

This Mother Can Run

JULY - AUGUST 2012

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“I don’t know how well my body will handle it, but I’m willing to find out for the noblest cause I can think of.”
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Kathy Sebright, PAGE 16



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RUNNERS

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This Mother Can Run

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Georgetown Super Sprint Race Recap

Today was the Georgetown Super Sprint Triathlon and it was a blast. (You know that means I did well right?)

As with every race, the morning started WAY too early and I questioned why I even do these things. I swear I'll never wake up on race morning and say, "Yep, this was a great idea." Am I alone here?

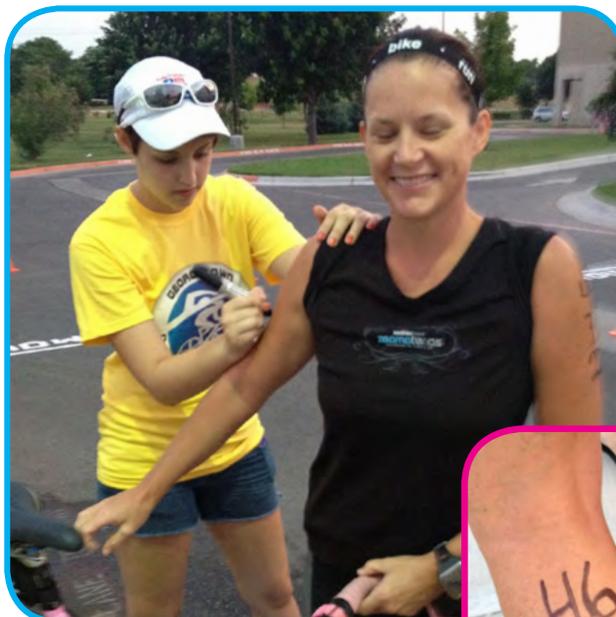
Anyway, we (my friend Kelley and I) left the house at 5:40 am as the transition area opened at 6:00 am. We were there just after the break of dawn to get our body markings. (I was still asleep).

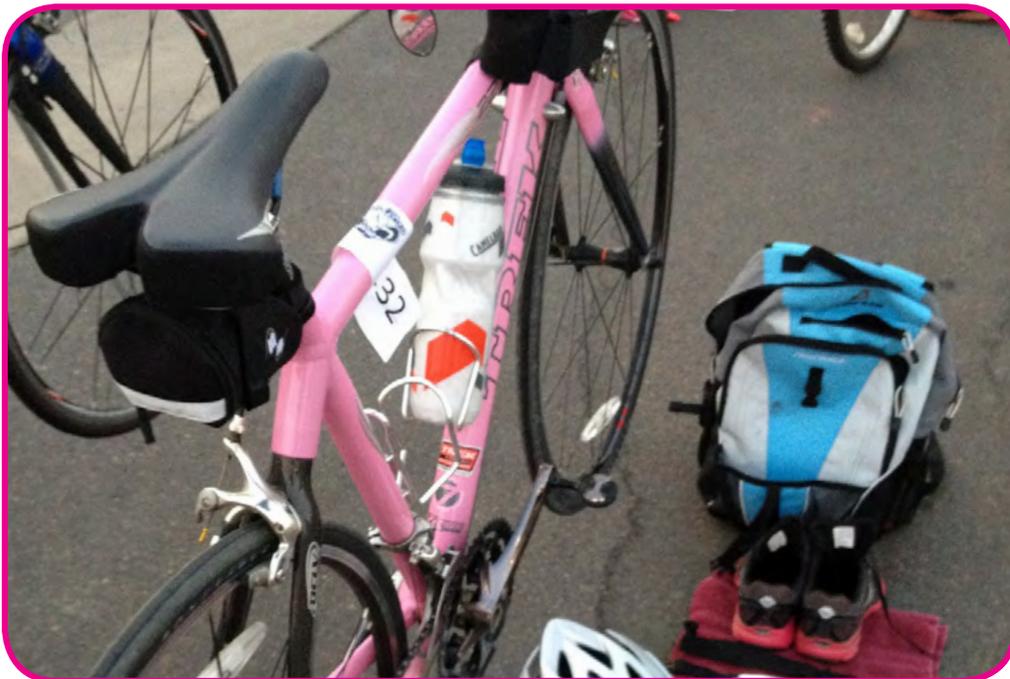


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 "I was so intimidated by the pool swim."

I always hate that your markings reflect your age at the END of the year. Why? I am NOT 38 for another 2 and a half months!!! Humph!

We had plenty of time to set up our bikes and we chose a spot halfway between bike-out and run-out right by the swim-out exit. We racked with a 78 year old man racing, and he told us our rack was only for medalists. Kelley and I laughed (I think he was serious).





Pretty soon we walked into the pool area to assess the "situation". I was so intimidated by the pool swim. It's not like an open water swim in that the distance looks so far, but I was afraid I was over confident in my swim abilities and put a too aggressive swim time (therefore start ranking).

"Pretty soon they had us all wrangled into the pool area and this is where chaos ensued."

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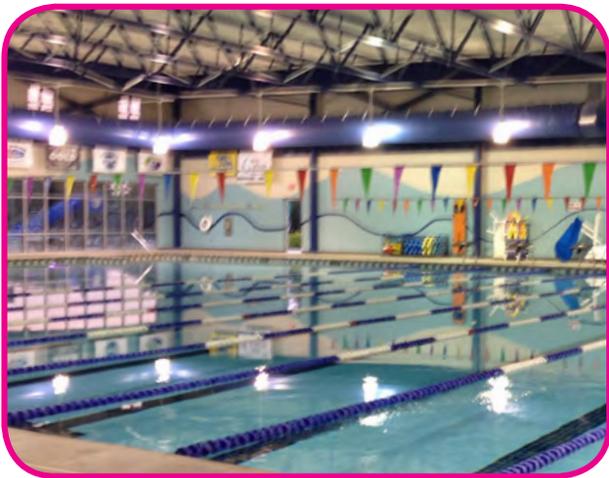
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Nevertheless this race was happening. We had about 15 minutes until the race meeting so I took advantage and ate my breakfast and drank a Gatorade pre-fuel.



When we registered, we all put down our 200M swim time. Well, they gave us numbers and ranked us accordingly. It should have been so simple, but for whatever reason it wasn't. Finally we lined up in some semblance of order and the first swimmer started. There weren't that many people in front of me and I started to think that my 4:00 time was too aggressive. As each new swimmer entered the pool I panicked. They looked so, so fast. I let about 5 people go in front of me before I got the courage to just go.



Right before the race meeting we saw our friends, Bianca, Isabel and Karla, coming our way. I told Bianca they did NOT need to get up so early and come out to see us, but she and Karla insisted. It's so nice to have such great friends there to support you!

Pretty soon they had us all wrangled into the pool area and this is where chaos ensued. It was so disorganized, although it should have been quite simple.





The whole swim went so fast. I was so focused on just not getting passed. There was no way to see behind me, but I didn't want anyone touching my toes. Pretty soon (about 100M in) I caught up to the girl 2 in front of me and passed her. I figured the chances of me getting passed were lessening. I powered through knowing it was just 4:00 minutes of my life, and I could do it.

200m Swim Time: 4:19:36 (56th out of 132)

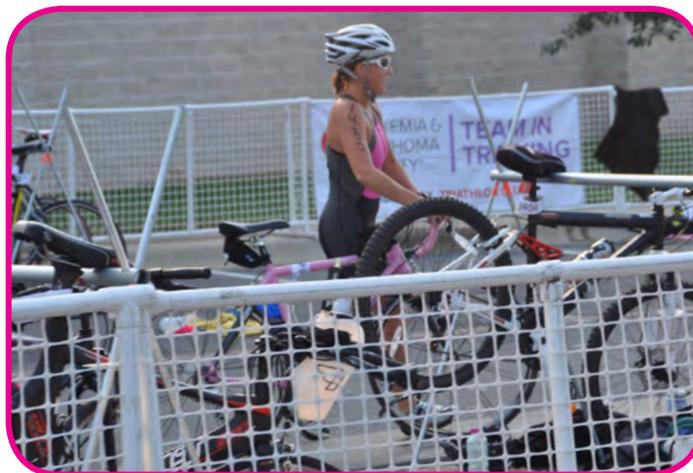
I always feel so shaky after I swim. I went into transition shaking like a leaf, but determined not to waste too much time. I made the decision to go sockless, and I think it did save me some time. I threw on my shoes, glasses, helmet and a little Chapstick (yes, really...)



I was in the last 50M, and I started to get excited that it was almost over. I kicked and pulled as fast as I could. I got to the last wall and had to endure the HARDEST part of the triathlon. I had to hoist my body out of 6 feet of water with no ladder. My arms were so weak. I gave myself a boost and barely got my chest onto the wall. I then clawed and scratched my way on the cement until I could get my knee on the wall and stand up. It was horrible and not graceful, but at least I didn't fall back in the pool. Swim was over.

.... grabbed my bike and I was on my way.

T1 Time: 1:15:96 (27th of 132)



The bike was pretty uneventful. I passed two bikers right in the beginning and then was passed by three men. I kept one of the men in my sights the whole time, but the other two were on Tri bikes and blew my doors off.

I wasn't mad that I got passed by a couple of dudes. I just didn't want to be passed by any females. And I wasn't!!! I kept a good steady pace the whole time. I kept reminding myself that it was a short period of time, and I should be pushing myself. I drank a good bit of water trying to rehydrate from the swim. I was parched.

My Garmin was all messed up so it wasn't giving me my MPH, but I could see that I was ticking off miles in less than 4 minutes. I knew I was pedaling faster than I anticipated I would and it was only further fuel to keep my legs moving.

Before I knew it, I rounded the corner into the bike dismount and heard Bianca and Karla cheering me on.



“I kept reminding myself that it was a short period of time, and I should be pushing myself.”

7 mile Bike Time: 22:57:98 (37th of 132)

Bianca and Karla ran over with me to transition and were giving strong words of encouragement. I don't think I ever made contact. I was so focused on getting my stuff and getting out of there. I wanted to be quick.

I didn't have Yanx (tieless laces) in my shoes and it might have cost me a few seconds as did the second Chapstick application. Oh well.

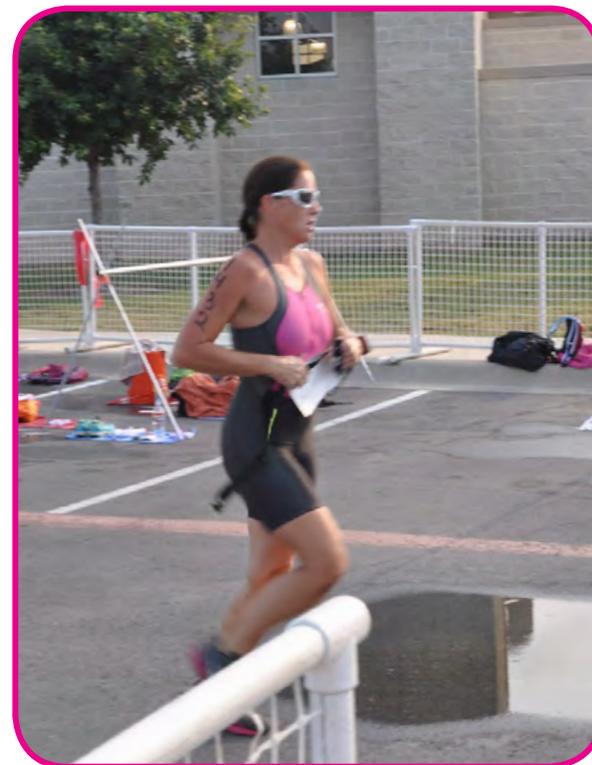


I grabbed my race belt with my bib and my headband and got the heck out of there.

T2 Time: 54:84 (62nd of 132). I was proud of this T2 time, but apparently I ranked better coming out of T1. Go figure.

I started running and was so preoccupied with my race belt and getting my headband in and readjusting my ponytail that I forgot to look at my time/distance. I had no way of knowing my pace at all. I could only go by what my heart was telling me. I pushed as hard as I could and told myself it was 2 miles. I could do anything for 2 miles.

The people ahead of me seemed to be going slowly and I was gaining on them, but I wasn't bolting by. I estimated I was running just under a 10:00 minute mile.



But before I knew it I was at the water station, which they mentioned in the pre-race meeting was at the mile mark. I had glanced at my watch after I got my belt and hair all squared away and the best I could tell, I was running UNDER 9:00 minute miles. I figured I must have computed incorrectly. There was no way.

I was passing people and doing it with gusto. I think I passed a total of 6 or 7 people on the run (including one of the dudes that passed me on the bike) and only got overtaken by a 28 year old guy.

In a blink of an eye I was heading into the homestretch. I could see Bianca, Isabel and Karla and I could hear them cheering for me. What is it about having people you know cheering for you that makes you run faster? I felt like I was slogging along, but I knew I was giving it my best effort and hoped I didn't look too slow.

2 Mile Run Time: 17:28:17 8:44 average!!!!!!! (36th of 132)

I set a goal for myself to finish in less than an hour. I figured the bike would take me close to 28 minutes and the run closer to 20 minutes. I far surpassed my expectations for myself.

Finish Time: 46:44:78 (34th of 132)



To say I was happy was an understatement. I set out to give it my all and I did. It felt GREAT!

Kelley did so awesome.

She swam well, kicked total booty in her transitions, pedaled her heart out, and ran like a beast (taking about a minute per mile off her normal run time).

Tell me this woman doesn't look STRONG!



We were just so happy that we both had such a good race. It's nice to perform up to your own expectation, and it's even nicer to see your friend do it too.

Pretty soon they posted the results, and I could NOT believe it when my name was on the FIRST page. Shut up! I know this was a small race, but my name was on the FIRST page y'all. That NEVER as in EVER happens.

I counted the people in my age group and realized I had finished 6th in my age group. Still, Kelley and I wanted to eye up the people that had beaten us so we decided to wait for the age group results.

And then it happened.... **I WON SECOND PLACE IN MY AGE GROUP!**

That's right folks. What I didn't realize when I was counting the people in my age group on the results page is that I was counting BOTH men and women. I had actually come in 2nd place in my age group!!!

I was so excited I was jumping up and down like a crazy fool. I realize it's not an Ironman, but to me it meant a lot. I told Kelley she probably thought I was an idiot acting like a fool. She said she would act the same way if she won.



And then it happened.... The first place winner in her age group was Kelley!!!! She hadn't anticipated that happening and she really did jump up and down and scream too. We were both so giddy and proud of ourselves. Thank goodness we were there together because we definitely were enjoying our little moment.

I'm so proud of myself, not because of any medal, but because I went out there and gave it my all and had a great race. I couldn't have asked for anything better to have happened today.

34th out of 132, 2nd in my age group and 6th female finisher. I'll take it. Thank you Georgetown Super Sprint for giving me a little confidence today.

Thank you to Kelley for going with me, Bianca, Isabel and Karla for cheering their little hearts out and getting up early on a Sunday, and Mike (Kelley's husband) for all the awesome photos.





Susan Tirch is a 37 year old mother of 3 small children. Her children are Nicholas (8), Ella (6), and Jack (4). They really are the main focus and source of enjoyment in her life. She has been married for 10 years, and raising their children is their most important job. She has run 9 half marathons and 2 full marathons, 3 half centuries, a 70 mile ride, and also attempted a full century and even a triathlon. In her spare time, she trains to stay sane and loves blogging about her every day adventures as a mom at <http://momswimbikerun.blogspot.com/>



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This Mother Can Run

YOGA AND RUNNING

Years ago, it seemed I could do just about anything to my body and it would not complain. Eat a hot dog and exercise one hour later? No problem. Purchase off-brand shoes and take them for a ten-mile run? Piece of cake. Have cake and not get the heebie-jeebies? Sure, and with extra frosting, please.

“Post-run stretching was for posers and maybe old folks.”

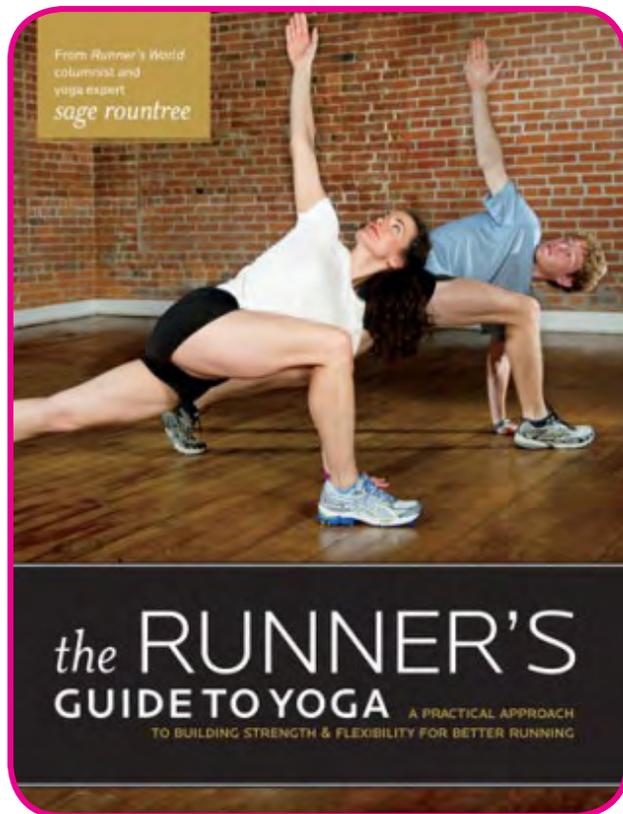
Never, ever intentionally stretch my muscles? Post-run stretching was for posers and maybe old folks. Besides, there’s no time.

Now, firmly in my 40s, my joints are sufficiently creaking, and my muscles are all the time tight. I know what would do my body some good, and I end each run fully intending to spend some time stretching. But then I step into the house and the kids need something, the laundry should be moved, I’m starting to chill and then the moment for stretching is gone. I vow that the next run will be different, and end up walking through my morning with a stiff Frankenstein lurch.

Sensing I was never going to make time for stretching unless I did so intentionally, I signed up for a yoga class at the university where I teach, figuring that two sessions of stretching a week would be better than nothing. Doing downward dogs and planks would be daunting—given that everyone else in the class was at least 20 years younger—but I stuffed my pride, purchased a yoga mat, and began.

Four months later, I am a body transformed. My muscles, especially in my core, feel stronger, thanks to the power yoga moves I’ve learned. Even though I can barely do a toe touch, I’m more limber than several months ago, when a toe touch meant grabbing my shins. I am less creaky and less crabbed, more balanced in heart and mind, a healthier—and thus happier—runner overall. Yoga has changed my middle-aged life, and so I’ve become downright evangelical about its power.

Hopefully, a new book about running and yoga will make converts of others, too. Sage Roundtree’s *The Runner’s Guide to Yoga*, out this past spring from Velo Press, describes





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the ways yoga can help runners, then offers a number of poses runners can follow to help increase their strength and flexibility, find balance, concentrate on correct breathing, and develop focus. Roundtree's book ends with several different yoga routines runners can try, depending on their needs.

The Runner's Guide to Yoga opens with an excellent overview of the many ways yoga can help runners. The overview is short and to the point; rather than overwhelming readers who might be new to yoga, Roundtree provides simple (but in no way simplistic) explanations about yoga's ability to increase range of motion through flexibility training; strengthen a runner's core, as well as other vital muscle groups; and create balance in a runner's body between strength and flexibility, rather than working on one at the cost of the other.

Roundtree promises that, in "cultivating balance, you'll be able to run more mileage, faster, with less physical and mental effort." This more-with-less approach—more miles, faster, and with less effort—seems the Holy Grail to which most runners aspire. Additionally, yoga teaches proper breathing, meditation, mind-focus: all the tools runners need to push through difficult workouts and races.

Yet if yoga delivers all these benefits, why don't more runners jump on board?

More are, especially if the Runner's World reader forums—and the recent addition of

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a yoga-only discussion board—are any indication. Other runners may remain skeptical about yoga's benefits; because so many runners are hard-core about getting in all-out, calorie-busting workouts, yoga's much more sedate reputation might be a hard sell. Why spend time perfecting a mountain pose when a 45-minute run might provide more challenge?

In my experience, though, yoga's reputation as a soft sport is undeserved; the first few classes I took were especially difficult, as I discovered just how little strength and flexibility I really had. And while the poses have become easier over time, I never feel like I'm compromising my fitness in yoga, or somehow wasting precious minutes that could be spent on the road.

Indeed, as Roundtree points out, "Yoga balances your running by serving as the yin to its yang . . . Yoga's role is to complement your training," rather than to replace it. The Runner's Guide to Yoga is organized with this principle in mind, and provides advice that reflects the training cycles most runners experience as they move through competitive and resting seasons in a year, and hard and easy workouts every week.

Ultimately, The Runner's Guide to Yoga argues convincingly that we should be balanced: both in the sense of our physical bodies, but also in the sense of having balance in our running lives, in how we approach our workouts and our goals for each day, month, and year.

Finding such balance takes intentional time, Roundtree reminds us. But the rewards

can stretch far beyond becoming stronger, faster, and injury-free. Roundtree points out that yoga also teaches runners focus, an attention to the body and to form—either running or yoga form—that can enhance running performance and overall well-being.

The best part about *The Runner's Guide to Yoga* is its accessibility. Roundtree explains the purpose of yoga, and then the potential poses in yoga, clearly and well. The book also provides pictures showing the progression of each pose and—this is important to me at least—the models in the pictures look less like enlightened yogis and more like an everyday runner, someone just like me. The message? If these folks can work into those poses, I can too. Eventually.

Because, like with most things, success in yoga takes time, work, and practice. Success is also attainable, and is defined not by some clearly measured standard, but by one's own goals. My yoga teacher often reminds the class that yoga is no competition, and that success means meeting

personal goals and finding contentment in your body's abilities as well as its limitations.

Even after reading *The Runner's Guide to Yoga*, finding a teacher or class still seems the best approach to a rewarding yoga practice. Although the book is a great primer on the practices of yoga, Roundtree also acknowledges a class pushes runners "in different ways." She writes, "Class is where you learn new things . . . You'll be encouraged to approach poses, sequences, and techniques differently than you would at home." Roundtree then offers important criteria to use in finding a teacher, as well as showing how a yoga class can be balanced with home practice.

Right now, with my yoga class out for the summer, I'm turning to Roundtree's book for guidance. Using her descriptions for poses and workouts has been useful, especially when I find myself slipping back into old habits, foregoing the mindfulness of yoga to fold laundry or get breakfast for the kids. *The Runner's Guide to Yoga* calls me back to the

"Yoga has changed my middle-aged life, and so I've become downright evangelical about its power."

balances I need in my life, reminding me that my body and my mind need attention, too. Although I'm still a new convert to the practice of yoga, it has taught me a great deal, including this: a woman in her 40s may not be able to eat hot dogs before long runs, nor pass miles in off-brand shoes, but she needs to treat her body and her mind well. *The Runner's Guide to Yoga* has become an important tool in helping me find ways to do exactly that.

Melanie Mock is a mother of two third grade boys, a professor of English at George Fox University in Newberg, Oregon, 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. She has written for a number of periodicals, and her book, *Just Moms: Conveying Justice in an Unjust World*, was published by Barclay Press. She has also finished 28 marathons and a 50K.

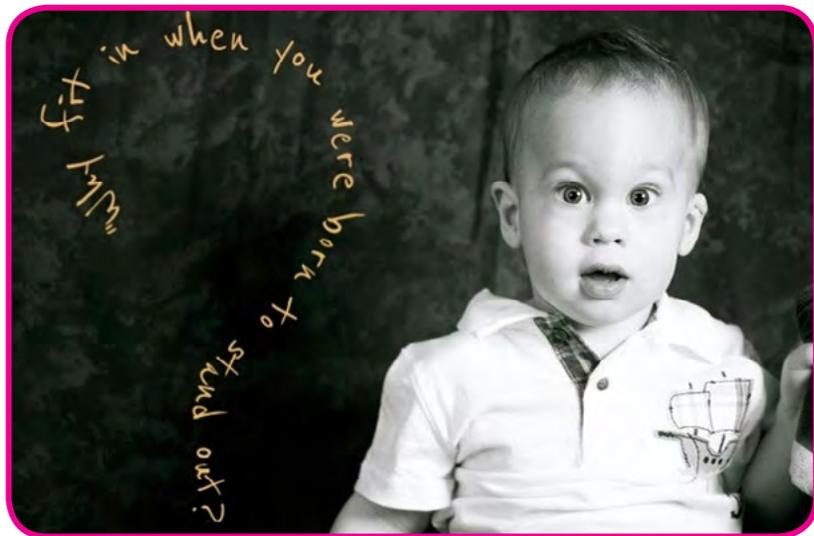


ONE LITTLE BOY'S ULTRA MARATHON

Do you like running on treadmill?

Neither does Kathy Sebright. In fact, she despises it. Ask her about the treadmill and she'll tell you in no uncertain terms, "I only run on it when there are no other options for getting outside. I run outside year round. Snow, ice, wind, rain, heat, blazing humidity - you name it, I'm there." But in less than a month she's going to be running on one...for possibly eight hours straight. Let that sink in for a minute. She'll be running **AN EIGHT HOUR**

TREADMILL RUN or however long it takes her 15 month old son to emerge safely from an invasive surgery in which the bones of his skull will literally be broken and put back together because of medical condition called Craniosynostosis. Never heard of Craniosynostosis? Neither did I. Nor did Kathy. In fact, she's not entirely sure her son's doctors did either which is **EXACTLY** the reason why she'll be running - to raise awareness for a cause that hit home. This is Kathy's story, and that of her precious son, Emmett, in her own words...



Craniosynostosis is a birth defect in which one of the sutures in the skull closes too early, before the baby's brain is fully formed. This can inhibit brain growth and cause severe and permanent damage. Signs to look for are a misshapen head (not to be confused with plagiocephaly - flat head syndrome), a hard, raised ridge along the affected suture, a soft spot that closed too early, or a slow growing head. The earlier Craniosynostosis is caught - the better! A less invasive surgery is sometimes an option if the child is under 6 months. Otherwise, 6-12 months is the optimal age for cranial vault reconstruction.

Emmett is our second child, he is 14 months old. We also have a 3 year old son, Travis. Emmett is such a happy, smiley baby with a huge personality. He has beautiful, big, blue eyes that just light up the room. He adores his big brother and laughs uncontrollably with infectious baby giggles anytime my 3 year old does something silly. He's a stubborn, strong willed baby, but that has served him well as he's become an excellent fighter. He came into our lives shortly after I had lost 2 babies consecutively during pregnancy. The doctors who thought I would lose him as well, told me to "prepare myself", and put

me on bed rest for 8 weeks during the 1st trimester.

But just as quickly as the problem had surfaced, it went away, and I was taken off bed rest with a very normal, uncomplicated, remainder of my pregnancy! He is our little miracle baby. He is developmentally delayed in a few areas. We have yet to hear him say mama or dada, or even associate us with those words, but I know he's a smart baby and will catch up soon. He also doesn't walk yet either, but we keep patiently waiting until we can fill out that milestones page in his baby book.

We noticed right away when Emmett was born that he had a different shaped head, but the doctors kept telling us it was

.....
 "I will suffer right alongside him,
 in the best way I know how."



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nothing to worry about and it would "pop back out" eventually. He has a prominent ridge running from the top of his head down to his nose, his temples are pinched in (indented), and he has a triangular shaped head. But other than his oddly shaped noggin, he was a perfectly healthy baby for the first entire year of his life.

And then everything happened at once. He had his first grand mal seizure a week after his first birthday, then a partial seizure, and later another grand mal seizure. A CT scan revealed the metopic suture in his skull had closed early and we were told it was nothing at all to worry about. This time, I didn't believe them when they said not to worry. I did my own research, looked at other CT scans online, made my own diagnosis of metopic Craniosynostosis (trigonocephaly), and demanded a referral to see a specialist. I knew what my son had before any of his doctors. We struggled to get the doctors to take us seriously, to get the referral we needed, and for them to believe me. They didn't even want to schedule surgery for another 6 months and told us "he should be fine" until then.

We ended up switching hospitals/doctors because we felt we were not getting quality care. At the second hospital with a different set of doctors, our son was immediately diagnosed with severe metopic



"He adores his big brother and laughs uncontrollably with infectious baby giggles anytime my 3 year old does something silly."



Craniosynostosis. When they gave us the diagnosis, in front of an entire team of doctors and surgeons, I started sobbing. The doctor stopped talking about the surgery, handed me a tissue, and reassuringly patted my hand. At which point I cracked a smile and then started giggling, realizing they thought I was distressed about what they had just told me and about to crack. I managed to blurt out, "I'm relieved, I was right" and the doctors started laughing with me. They told me I was the first parent they've ever seen cry tears of relief at this diagnosis and then laugh. I was just so unbelievably relieved that this group of doctors agreed with me, saw the urgency in the situation as we did, and were going to do something about it as soon as possible.

We then took on our insurance company who did not want to pay a penny for us to use this out of network hospital. They wanted us to go back to the first hospital that didn't take us seriously and didn't even seem concerned with our son's condition. We fought relentlessly with them, for weeks, and were just about to contact the local news station to help us put public pressure on them, when they caved.

During the pre-operative testing, we found out a few things. The seizures were not related to the Craniosynostosis, but without a doubt, a Godsend because we would have never known about the Craniosynostosis without the seizures coming first! We will investigate the seizures further after the surgery, as the surgery is the highest priority right now. An MRI also revealed a venous abnormality in his brain – which is something abnormal with a vein in his brain. Again, it's unrelated to the Craniosynostosis, but something else we never would have known to look for if he didn't have Craniosynostosis first! Another Godsend. He will need to have it monitored regularly in case it starts to restrict blood flow or rupture, but for now, it's not causing any problems.

The surgery he will need to correct the Craniosynostosis is a cranial vault reconstruction. It is a 7-8 hour surgery where they will make a zig-zag incision ear to ear. They will break the bones of his skull, reshape them, and put them back together with plates and screws. Since Emmett also suffers from unexplained seizures, there is a bit of a complication. If he seizes on the OR table, it could be fatal. He will be put on anti-convulsant medication for the surgery but nothing can be guaranteed as we don't know the origin of the seizures. If all goes well with the surgery, we will spend 2-3 days in the PICU (pediatric intensive care unit) and 3-4 days in the hospital. Because of the nature of the surgery, there is a lot of facial swelling which causes the eyes to swell shut. Before we can be released from the

hospital, he will need to be able to open at least one eye. From what we understand, he should bounce back fairly quickly, in a couple of weeks; he should be acting like his old self! Sometimes additional surgeries are needed because the skull can revert back to its original shape. It's something we will have to watch.

As for the stress, all I can say is that we are very fortunate. We have a solid faith to lean on that has helped us navigate this with more ease than I thought possible. We have a huge support system with family, friends, coworkers, and our church congregation. I have retold Emmett's story to people many times and I've watched their mouths agape with horror and tears in their eyes. People are always shocked that we are doing so well with this and they don't understand how. It's not that I'm desensitized to it or I don't care, it's just that I know something big is happening and I know something good is coming out of this. I choose hope.

When he's in pain, it pains me. I still do worry too. When I can't sleep, I sneak into his room and watch him sleep. I have been known to fall asleep on the floor next to his crib. I try and reason with God, telling him all the good Emmett could do here with us if he'll just



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“We struggled to get the doctors to take us seriously, to get the referral we needed, and for them to believe me.”

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allow it. But in the end, it's not up to me and I have to accept that. I will cherish every moment I have with him now and not worry about the future. If we didn't have the faith we do, I can certainly see where it would break me. The thought that he is suffering in vain, that the seizures could cause irrevocable damage, that surgery could kill him, that the abnormality in his brain could kill him – that's too much to handle on my own. But because I know it's in God's hands, I know Emmett is going to make a difference. Emmett is going to bring about change. What is happening to our family right now – people are watching, waiting to see what we will do. And what we are going to do is simply trust.

We have decided to embrace Craniosynostosis whole heartedly. Because his skull is triangular, we have a newfound love of triangles and all things triangular. We joke that the triangle is our new family crest. I wrote a book about Craniosynostosis from my 3 year old's perspective, in the hopes other kids can understand. We are working with an illustrator now and will try publishing shortly. I wrote the word Craniosynostosis on the bottom of my running shoes so that I can stomp it into the ground, mile after mile. We made two shirts for him to wear after surgery. One says, 'chicks dig scars' and another says, 'you should see the other guy'. People are going to stare. We know that. We've decided not to let it bother us or get to us and use it as an opportunity to educate others.



I have a pretty solid running background. I truly and passionately love running. I have run for a little over 7 years. I direct my own small 5k; I've been a fitness ambassador, a pacer; I ran a half marathon 6 months pregnant; I've run 2 full marathons, numerous half's, and way too many 5ks and 10ks to keep track of. I was in the very early stages of training for an ultra when I got pregnant and decided to tone down the mileage a bit! I have run all the way through both pregnancies with my boys including a 3 mile "due date run" with both as well.

My husband and I decided to do Emmett's (virtual) Endurance Event on June 20th in honor of our son. I am going to run for the entire 7 to 8 hours he is in surgery. I will not

rest and will not stop, until he is out safely. I wanted to do this because I could think of no other way to show my level of dedication and devotion to my son. I don't want him to do this alone. Even though he is in another room, I will suffer right alongside him, in the best way I know how. Of course, running is nothing like having your skull broken apart, but it's the best I can offer him.

We are asking others to do something on this day in support of Emmett. Print off a race bib and run, walk, bike, hike, or do anything at all that you want to at some point during the day. It doesn't have to be at any specific time, it doesn't have to be a certain amount of time, just whatever you are willing to do, whenever you have a chance. Take a quick picture for us so we can immortalize you in our support hall of fame too and that's it. We get 2 things out of this: 1. People will hear the word Craniosynostosis and it may help raise awareness and 2. We will know we are not alone in this. When I start to run on fumes around hour 5, I





will know there are all these people out there who are willing to do something for my son, doing something right at the very moment, and I must keep going.

Training for this has presented a few problems, mainly due to time constraints. The hospital where he will have surgery is 2-1/2 hours away. Just one appointment can take up an entire day. I am still running regularly, but for the first time ever, I am running for time – not distance. I made up my own training plan based loosely on the Pfitz marathon plan I've used in the past. Running for time is a new concept for me to grasp. This week, my long run was 4 hours. I kept looking at my watch to see how close I was to being "done" but had to keep reminding myself it didn't matter how far I went, just how long it had been. Next week, I will go for 5 hours, and so on. I will peak at 7 hours before coming back down. I don't know how well my body will handle it, but I'm willing to find out for the noblest cause I can think of.

The hospital has a small gym for inpatient

"We have a solid faith to lean on that has helped us navigate this with more ease than I thought possible."



Kathy ran 36.2 miles for Emmett!

families and that is where I will be running. The hospital is giving me a pager so they can notify us if anything comes up or they need to talk to us. My husband, Tony, will be at my side the entire time as well and will take periodic updates from the doctors as long as everything is going ok. Tony is my biggest fan, running supporter, and coach. While not a runner himself, he knows more about running and training than a lot of runners do!



I have made it my personal mission to bring Craniosynostosis awareness. Early detection is key, and there are many doctors out there who don't even know what it is or what to look for! I was recently a pacer for a large 25k road race. I wore a sign on my back about Craniosynostosis urging people to ask me about it. So many people did, and it was wonderful to help get the word out. I even got to tell a midwife all about it, who had never heard of it. It's small, but it's a start!

My sincerest hope is that this information about Craniosynostosis sticks in at least one person's mind, and it makes all the difference in the world to someone else. I want Emmett to wear his scar proudly and to know that he helped make that difference.

UPDATE: True to her word, Kathy Sebright ran on a hospital treadmill the entire time her son Emmett was in surgery, 7 hours and 26 minutes at an average pace of 12.19 minutes per mile burning well over 5,000 calories in the process. Her husband, Tony, took part in an ultra marathon of his own as Kathy's support crew, keeping her hydrated, fueled and in touch with the doctors the entire time. They were joined by more than a thousand people in 45 states and 15 countries who printed off a bib and participated in Emmett's (virtual) Endurance Event. Participants prayed, ran, walked, swam, bicycled, kayaked, hiked, bounced, and gardened to name just a few of the ways people dedicated a portion of their day to Emmett in support of Kathy's efforts to raise awareness of her son's condition, Craniosynostosis.

Emmett's surgery went wonderfully, exactly according to plan. Doctors said that although tests prior to surgery had been negative, once in surgery it was discovered that there was actually a tremendous amount of intracranial pressure on his brain which means that the pain, crying, screaming, head holding and pounding that came along with that pressure will thankfully be gone too. As was expected, Emmett experienced some facial swelling following surgery and his eyes were swollen shut for a few days, but the swelling has begun to subside and just four days following surgery, Emmett was able to go back home. General recovery is expected to take about a month and it'll be 6 months to a year for his head to completely mold into its new shape.

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 Kelly Collins is an RRCA certified running coach, writer, blogger, wife and stay at home mamma to two beautiful and wildly entertaining little girls ages 2 and 5 with another little running princess on the way due to make her arrival this fall. Read Kelly's latest adventures of mixing pregnancy, mommyhood, and running at Secrets of A Running Mom (www.runfast-mommy.com) or visit her at her coaching website www.runningcoachformoms.com.



To the throngs of supporters who participated in Emmett's Endurance Event, Kathy would just like to say, "Thank you a thousand times over. The outpouring of support was amazing and we are grateful beyond words. You will each forever hold a spot in our hearts. It's cliché, but I can't tell you how much it meant to us!"

Cliché or not, one thing is certain, because of this little boy who stole the heart of so many and his mom who was willing to share his story and run, there's a sizable number of people around the world who can tell you now about Craniosynostis who couldn't before. And chances are, they all share a new found love as well, a love of triangles.



Name: Kathy Sebright

Q: Favorite running song and the artist/band
 Dog Days are Over by Florence and the Machine

Q: Favorite time of day to run
 early morning, 5 or 6 AM

Q: How do you prefer to train?
 alone
 with a partner (whenever possible)
 in a group

Q: Most scenic place you've ever run
 On the beach at dawn along the Gulf of Mexico on South Padre Island, Texas. Running on the beach is so much more glamorous in the movies. When you do it in real life, it's actually pretty hard and awkward to keep your footing!

Q: Average miles per run
 around 6-8 miles plus 1 wicked long run on the weekend

Q: Where do you usually run?
 treadmill
 outside

Q: What do you do while running?
 listen to music
 watch TV
 talk
 think
 other (daydream and pray)

Q: Favorite running gadget or gear
 I just love running skirts and my Garmin.

Q: Why did you start running?
 to get in shape (And I quickly fell in love with it..)
 to get back to pre-pregnancy weight
 for fun
 for sport
 other

Q: Favorite race distance
 5K
 10K
 1/2 marathon
 marathon
 ultramarathon

ASK THE PT

In this issue of *This Mother Can Run* magazine I am going to talk about one of the most used but often overlooked joints in the entire body that is so crucial to running performance that many seasoned runners often overlook it in their training: the hip joint.

Each year over hundreds of thousands of people are treated for specific hip related injuries or symptoms associated with hip soreness. The question is why and how can we prevent specific injuries from occurring when we are training? So how do we get the swivel back in our hips and get us back to those 4 minute miles? Read on and you will see it is not as hard or as complicated as you might think.

1. Lack of strength

This to me is the most common factor in why most people have sore hips. Improper training of the hip muscles. You have groups of hip muscles that assist in every major function we do in life from walking to riding a bike. Your hip flexors which are located in the front part of your hip are composed of your iliopsoas and psoas major muscles commonly referred to as the iliopsoas. Kicking your leg forward activates these muscles. Your hip abductor muscles which include your gluteus medius and tensor fascia latae control your ability to bring your leg out to the side. Your gluteus maximus (yes your tough muscle) is a very strong hip extensor. You can kick your leg back because of this all important muscle. Finally we must not forget the piriformis muscle in all of this talk as this is responsible for rotation of your hips. Your ability to start and stop or accelerate and decelerate is in part because of your piriformis. People think they have rock solid hips when in reality they do not. I am a prime example. I work out 6-7 days a week and I incorporate some sort of cardio activity in my routine at least 3 times a week. My hip muscles when tested were extremely weak. What this means for me is that because of the amount of exercise I perform on a weekly basis, I need for my hips to be strong so I do not put any stress on the rest of my joints such as my knees or back. It is important to be balanced so future problems do not occur in other joints. Quite simply, what affects the top of the pelvis can have a trickle down effect to the rest of the lower extremities.

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 “Quite simply, what affects the top of the pelvis can have a trickle down effect to the rest of the lower extremities.”

2. Lack of flexibility

This is extremely important. From previous issues of *This Mother Can Run* you know I am a huge proponent of stretching the muscles both before and after any kind of physical activity, especially running. The muscles that need to be stretched are your hip flexors, hamstrings (back of the thigh), quadriceps (front of the thigh), and piriformis (rotators of the hip). A regular routine of keeping these muscles flexible and loose will contribute to greater health in all of the other joints as well as the hips.

3. IT band awareness

The infamous IT band. This structure is the cause for almost 50% of the known hip pathologies in a PT clinic. The body commonly expresses it as IT band tendonitis. But many people do not even know what the IT band is. Let's define it. It stands for iliotibial band and it is a structure that extends from the top of the hip to the top of the outside of the knee joint. It is not a muscle but think of it as a cord-like structure that if you put a million guitar strings side by side and then wove them together you would get something similar to the IT band. If this is not stretched properly problems can arise. It, however, is not so easy to stretch. My recommendation is to have a trained professional show you how to stretch this, so further injury or irritation can be avoided.

“More stress can lead to more injuries, and more injuries can keep you on the sideline from doing what you love to do, and that is run.”

4. Increased weight gain

This one is not rocket science to anybody. The more weight that is put on, especially in your lower extremities, the more stress your hip joints are under to be the anchors they need to be to support all of your activities. More stress can lead to more injuries, and more injuries can keep you on the sideline from doing what you love to do, and that is run.

Hopefully you can incorporate these helpful hip tidbits into your daily routine. Make sure whatever you are doing you get correct advice from professional people who are trained in the mechanics of the human body. Now go out and keep shaking those hips!



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.



DESTINATION RUNNING



I had a low-key road trip planned this past weekend to Schaumburg, Illinois. Not much planned for the weekend, in an area that has tons to do. No agenda ... other than to have some fun, do some shopping, enjoy some good eats, and of course, to fit a run in.

I've visited Schaumburg dozens of times and have always noticed runners out on a local trail and a bike or two passing by, as I exited the interstate. When we arrived in town on Saturday afternoon, I decided to make a quick stop to see what was up. To my surprise, we landed at the Busse Woods Trail System, a forest preserve, complete with 12 miles of paved trails through woods, lakes and even an elk pasture. Too cool!

The next morning, we returned to venture out for a nice, scenic run. And scenic, it was! We started at Higgins Road. There were several places to start your route at various parking lots, complete with ample restrooms. There were gorgeous bridges, ponds, lakes, trees in bloom and ample mile markers on signs as well as painted on the well-kept winding



“There were gorgeous bridges, ponds, lakes, trees in bloom and ample mile markers on signs as well as painted on the well-kept winding trails.”

trails. We ended up doing an out-and-back four mile loop. The portion of the path we ran was fairly flat and very scenic. This was so much better than running in the hotel gym.

There were organized groups of runners, fishermen, yoga in the park, and we were constantly passed by cyclists and in-line-skaters. I would've felt safe even if I had been running by myself, doing a long training run.

When I returned home, I was curious and looked up the trail system online. I was amazed at all of the trail systems in Cook County. I can't wait to check out more awesome running areas the next time I head across the border to Illinois.

Destination running is so much fun.

(Special thanks to about-bicycles.com for some of these awesome photos that I didn't have the opportunity to snap myself.)

Jamie Edge is a single mommy of two who started running in 2005. Being very goal-oriented, she set a goal to run twelve half marathons in 2011. Shortly after she set her goal, she was confronted with a divorce and thought that she would need to set more “realistic” goals for herself during a time of transition. But, she decided to recommit herself and use running as therapy and to occupy her time. By the end of the year, she ran sixteen of her twelve half marathons and one full marathon. The same year, she also started a coaching business and helped 50 other people train for their first 5K. You can check out her blog, Running Diva Mom (www.runningdivamom.com) or the Running Diva Facebook Page (<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Running-Diva-Mom/148863891815074?ref=ts>)



DIGGING DEEP

I completed my sixth half marathon which was my third More/Fitness Magazine Half Marathon this spring; the course was two challenging loops of continuous rolling hills through Central Park in New York City. I had every intention to make this half marathon, THE HALF MARATHON where I got my PR, where I kill it and where I left it ALL on the course. Let's just say I learned a lot about myself at this race, more than I thought I'd ever learn during a half marathon.

I made sure that I committed myself mentally and physically to this training; I wasn't very committed to my last training cycle and I suffered the consequences by completely bonking at mile eight, I gave up mentally, physically, spiritually and everything else you can think of. For half marathon number six I made sure to train hard - mentally and physically, I made sure I ran my intervals and fartleks. I made sure I ran all the long runs. I made sure I didn't psyche myself out when the going got tough, or the tough had a few too many chips.

I did everything I needed to do to run a great race. Everything.

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 "I did everything I needed to do to run a great race."

When I woke up on race day, I felt good, well-rested and strong. I prepared my standard pre-race fuel of a cup of coffee as my insurance that I'd have no bathroom issues, a few wasa crackers with peanut butter and a banana. As I was getting ready to pick up my running partner I popped on Facebook to brag that I was embarking on my sixth half marathon. Then I made my way over to email and deleted my 100th Lands End ad-mail pimping their latest sale, and then I saw much to my surprise, an amazing email from Ultra Marathoner Amy Palmiero Winters (we were working together on a story), who was responding to my comment on wanting a PR for this race:

"Remember...all you can do is give your best for that day. And if you get tired remind yourself it is just a feeling, so get over it!!"

This gave me the mental strength I needed as I walked out the door; now everything was

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 "I fought hard, and I dug deeper than a kid picking out a wedgie."



perfect. I was well-rested, well-fed, well-trained and mentally strong; even the weather was perfect: cloudy and 60 degrees, cool but not cold, some bursts of sun without it pounding down on us. The best part was I knew this course, ran it twice, I was ready to go get it.

When the gun was fired, I gave this race my all. I sailed through that fearful mile eight at a great clip and never bonked; by mile 11 I was feeling a little tired, a little weak, a little like throwing in the towel but I thought of all the people in my life that can't give up – my dad, my mom, Patty and Julie fighting cancer, my sister in law mourning her son, and then I thought of what Amy Palmiero Winters said to me and repeated that over and over again; I gave this course my heart and soul. I never gave up. I fought hard, and I dug deeper than a kid picking out a wedgie.

When I crossed the finish line I was in tears, hysterically crying, sobbing. The medics thought I was hurt, but I wasn't, and no I wasn't crying because I got my PR. It was because I didn't. I gave this race my all but never hit my goal.

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 "But I was so angry and disappointed I swore I'd never run another race again."

As I made my way through the bagels, apples, and water, the tears kept coming, and coming, and coming; I was beating myself up, inside my head I was yelling and screaming at myself. I cursed myself out; hell if my grammar school nuns would have heard me they would have washed my mouth out with soap. But I was so angry and disappointed I swore I'd never run another race again.

And then as my sloppy messy tears slowed down and my breathing returned to normal, oxygen began to flow back into my brain I realized that I was an ass. I did leave a piece of me on that course, and this time it wasn't because of my irritable bowels. I never gave up on myself like I had so many times before. I fought to the finish. I broke through physical and mental barriers and learned a very valuable lesson –I can finish anything I start. I might not always get the results I want, but that doesn't matter. I finished. So lesson learned. If you give up mentally you fail. On race day I achieved an unexpected goal, one that in hindsight is sweeter than my PR. Running is 90% mental the other 10 % is any uncertain variable that can pop up on race day. For the first time I won the mental game and thankfully the other 10% didn't rise up to bite me in the ass. Now I think I'm ready for my next half marathon and my next lesson- which is not to put so much pressure on myself and lower my expectations.

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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.



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“You were born to run. Maybe not that fast, maybe not that far, maybe not as efficiently as others. But to get up and move, to fire up that entire energy-producing, oxygen-delivering, bone-strengthening process we call running.”

-Florence Griffith-Joyner

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This Mother Can Run