## Find a Substitute

At the lowest point of my injury, the only exercise my body seemed to tolerate was swimming. I've always liked swimming, so at least there was that. And since I had new found time to spend on it, I decided to make the most of it.

To give you an idea of how I did this, during a typical week of running, I might swim two to three times a week for about 2,000 yards each session. While injured, I upped that amount to five times per week and increased each session to somewhere between 3,000 and 3,500 yards in distance. I also focused more on drills and kicking, something I would never do otherwise. In addition, I made it my mission to shave time off my intervals, eventually bringing my average 100-yd. split down by 10 seconds.



If you're injured, find an alternative activity that will get you through. No, it won't be the same as running. But it will give you an outlet for stress, help keep the weight off, and keep your cardiovascular system in shape for your return. Good alternatives for most injuries are cycling, swimming, water running, and yoga.

Once you've picked an activity, or two, try to maximize your time at it. If you can cycle, try to go farther than you ever have. If you can swim, look to improve form. You get the picture. By having a goal with your alternative activity, it becomes more interesting and gives you something to focus on.

## Work on Strength

As runners, we're not always the best about strength training, but that's a mistake. Strength training has lots of benefits, including helping with injury prevention. Now that you're not running, take the time to focus on your strength training.



“As much as it stinks, you're probably not burning as many calories as normal, so cut back on intake and focus on giving yourself the best quality nutrition you possibly can.”

There are plenty of ways to strength train and most can be done right at home, which is convenient. If you have an area you know tends to be weak, try to improve here. Check in with a trainer or PT if you have one to see where to focus.

Another good aspect to add to your routine is balance work. Running is essentially standing on one leg, over and over again. If you find that it's tough for you to stand for very long on one leg, then you know your balance can use some work.

Luckily, balance is an easy place to make some improvement. Any time you are standing throughout the day, try doing it on one foot. Tooth brushing, cooking, even standing in line at the store are ideal places to implement this practice. Make sure to do it on each leg.

Don't forget to focus on your nutrition as well. As much as it stinks, you're probably not burning as many calories as normal, so cut back on intake and focus on giving yourself

the best quality nutrition you possibly can. It will not only help you keep unwanted weight at bay, but taking in lots of nutrients may help with the healing process as well.

## Put on a Smile

Believe me. I know how stressful being injured can be for a runner. You miss one of your true loves and frankly, that stinks. Take some time to wallow, especially at first. But then try your best to move forward. One thing that helps is focusing on your potential date of return. Most injuries come with an approximate time period for healing. If your doctor has estimated this time frame for you, start your countdown. Think about when you might get back to racing down the road (make a reasonable goal!) and envision your strong return.

What you don't want to do is become a Debbie Downer. Your injury consumes much of your thought processes each day, but don't let this affect others. As much as you care about your injury, believe me,



*No Limits. No Constraints. Only Opportunities to be REMARKABLE.*

Girls on the Run inspires 3rd through 8th grade girls to stay true to themselves and live free from societal stereotypes. Our 12-week after-school curriculum innovatively weaves training for a 5k run with lessons that empower girls to celebrate their bodies, honor their voices and embrace their gifts. There are so many ways to get involved! To learn more, find a program near you, or sign up for our Adult Charity Running Program, SoleMates, visit [girlsontherun.org](http://girlsontherun.org).



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others don't want to hear about it every time you chat.

I wanted to whine and complain to my husband all the time, but I also knew this wasn't fair to him—yes, he was sympathetic, but he didn't marry me to listen to me complain. So I kept myself in check as much as I possibly could. The same went for friends and other family members—I didn't need to bring them down with me.

You might want to consider keeping a journal while you're injured. This gives you an outlet for your feelings of sadness and disappointment, but doesn't affect anyone around you. Pour it all out on paper and you'll likely feel a bit better.

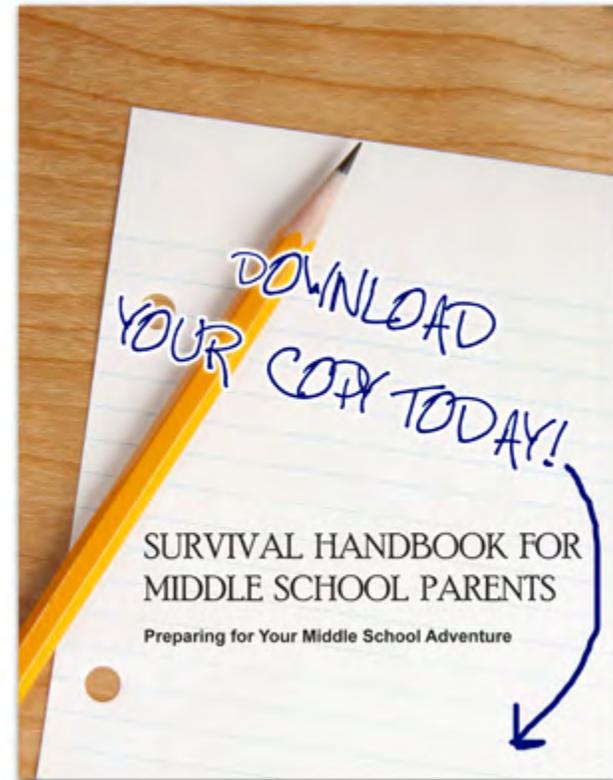
Whatever the injury, and no matter how down you are about it, remember this: You will return to running. You will be an athlete again. In the meantime, focus on making the most of this time and when you come out on the other end, you'll be that much stronger for it.

Amanda Loudin has been running and competing in triathlons for the past 13 years. She is also a certified running coach, freelance writer and mom to two. She writes about balancing it all on her blog, [www.misszippy1.blogspot.com](http://www.misszippy1.blogspot.com), and offers running advice on her coaching site, [www.misszippycoaches.blogspot.com](http://www.misszippycoaches.blogspot.com).



“If you're injured, find an alternative activity that will get you through.”

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# Empowering Women Through Running

By Ashley Crossman

When I was 22 years old, running saved my life. My story goes back to when I was an innocent, average-sized 12-year-old girl who was having fun taking ballet lessons a few days after school. The ballet school I attended, however, didn't believe that ballet was something you do for "fun." They were in the business to produce ballerinas. I remember the incident like it was yesterday: my ballet instructor approached me after class one day, looked me up and down, and said, "Now Ashley, if you ever want to make it as a ballerina, you're going to need to lose some weight." I was horrified and embarrassed! But after getting over those initial feelings, I brushed it off and pretended it was no big deal. I didn't continue with the ballet for too much longer and instead decided to focus on other forms of dance – ones that didn't require 12-year-old girls to diet. But I never fully realized the impact of that incident until years later. It was one that would plague me for the next ten years of my life.



Throughout high school and college I was obsessed with how much I weighed and how my body looked. I counted every calorie that

went in and every calorie that was burned, making sure they always balanced each other out. It got particularly bad during college; so much that I would spend hours at the gym every day and simultaneously live off of Slim Fast. Terrified of gaining the "freshman 15," I let my behavior spin out

.....  
"I would spend hours at the gym every day and simultaneously live off of Slim Fast."  
.....

of control until it became an obsession. It affected my relationships, my happiness, and my mental and physical health.

I took up running during this part of my life, simply as a way to burn calories. During my senior year of college I developed a serious case of IT Band syndrome – one so severe that it eventually required surgery. The surgeon told me I may never be able to run more than a few miles at a time ever again and I made it my mission in life to prove him wrong. It was right around this time that I met Dave Steffens, an amazing runner and coach, who believed in me and took me under his wing. With his guidance, I decided to train for a marathon. I had never run more than 6 miles in my life, so this thought was pretty daunting. But, I had something to prove to that surgeon.

were: the importance of perspective and attitude; and the importance of having supportive influencers and guidance from trusted people in both running and in life. I could have easily and falsely believed what the surgeon told me and lived with the perspective that the IT Band Syndrome was the end to my running career. But instead I chose to believe that the IT Band Syndrome was simply a hurdle to tackle and that with the right support and guidance, anything was possible. If I had surrounded myself with people who believed in limitations and didn't believe in me, I could have kept myself buried in a hole, convinced that my destiny was to give up running and give up trying. But instead, I surrounded myself with supportive and encouraging people and they were just what I



The most amazing thing happened to me during this journey of training for and running my first marathon. I no longer looked at my body in terms of how it looked. Instead, I began to look at it in terms of what it was capable of doing and achieving. I was given this amazing tool that could do amazing things!

Slowly and surely as my perception of myself and my body changed, so did my exercise and eating behavior. And as I started to let go of my unhealthy behaviors and treat my body like the temple it is, I became a happier, more confident, and more empowered person.

Two things I took away from that experience

“I no longer looked at my body in terms of how it looked.”

needed during my journey to finding my real happiness and fulfillment. And I knew that I wanted to be that person for other people.

Shortly after running my first marathon, I heard about Girls on the Run, a non-profit prevention program that encourages girls in 3rd through 8th grade to develop self-respect and healthy lifestyles through running. I truly believe that if this program had been around when I was a young girl, I would not

have been so affected by those words uttered by my ballet instructor. This was my opportunity to be that support and mentor for other people. I had to get involved! Discovering that there was no chapter in my state, I decided, along with two other amazing women, to start one. After founding the organization, I became a coach, then served on the Board of Directors, and am now serving on the Board of Advisors. Through this process, I have realized that

many of the lessons taught in the program and many of the issues that young girls face today are relevant to women of all ages. The body image, confidence, empowerment, and healthy living issues don't just affect young girls – they are issues that some women face their entire lives.

Running has helped me with so many things. It has helped me overcome a negative body image, increased my self-esteem and confidence, it consistently helps me reduce stress, helps ward off anxiety and depression, and always makes me feel strong and empowered. I also know that running makes me a better mother. It keeps me sane in an otherwise chaotic household with two boys (ages 4 and 1), a dog and a husband. I feel so strongly about running's abilities and powers that I left my well-paying job in the corporate world to help other women realize what running has to offer them. It is my mission to help women feel strong, empowered, and confident and I use running as a tool to do so. I think of this business, called She Runs Strong, as a Girls on the Run for adults, but with more of an individualized approach. Helping women to realize their full potential and get them on the path to leading more satisfied, confident, empowered, and healthy lives gives me more satisfaction than any job I can imagine. It is my way of giving back, of paying it forward, to those who helped me get to this place of happiness in my life. It is my way of helping make society and this world happy, healthy and successful for everyone!



Ashley lives in Phoenix, Arizona with her husband and two energetic sons, ages 4 and 1. She has completed seven marathons and is currently training to qualify for Boston. She is an RRCA and ACE certified running coach and owner of She Runs Strong, LLC. Ashley can be reached at [ashley@sherunsstrong.com](mailto:ashley@sherunsstrong.com) or [www.sherunsstrong.com](http://www.sherunsstrong.com).



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This Mother Can Run

# See Jane Run

If you've seen Jane Notar on TV Guide or working on her show called Education Superhighway with Al Sharpton, you know she is eloquent, intelligent, and driven. But what you may not know is that she has a deep seated competitive side that drives her passion for running and thrill seeking activities. Let me tell you... this mother can run!

**Q:** Do you deal with mom guilt?

**A:** Oh gosh yes! My daughter, Harlow, is five. For a long time I brought her everywhere I was. For the first year she was born I brought her with me while I was doing a show that literally woke me at 6 in the morning, and I wouldn't get home until night. I would come home, and I just wasn't enjoying any of it. I was miserable because I felt like I was missing everything. Meanwhile she doesn't remember anything. Now when I take a job there are a lot of single people or male producers who are okay with taking their time. Meanwhile, I deal with it by rushing because I want to get home to see my baby. Harlow comes before my career. I have turned down more jobs than I've said yes to which is incredibly difficult. During the first two years it wasn't difficult because I knew that was where I needed to be, but as time goes on and I'm saying no to things because it doesn't fit into Harlow's schedule, it gets frustrating. With my husband for instance, that is never an issue. But it's the way I've chosen it to be, I suppose.

**Q:** How do you keep in such great shape?

**A:** I work out six days a week. I'm a runner. I aim to run 30 miles a week. It just depends. Certain times of the month my energy levels are down and then I just use the elliptical machine. I'm hugely into



interval training/circuit training. I like doing weights in quick repetitions. I feel like it's the one part of life you can have control over, and it's a great stress release for me. And I worked out the whole time I was pregnant. I followed the doctor's rules. I ate what I wanted to eat, I worked out 5 days a week and my heart rate never got above a certain level. I stopped running at 6 months. I put on 22 pounds. After I had her I only had to lose 4 pounds. I was happy. I didn't deny myself anything. And right now even, I don't deny myself food in any

way. Sometimes I binge. I like to drink wine. You also know that if you want to drink wine you have to make up for it. Once you hit 30, you start losing your sexuality. People see you differently. You still want to feel good. The other day I was on a set and someone said to me, "My God! You look so good! You must work out all the time to have lost all the baby weight." He just assumed that because I had a child I would be bigger.

**Q:** How do you fit your workouts in with your baby's schedule?

**A:** It seems selfish to say it's a priority, but I think it's important to make it a priority for you. Your husband or partner needs to understand that. Richie, my husband, knows that if I don't work out 6 days a week, that I don't feel good about myself. I drop Little H off at school or I'll even work out at midnight if I have to. Once I drop her off I go to the park and work out. It's like a schedule. My running partner, Beth, and I will run together once or twice a week. When I run alone I listen to music on my Nano. It relaxes me.

**Q:** Your running partner is Beth Ostrosky. How did the two of you begin running together?



**A:** She was running for the North Shore Animal League. She talked about it and then I decided to do it too. We did the New York Marathon together. It was such an amazing experience. It was two years ago. She raised \$300,000 for them. It was amazing. We always say that we are going to do it again. I'll definitely do a couple more.

**Q:** What other races do you like?

**A:** I do a lot of sprinting. In school I was a 100 meter sprinter. Now my brother has

.....  
 "Pretty much I like anything that gives me that thrill."  
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MS. Many things I do center around that. There's a thing called Race to the Top, which is a race to the top of the Rockefeller Center. People either do it for fun or for the challenge. Last year my brother flew over, and all my girlfriends and I did it for time. If I want to do a run, I usually do it to support that charity.

**Q:** You did sprinting and now you do marathons. You do it all!

**A:** The sprinting and interval training is so good for your body to mix it up. At least a couple times a week I do intervals on the treadmill. There's a guy named Pat Manocchia who owns a very popular gym in New York City called La Palestra. He believes in people doing marathons and not injuring themselves. He runs and has never had an injury. He believes in not killing people with mileage and interval training. Interval training was a huge part of my training. I didn't get hurt, and we loved every second of it. His gym is right beside Central Park. After a run he puts your legs into a huge tub of ice water. It really helped. Then there's another man who comes in and gives massages to all the runners. Pat is one of the best. We are really lucky to have worked with him. He's a very clever guy. He's just wonderful.

**Q:** When did you start running?

**A:** I started in high school, and I started jogging when I was 19. I've been running ever since. It drives my family crazy. My family doesn't understand it. They're Irish, and they live in Dublin. Europeans are very much of the idea that if you're over on vacation, why are you working out? They think I'm insane. My mother only has one grandchild, Harlow, and she wants more. She thinks that I'm not pregnant because I run too much. I feel like if something makes you happy, and you're not doing it then you're definitely not going to get pregnant!

.....

“Some days I run for the way I look. A lot of the time I run outdoors just to be in nature. When I run with my girlfriends it’s for fun.”

.....

**Q:** Who or what inspires you to run?

**A:** My brother inspires me. He was a rugby player all his life until he got MS. He’s incredibly strong and healthy. He does boot camp every day, but he finds it difficult to run because it hurts his legs. So when I think I don’t want to run, I think well, Gareth would love to. Or I think of Harlow. Sometimes I think I’m running this last mile for my baby. Pat always says, “Put one foot in front of the other, and don’t look down.” It’s all in your head. For example, every year we go to the marathon. We are on 105th street. You can see people psyching themselves out of the race. It’s all in your head!

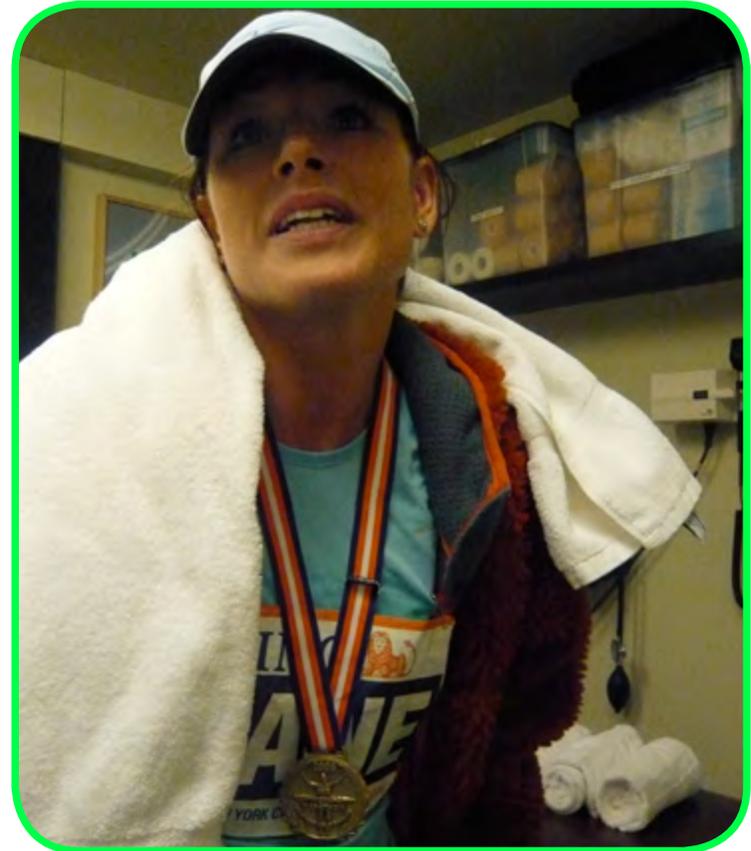
**Q:** I know you cross train. What other sports to you enjoy?

**A:** I horse ride in the summer. I’m a huge fan of paddle boarding. I do a lot of things outside. I’ll always try anything once. I wake board and water ski. I’m a snow boarder. I use to box as well. Pretty much I like anything that gives me that thrill. I love the adrenaline rush. I came from a family of a lot of men, and they never let me win just because I was a girl. So I have a competitive side. I think I can do anything that they can

do. My daughter has inherited it too. Her body is quite athletic and she likes to be outside. She has no fear. She learned to swim when she was two. She came out with her little pompons when we were running in the park.

**Q:** Do you run for fun, time or distance?

**A:** Some days I run for the way I look. A lot of the time I run outdoors just to be in nature. When I run with my girl friends it’s for fun. If you don’t it becomes torture. My whole goal in the marathon was to beat my husband’s time. At first he was much faster than me five years ago, but now I’m faster. He would never admit it. I run more than he does. He did his second marathon in 4:01, and I finished in 3:53. He wasn’t happy about that! (laughing) He’s actually very sporty and a wonderful chef. He would cook me great things when I would come off a run. He would rub my back.



Jane right after the marathon



Jane in white at left with the La Palestra Team

.....  
“Europeans are very much of the idea that if you’re over on vacation, why are you working out?”  
.....



**Q:** How many marathons have you done?

**A:** I’ve done one, and I’ve done three half marathons, two over in Ireland. Most of the runners walk during a race so I looked like a professional runner! They do it mostly for fun.

**Q:** What are your running plans?

**A:** I want to do another marathon. Pat Manocchia plans great running trips. He planned one to Mount Kilimanjaro, everything. There’s a marathon and ½ marathon at Disney World in March. They do a big children’s race. Our children will run their first race together. Last year Harlow ran, and she was very proud of herself. He organizes these trips throughout the year. I will always get involved. There’s a place called White Oaks, which is an animal preserve, where Rudolph Nureyev, the very famous ballet dancer, practices. Pat develops all the gyms down there. So we went down there last year. We did a whole week of circuit training and learned new techniques that he’s working on.



.....  
And right now even, I don’t deny myself food in any way.  
.....

Name:     Jane Notar    

Q: Favorite running song and the artist/band

     "Empire of the Sun", Bob Sinclair  
     "Love Generation", Rihanna...boppy music

Q: Favorite time of day to run

     fall/winter first thing in the morning,  
     in summer at sunset

Q: How do you prefer to train?

     alone  
     with a partner  
  X   in a group although it depends on my mood

Q: Most scenic place you've ever run

     Bali

Q: Average miles per run

     never less than 4, and at most 7

Q: Where do you usually run?

     treadmill  
  X   outside in Central Park

Q: What do you do while running?

     listen to music  
     watch TV  
  X   talk when I'm outside chatting with a friend  
  X   think on the treadmill, listening to music  
     other

Q: Favorite running gadget or gear

     iPod Nano, Lulu Lemon - When I have new workout gear I work out harder!

Q: Why did you start running?

     to get in shape  
     to get back to pre-pregnancy weight  
     for fun  
     for sport  
  X   other I'm competitive and like to push my body

Q: Favorite race distance

     5K  
     10K  
     1/2 marathon  
  X   marathon  
     other

# Book Review of Samuels, Mina.

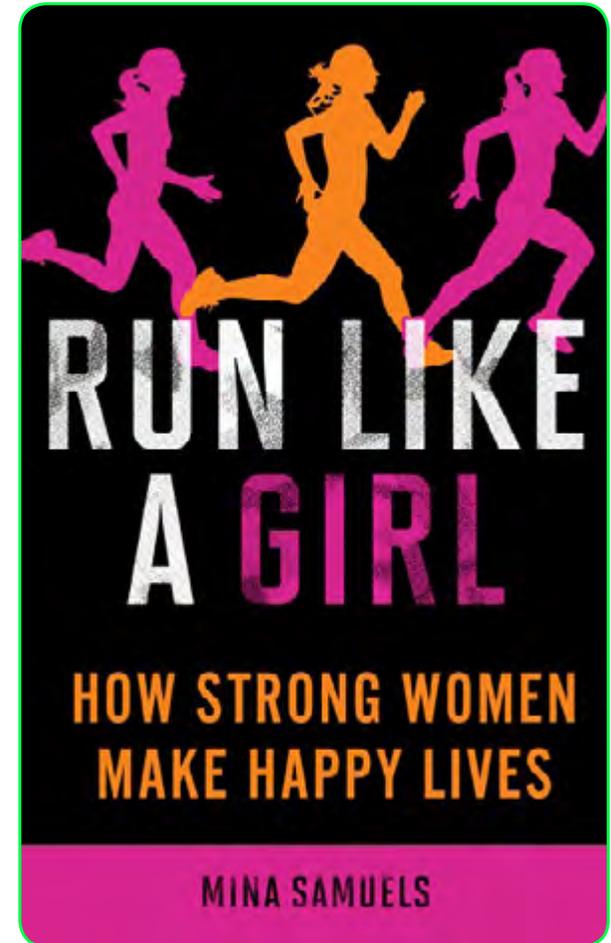
## Run Like a Girl: How Strong Women Make Happy Lives (Berkeley, CA: Seal Press, 2011)

After being hassled most of spring break to play catch with my youngest son, I caved two days before its end. His baseball season would soon be starting, and he needed the practice; besides, the sun was shining, a rarity in Oregon, and I figured being outside would make up for the back-and-forth tedium of catch. But truth be told, I'm a terrible baseball player—always have been—and I soon found myself apologizing for the many errant throws my son chased down our cul-de-sac. "Sorry, honey," I shouted. "It's just that I throw like a girl."

I immediately regretted my comment, wanted to call it back as soon as it left my mouth. Why would I equate a bad arm with being female? What kind of message was I sending my son? Because let's face it: saying someone throws like a girl, or fights like a girl, or runs like a girl is not meant as a compliment.

Perhaps that's why Mina Samuel's new book, *Run Like a Girl*, is such a refreshing read. Samuels, a writer, runner, and all-around tough athlete, turns "running like a girl" on its head, redefining the term to mean those women who meet athletic challenges head-on, who find balance in their lives between work and family and fitness and everything else, and who pursue physical well-being into old age.

Samuels' book draws together the real-life stories of athletes in sports as varied as dog mushing and gymnastics, showing that women who pursue athletic excellence, no matter the sport, can embrace the empowering ideal of "running like a girl." Although a majority of the stories she tells are about runners (and triathletes), Samuels uses the metaphor of running like a girl to suggest something more: that, as



Because let's face it: saying someone throws like a girl, or fights like a girl, or runs like a girl is not meant as a compliment.

her subtitle proclaims, “strong women make happy lives.”

The real power of Samuels’s book resides in its storytelling, in the narratives of women runners who have made a difference in their lives and in the lives of others. Some of these women will be familiar to many readers: Kathrine Switzer, who broke the Boston Marathon’s glass ceiling in 1967; Mary Wittenberg, president of the biggest running club in America, the New York Road Runners; new mothers Paula Radcliffe and Kara Goucher, currently two of the world’s top runners; Lisa Shannon, founder of Run for Congo Women.

But the more compelling and inspirational stories come from women who are far less known, yet have achieved remarkable feats. Shannon narrates the journeys of women sidelined not by relatively minor injuries like tendonitis or muscle pulls, but by multiple sclerosis, cancer, serious chemical dependencies. Instead of being debilitated by daunting diagnoses or debilitating addictions, these women used running and other athletic endeavors to fight back, making themselves stronger—and, as a result, more contented.

Perhaps most memorably, Samuels tells the story of Meg Benson, the mother of two and a jewelry store owner whose scoliosis had “flared so badly . . . [that] doctors told her she was destined to be in a wheelchair.” Instead of accepting this fate, Benson decided to try exercise, crawling out of her

house, laying her bicycle on the ground, then painfully righting the bike beneath her. Excruciating miles turned to bearable miles turned, over the next year, into well-being and vitality. Samuels argues convincingly that Benson’s fearlessness and strong will are characteristics shared by anyone who runs like a girl, again turning the derided phrase into a mantra female athletes should champion.

Affirmation is at the heart of Run Like a Girl, and women who struggle to balance caring for family with their many other responsibilities will find certain encouragement in



Samuels’s book. The author spends some space addressing mothers who run specifically, noting the many ways being healthy and strong “pays dividends” for our families, both in terms of our happiness and because fit mothers provide excellent role models for their children.

But in a broader sense, Samuels provides

ample evidence that women’s pursuit of athletic excellence isn’t necessarily a selfish endeavor. Drawing from medical and psychological studies, Samuels convincingly shows spending time running, swimming, biking, even mushing dogs through the Yukon can make women more productive, healthier, and more pleasant to be around. Of course, as mothers who run, we already knew that—but Samuels offers scientific proof. Other chapters address the need for balance in all things, and how forces can sometimes conspire to throw us off kilter. Samuels writes about the ways even gender

“Affirmation is at the heart of Run Like a Girl, and women who struggle to balance caring for family with their many other responsibilities will find certain encouragement in Samuels’s book.”

relationships can disrupt athletic endeavors—or, conversely, set them aright. In a great chapter on “Chicking the Boys,” she tells stories of women who have held back in competitions because the men in their lives couldn’t keep up, and affirms those men who support women to be the best athletes they can be—even if that means the men themselves will be “chicked” (another derided term Samuels claims and redefines). A subsequent chapter describes the ways friendships with other women can encourage athletic excellence—or not, as the case may be—showing the contrasting qualities of uber-competitiveness and mutual support are not unique to men.

A chapter on body image, titled “Fit is the New Thin,” refreshingly explores the idea of balance in how we understand what a healthy body looks like—and how messages from society, loved ones, even our minds can deter us from accepting our own fit selves.

As someone who 25 years ago internalized the words of a running coach—who told me I looked a little heavy—I fully resonate with Samuels’s challenge to ignore not only the media messages that promote an unrealistic standard for feminine beauty, but also the actual voices telling us our bodies aren’t perfect.

Admittedly, there are a few places in Run Like a Girl where Samuels strikes me as a little too buoyant, a little too idealistic—kind of like those people who yell “Looking good!” in the last mile of your marathon, when you know you are anything but. Samuels would

“I always loved running... it was something you could do by yourself, and under your own power. You could go in any direction, fast or slow as you wanted, fighting the wind if you felt like it, seeking out new sights just on the strength of your feet and the courage of your lungs.”

Paula Radcliffe

surely point out that women too often receive negative admonitions about their athletic pursuits, and it doesn’t hurt to hear an alternative message: one that emphatically affirms that doing anything “like a girl” is well worth our time and effort.

I’m a mother of two third grade boys, a professor of English at George Fox University in Newberg, Ore., and a long-time runner who began the sport in the 8th grade, when no one else on the track team would run the mile. I’ve written for a number of periodicals, and my book, *Just Moms: Conveying Justice in an Unjust World*, was published by Barclay Press this April. I’ve also finished 28 marathons, and am signed up to run my first 50K in May, about which I am only feeling occasional panic.



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# Ask the PT

I am recovering from a stress fracture. Once healed what precautions can be taken to make sure it does not happen again? Also, how much running do you recommend and how soon?

Great question! Stress fractures are more common than people think. In my 10 years of physical therapy practice the most common situation where a stress fracture has the greatest incidence of occurring is when a person suddenly shifts from a completely sedentary routine to a full blown work-out-till-your-eyes-bug-out routine. This spells danger or at least a somewhat uncomfortable and time consuming trip to your local orthopedic practitioner.

Typically stress fractures occur most often in the ankle and foot but they can occur anywhere where a load bearing stress is experienced on the body. Here are some common symptoms of a stress fracture: visible swelling, pain, tenderness in a specific spot, increased swelling and pain with activity, decreased swelling and pain with rest, early onset of pain with each consecutive workout, and continued pain at rest as the damage progresses. If you are experiencing these symptoms for more than a week consecutively see your doctor. Don't think that you are going to be the brave one whose stress fracture miraculously heals by itself. It won't.

The best precaution to prevent stress fractures is examining what the possible risk factors are. There are 5 major risk factors for stress fractures according to Mayo Clinic research (<http://www.mayoclinic.com>). They are pretty darn accurate as to what I see in clinical practice. They are:

1. Sports such as track and field, basketball, tennis and gymnastics. All of these sports have an explosive start and stop quickly component to them. Make sure your body is ready for this.

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**Don't think that you are going to be the brave one whose stress fracture miraculously heals by itself."**

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2. Increased activity such as a sudden shift in going from a sedentary lifestyle to a very active one in a short period of time.

3. Sex - Yes, you heard it right. Sex. Women who have abnormal or absent menstrual periods are at a higher risk of developing stress fractures.

4. Foot problems – This is the number one cause, in my opinion, of why not only women but men are susceptible to stress fractures. If you have feet that are flat which suck the floor when you walk or if you have high arches in which a truck could go under your foot, then your risk increases for possible fracture. Good news though, you were born with these feet! It's not your fault. Simple orthotics that easily slip into any running shoe will alleviate this problem.

5. Weak bones - Women with osteoporosis (loss of bone density) who leave it untreated, have triple the incidence of stress fracture as opposed to women who do not have osteoporosis.

So how do you know if you even have a stress fracture? I know, people at this point are tired of you complaining about the nagging pain that won't go away. If you

suspect a possible stress fracture there are a few tests that can be run. X-Rays and bone scans are good tests but they can overlook or even miss altogether a stress fracture that is recent. The most accurate test, in my opinion, is an MRI, to get your stress fracture properly diagnosed.

Now, the all important question... Since most runners and athletes alike want to get back to running yesterday, what can be done to prevent it? Here is what I advise:

1. Change slowly-If you are beginning a running program do not do 45 minutes over the roughest terrain or at a 5% incline at 6.0 mph. You will be sore and your body will revolt. Trust me. As a runner myself, it's not pretty when you feel like your lower half has been pounded with a Louisville Slugger baseball bat.

2. Proper footwear is key especially if you either have flat feet or high arches. Yes, the shoes are more expensive than anything you can find in your local department but the extra money you spend will keep you out of the doctor's office!

3. Make sure you add a proper warm-up and cool down to your program. OK, so it takes a some time and you don't think it's important. But the 15 minutes you spend doing this could be the difference between you popping Motrin in the morning or not. Prepare your body appropriately.

4. Proper nutrition is the key to basically

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 "As a runner myself, it's not pretty when you feel like your lower half has been pounded with a Louisville Slugger baseball bat."  
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anything related to health and wellness including running. It is important especially as women age to get the proper amount of calcium in your diet. With osteoporotic women, this is especially important.

5. I am sure people are thinking is ice or heat better? Honestly in my opinion, neither works great. Both have been equally ineffective in reducing symptoms associated with a stress fracture. Pain relievers, as prescribed by your physician, work best.

So the million dollar question still remains: How soon can I return to running? The number one thing you should do is ALWAYS listen to your body. Never ignore warning signs that something is wrong. Typically the healing time for stress fractures is anywhere from 8-12 weeks. Use this as a general guideline and with the proper modifications and the gradual return to your running program, you should be ready to blaze that trail again!

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 Eric Tomei is a physical therapist who has been in orthopedic practice for 10 years. He currently works in Rochester, MI as a staff physical therapist and truly enjoys shaping the health of all his patients. He has a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology, a Bachelor's Degree in Health Sciences and a Masters Degree in Physical Therapy from Oakland University. His passions include: Real estate investing, physical fitness, and volunteering for various charities in the metro Detroit area.  
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# Into The Woods

This run would be epic. I knew it. I had fresh legs. I had my mind-set to kill 10 miles. I had the new running shoes, the new socks and I was running with my sister. I was also running guilt-free as the hubby was home with the kids. How could this not be the... Best. Run. Ever? I was more excited than if I put my three year old in a candy store and said, "Get anything you want. ANYTHING."

And we were off... Running at a good clip, yakking it up, dishing on the latest news in our lives, giggling about our other sisters and the craziness of our children. This was shaping up to be the run I had always imagined, and then it happened...my underwear started to slip. First the left side slid to my hip. Whoops! I picked it up and then right side fell down. I yanked it up and then the games began... Up-down, back-and-forth, up-down, back-and-forth-back-and-forth! It was like being on "Dancing with the Stars", sans the stars and any real dancing. To say my sister was embarrassed is an understatement. As for me I was perplexed and couldn't imagine why this was happening. DUH! It hit me like a ton of bricks. I was wearing my purple undies – the ones that are in my "only wear to bed" rotation, ya know the big or pregnancy undies that you keep around for the days when you need just a little more room.

## Rookie Mistake Number One: Be aware of the underwear.

I was set to change them but I got side-tracked trying to chug coffee while talking my three year old off the ledge. I had to explain a dozen times that I would indeed be back by the time

"As if she was in my head, my sister, as sisters do, chuckled and moved to the side of the road."

4 Sponge Bob Episodes were over. After countless routines of underwear mambo, I sighed, "Dammit-to-hell," gave my undies one more yank, a real tight, would've castrated myself if I well had anything to castrate yank, and thought, "If this doesn't do it, then they can just sit on my hips for the remainder of the run." My underwear was now under my control when a mile or two later, I mumbled to myself, "I'm struggling here, I went out way too fast." I slowed down a bit but didn't say anything to my sister. I figured we were at mile five, half way there. I gave myself a little pep talk: "Man-up, Deanna! One more hour. You can do anything for an hour." Seemingly convinced, but still struggling, my stomach started to turn, and turn, and turn. Uh oh. The stomach pains got more intense by the second. I let it go for another 5 minutes, and just barely let out a, "Holy crap!" As if she was in my head, my sister, as sisters do, chuckled and moved to the side of the road. She knew what was happening all too well.

## Rookie Mistake Number Two: Don't drink coffee too close to the starting gun.

I had to make a pit stop. With sweat pouring down my face and trying to catch my breath, I hid as best I could in the bushes of the trail. Faster than a pit crew at the Daytona 500; and in all honesty, I have to say that I've become so efficient with this task that it's humorous, scary and sad all

wrapped into one little ball of humiliation. I surmised that bears aren't the only ones that do their thing in the woods, and, uh, cleaned up as best I could. As I emerged from the woods, head hung low, I caught my sister's eye and lost it, gasping for air from laughing so hard. Sadly it's almost inevitable if you run with me and my sister. One of us will make a pit stop. I managed to get my head back into the run. I was determined and dare I say confident that I could finish this run with just as much zest and zeal as I intended. In fact I thought I'd kill the next five miles. Not more than 10 minutes later I started to feel an odd sensation on my leg, a cold feeling, a feeling of metal on my skin

accompanied by a subtle thump-thump-thump sound. At first I thought it was my heart, but I checked, and it wasn't. I thought, flat tire? Not mine, but turned to see if there was a car behind me. Nope, but as quickly as I surveyed the area I looked down at my pants and realized that my iPod that was attached to my pants was now inside my pants

I was going to have to de-pants myself if this as going to work. Not my best life moment. As this sank in, I yanked my pants down fast. My big purple bloomers and my pancake flat tush were blowing in the wind for all the world to see. As I rushed to untangle my iPod, I tripped myself up a few times and almost toppled over. I bit my

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## “What sister walks away from another sister's utter humiliation?”

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Deanna Verbouwens is a writer, runner, blogger, working mom of two unbelievably active and very funny boys ages 3 and 7. Deanna is currently training for her 4th half marathon, and her third 24 hour relay, and various 10 & 5k's, of course that all between working full time, and managing spaghetti on the ceiling, a dumped out fish bowl, a house and a family. To catch up on how Deanna tries to get it all done without completely failing visit her at *The Unnatural Mother*, [www.theunnaturalmother.com](http://www.theunnaturalmother.com).



which was now inside my underwear and that indeed was what was thumping against my skin.

### Rookie Mistake Number Three: Don't forget to put the armband on for the iPod.

I quickly grabbed my sister and in sister-speak I told her what happened and waved her on, but she's not an idiot. What sister walks away from another sister's utter humiliation? Not this one; I'll tell you that. I couldn't blame her I would've waited to see how I got myself out of this mess too. I tried to discreetly unravel my iPod from my pants but much like that bra strap that gets wrapped around a towel in the wash it wasn't happening.

lip and tried not to cry out in frustration as I received bizarre looks from a dozen or so extremely confused and bemused spectators who weren't really sure if they should help me or not. I wanted to say, “What? You've never seen a half-naked women in the woods before?” or maybe “Why the hell did you choose today to tackle your healthy goals? Shouldn't you have started this in January?” But I didn't. I sucked up my humiliation like Charlie Sheen sucks up a lap dance, and finished the job at hand.

Finally, pants up, iPod unraveled, we were finally on our way. An epic run, like Prefontaine? Nope. An epic run like the Three Stooges, minus 2, without-a-doubt. Rookie Lesson Number One: Comedy and tragedy always seem to go hand-in-hand!

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“Now I am not running to please sponsors or to be the No.1 U.S. runner. Now I look at each step I get to take as a gift. I run because I love to run. I want to be able to run until I am 90 years old.”

- **Suzy Favor Hamilton (Olympian miler)**

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# This Mother Can Run