

# This Mother Can Run

“The best ways to combat the exhaustion is taking easy days SUPER easy, sleeping well and hydrating/eating well.”

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## This Mother Can Run

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# Jump Start Your Fitness by Ending Excuses

Are you the queen of excuses when it comes to working out? Join the club. There are millions of us.

It is a recurring theme: you plan an early morning workout. The later you stay up, the more you drink and eat. Then, the negotiating kicks in: "I don't really need to get up that early. I don't really need to do that workout anyway." By the time you lay your head on the pillow at midnight, stuffed and dehydrated, you move the alarm to the off position and sigh, "Oh well. Working out isn't everything. I'm sure I can fit it in later in the day or next week or never. I'm just destined to {insert adjective here}: be lazy, be out of shape, not meet my goal."

As someone who doesn't like to sacrifice her social life or family time while training for a big race, I'm constantly battling between my rationalizing-self and my disciplined-self. Two beers and a foot-long hot dog at a late night baseball game is enough to make me want to throw in the towel, to sacrifice the next day's early morning workout. Yet,

my disciplined-self knows that once I fall off the wagon, it sets the stage for future workout failures. One missed workout becomes four or five.

**My new rule of thumb?** There is no reason worthy of missing a workout except illness, injury (or threat of injury), or emergency. Naturally, there are mom and/or work moments that might need attention (think: vomiting child), but only you know if these constitute true reasons to forgo working out, or merely excuses. Try this test: Is there anyone else who can take care of that child? Is the work obligation so hefty that it cannot wait an hour? Generally, regardless of time constraints, weather, fatigue or dirty/smelly running clothes, the workout should happen.

Some say that the biggest obstacle to exercising, getting in shape, and meeting our training goals is time, or lack thereof. I disagree. We will always find the time if we want it badly enough. The biggest hurdle? The excuses that we make - the

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"There is no reason worthy of missing a workout except illness, injury (or threat of injury), or emergency."

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rationalizations we give for our life not being how we want it to be.

As humans, mere mortals that we are, we will find reasons to not challenge ourselves, to not do tough things. Ask yourself why you don't follow through. Are you afraid of failing? Does the fear of change paralyze you? Digging deep for answers might produce unexpected results.

What is needed is a jump start just like that car with the dead battery that's been sitting in the driveway for weeks. Long hours spent on the couch, neglecting our bodies or simply being removed from them makes it challenging to take that first step and to get moving. Some of us don't really want to work hard. Others have goals but don't know how to reach them, so they give up.



Beth Risdon, author of the often irreverent blog, **Shut Up and Run**, never considered herself a runner until three years ago. At the age of 40 and feeling a bit off center, she decided to train for her first marathon even though she had never run further than six miles. After crossing the finish line, Beth got bitten by the running "bug" and has since run countless races and has recently competed in triathlons, even placing in her age group. Beth credits running with changing her life — not just in the physical sense, but in helping her become a kinder, more insightful, healthier and more balanced person who believes she can do anything she sets her mind to.



Inspired by her own experiences, she became a certified running coach in 2010 through the **Road Runner's Club of America** to support people in completing their first long distance race. All the while, she remains dedicated to her own training and does 8 to 10 races each year. Beth completed the Boston Marathon in 2011 and is currently training for her first half Ironman. A mother of two children, ages 10 and 13, she tries to emphasize the importance of a healthy body and a healthy outlook on life.

The mind is a powerful thing. Give it an out and it will take it. Challenge it to persevere and it follows suit.

There are stories of inspiration everywhere. Unfortunately, those are often overshadowed by the tales of laziness, poor eating habits, or lengthy time in front of the television or computer. Most are not walking the walk. Talk is typically about what people are planning to do (diet, start a new exercise plan). It is less common to hear people talk about eating clean everyday, getting enough sleep and sunlight, and actively and routinely exercising. These people are just doing it, not talking about it. It is how they live every single day. There are no resolutions or gimmicks, no Hollywood Cookie Diets. It is a way of life. One that provides self-satisfaction and accomplishment.

**My advice?** Stop thinking so much and getting in your own way. Thinking merely allows an outlet to not do something. Just put your workout into action without the forethought of: It's too hot, I'm too tired, I don't have time, I don't feel like it. If being in shape, losing weight, or running marathons was easy, everyone would do it. It's not supposed to be easy. When the "excuse" thoughts creep in, kick them to the curb.

One of the single best ways to embark on something new, something you've been putting off, is to just start. It's not about running a marathon today. It's about taking a single step in the right direction. Walk a mile. Swim two laps. Go to a yoga class. Follow through. Make it public. Be accountable. Reward yourself. Remember that no one finishes a workout and regrets having done it. It is the staying in bed or on the couch that we regret. So, take that first step. Become the queen of no-excuses and watch your life unfold for the better.

# Ask the PT

By Eric Tomei

## What advice do you have for Achilles problems?

Ah, the venerable Achilles tendon. First some fun history. The Achilles tendon was named after the Greek God, Achilles, who was a hero in the Trojan War. He was vulnerable only in one spot and that was on his heel. He eventually was killed by getting shot in the heel. Like Achilles, everyone is vulnerable to injury in the Achilles tendon if not properly treated. Correct footwear, exercising, stretching before and after a work out, and icing are all great ways to prevent Achilles tendon injuries.

“It is absolutely vital that the Achilles tendon stays healthy as it is the anchor between the calf and the ankle.”

The Achilles tendon is one of the most important structures in the ankle/foot complex and one of the most easily irritated in runners. It is absolutely vital that the Achilles tendon stays healthy as it is the anchor between the calf and the ankle. It connects both heads of the gastrocnemius and soleus muscles (calf) to the calcaneus (ankle bone).

There are many causes of Achilles tendon injuries. These are tightness or weakness of the leg, knee, hip or back, high or low arches in the foot, uneven leg lengths,

alternating between high heels and exercise shoes, sudden increase in training, and increasing speed, distance or running up steep hills.

**There are various forms of Achilles type injuries:**

1. *Achilles tendonitis (tendonosis)*-This is the most common injury in runners when talking about the Achilles tendon. Any tendon in the body, including the Achilles tendon, connects muscle to bone. At times, when you are overusing or performing a repetitive activity over a prolonged period of time, such as running, the Achilles tendon can get inflamed. When inflammation sets in things such as pain, burning, aching, or tenderness to touch are all common symptoms. Certainly, no one who is an avid runner ever wants to hear that the best treatment for Achilles tendonitis is to stop the activity that you are doing that causes it and rest. But it is absolutely true. Rest over a



*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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2-4 week period coupled with avoidance of activity, proper footwear, ice massage and in some cases physical therapy should decrease the tendonitis to the point of resuming normal activity. And what is normal activity? This is the million dollar question. This is all subjective. For some it is running 5 miles a day, for others 5 miles a week. Whatever the case might be, understand you will need to gradually work your way back to running or any other activity you choose. Prematurely performing any kind of physical activity is only asking for trouble. Trust me.

2. *Achilles tendon rupture*- A rupture of the Achilles tendon occurs when there is an actual tear of the tendon either partially or completely. At times, people will hear a popping sound and usually that Achilles tendon will coil like a snake. Partial Achilles tendon injuries particularly affect middle to long distance runners. Usually, surgery is not required for partial Achilles tendon injuries as over time the tendon will heal on its own. For complete tears, however surgery is required. Usually it is at least a year before you can resume normal activity comfortably and healing has taken place. In other words, avoid this like the plague.

**To prevent Achilles tendon injuries is simple:**

1. Stay in good shape.
2. Stretch before and after exercise.
3. Strengthen the ankle muscles through resistance bands or weights.

Do you know that there are over 230,000 documented Achilles related problems in the United States every year? By following the tips above, I hope that you avoid becoming 230,001.

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.



“Partial Achilles tendon injuries particularly affect middle to long distance runners.”



# Going for the Gold

Deena Kastor won the bronze medal for the marathon at the Olympics in Greece; she's been awarded the title of USATF Runner of the Year and Female Cross Country Athlete of the Year; and she has won several difficult races along the way. Deena's latest accomplishment is that she has become a mother for the first time. After almost 6 months since the arrival of her daughter, *This Mother Can Run* caught up with Deena to see how life is for an Olympic level runner and mother.



**Q:** You've been in the Olympics, won the Jesse Owens Award, USATF Runner of the Year, CC Jackson Award, USATF Female Cross Country Athlete of the Year, and you've won several races. What do you consider your biggest running accomplishment?

**A:** I wouldn't trade any moment over another. Each victory and defeat offers amazing lessons.

**Q:** After college, you lost your love for running. What caused that and how did you find that passion again?

**A:** I didn't necessarily lose my love of running. I simply had other passions competing for my time.

**Q:** Do you ever just feel like not running? If so, how do you combat that feeling?

**A:** I always like to get out and run because my goals are at the forefront of my focus. On a windy afternoon, I sometimes need my MP3 player so I don't throw a tantrum. Uphill, against the wind. Yuck!

**Q:** What motivates you to run now?

**A:** There always seems to be more to accomplish. With the Olympics around the corner, I don't need to search far for motivation. I do, however, have the added motivation of being a good role model for our daughter.

**Q:** Training and qualifying for the Olympics is the ultimate goal, but you only get that opportunity every four years. It's similar to most runners training for a marathon hoping to qualify for Boston. Most times it comes down to one race making or breaking your dreams. How do you deal with that pressure?

**A:** I thrive on the pressure. The pressure of qualifying whether it be for the Olympic Games or a Boston qualifier is what gets the best out of ourselves.

**Q:** You used to race shorter distances, but it seems that you've shifted your focus to the

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 "I survived and even thrived in the sabbatical I took to allow my foot to fully heal."  
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marathon in recent years. What caused you to make that shift?

**A:** I have moved away from the shorter distances and focus more on the marathon preparation because it seemed a natural progression. I love being at home and training with a narrow focus of a single race.

**Q:** Although it's nice to train for a single race, is there a downside? For example, are there as many opportunities to race and reach your goals?

**A:** Training for one race can be a risk when it comes to marathons, but if we have prepared well it should leave us with a great outcome. The trick is staying healthy, making good choices and listening to our bodies. Even when I ran the 5000 and 10000 on the track I chose not to race very much. I simply love staying at home and training so marathon running is a good fit for me.

**Q:** Three years ago you had to pull out of the Beijing Olympics due to a foot injury. How do you deal with major setbacks such as this?

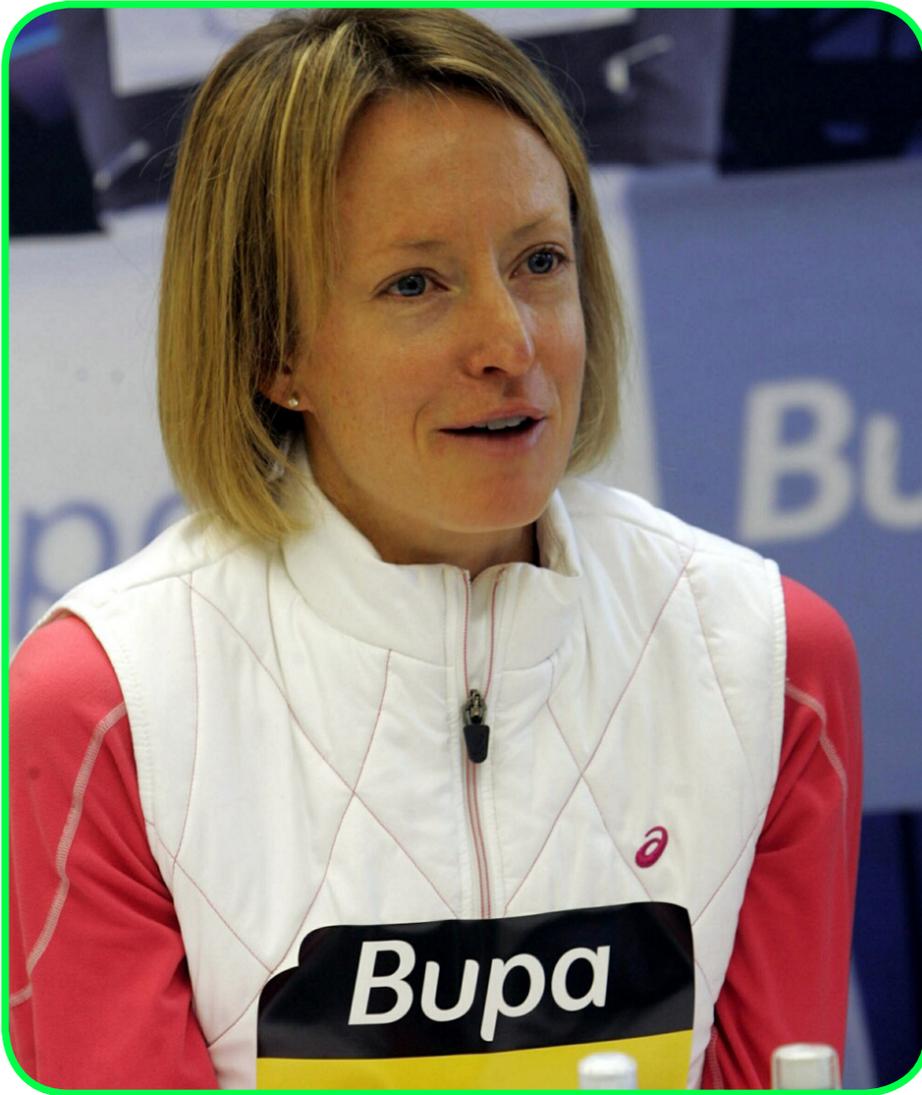
**A:** Breaking my foot as severely as I did in Beijing seemed like such a fluke. It was probably one of the greatest lessons this sport has taught me. It allowed me to realize that I am passionate about life, not merely running. I survived and even thrived in the sabbatical I took to allow my foot to fully heal.

**Q:** At the World Cross Country Championships in Portugal, you were stung by a bee in the back of the throat 100 meters after starting the race. Despite blacking out and falling during the 8K race, you finished in 12th place. Describe that experience and how you managed to pick yourself up to finish strong.

**A:** It was a strange day really. At the starting line, I gave our team a pep talk about not giving up and digging down for something special so the team could get on the winner's podium. It was my commitment to my teammates that forced me up and kept me going.

**Q:** How many people are in your team? How do you choose the team?

**A:** No matter our profession, we are only as strong as the team of people we surround ourselves with. I cherish my team. My husband Andrew is my foundation in life. My sponsor ASICS, my agent Ray Flynn and my coach Terrence Mahon are like family to me. I deeply cherish these relationships. And, speaking of family, my parents and sister have been traveling the world, coming to my races for over 20 years.



“It was my commitment to my teammates that forced me up and kept me going.”

**Q:** How did you get into running? Who or what turned you on to the sport?

**A:** I was terrible at every sport my parent’s introduced me to. Ice skating was the only sport in which I had a little success. My first day of track practice won me over. I had so much fun and enjoyed the Santa Monica mountain trail we ran on that day. It remains one of my favorite places to run in the world.

**Q:** Were you a natural when it came to running or was it a challenge?

**A:** I dabbled in a lot of sports growing up. I wasn’t successful in any of them! My first day of track practice was so much fun. I’m not sure which came first, enjoyment or success, but I’m pretty sure they went hand-in-hand.

**Q:** What is your favorite part of running?

**A:** My favorite part of running is the simplicity of such an enriching experience. But, I also love the running community and the millions of people who begin running for one reason or another and end up being rewarded in so many areas of their lives.

**Q:** Do you have any running rituals? If so, what are they?

**A:** None.

**Q:** What are your ideal running conditions?

**A:** My ideal running conditions would be making sure the best in the world are on the starting line. It is a great opportunity to draw the best performance out of myself.

**Q:** What is a typical training week like for you? How many miles do you run? How much speed work do you do? Do you run hills? Do you cross train? Do you run alone or with trainers?

**A:** I am 4 and a half months into training after having Piper and I am running about 100 miles a week. I am trying to focus on quality. I previously ran 120-140 miles a week and will get closer to that range once the Olympic Trials near. Living in Mammoth, we have no choice but to get strong running hills. I don't cross train.

**Q:** Do you ever have a stretch in training where your heart rate is where it should be, but you experience dead legs or just more fatigue than normal? If so, what do you do to get yourself out of this period of fatigue? If not, what do you do to prevent it?

**A:** Fatigue is part of training. The best ways to combat the exhaustion is taking easy days SUPER easy, sleeping well and hydrating/eating well.

**Q:** What pace do you run your recovery runs?

**A:** I don't care about the pace of my recovery runs as long as they are slow and serving the purpose of recovering. Cytomax motto is "You are only as good as yesterday's recovery". I couldn't agree more.

**Q:** You are a running icon for so many girls and women. Who are some of your running idols?

**A:** Joan Benoit Samuelson will

always be the benchmark of success in this sport. She is committed to giving back to the sport of running as well as those who enjoy it. She is amazing on and off the race course. For me, Joan is the highest example of being passionate about life.

**Q:** Do you have any running advice for beginning runners?

**A:** We all need to know what motivates us. Some people lead very social lives and for them, running solo is such a relief. Others need people around to push them and hold them accountable. Know who you are and plan your runs accordingly.



**Q:** Earlier this year you had your first baby. Congratulations! Did you run during your pregnancy? If so, how was it? If not, why?

**A:** I didn't run while pregnant with Piper. I intended to run easily each day, but had the worst side stitches. The rest was great and it has been a fun return to running.

**Q:** How soon after her birth did you get back to running? Did you have any challenges when starting back up? Did you start slowly and gradually increase your pace/distance? If so, was it difficult for you mentally to sort of "start over"?

**A:** I didn't run during my pregnancy. I had a C-section, so I wasn't sure how soon I could get back to running.. Two weeks after giving birth I felt ready to test the waters. It was heaven! I thought my first run would be a painful 1 mile jaunt through the neighborhood, and it was a 5 mile exhilarating run around town.



I ran for a few weeks and felt great until I wore my GARMIN which revealed the slow pace I was running. I keep it all in stride and have been grateful to see progress over the months.

**Q:** How is your training going now after having a little one around? How do you balance training and family life? What struggles do you have? How has it made you stronger?

**A:** It is an easy and natural balance to be a runner and a mom. I am grateful that Andrew watches Piper while I'm training. My training is very focused and acute in the morning. Then, I get the remainder of the day to lounge and play with her.

**Q:** Do you think it's important to encourage young kids to run, and if so, at what age?

**A:** I think it's important to encourage kids to play sports. Running is great because it is affordable and easy to do anywhere in the world. I would let children decide in what sports they want to participate and when. A suggestion is all they need.

**Q:** Will you encourage your daughter to be a runner some day?

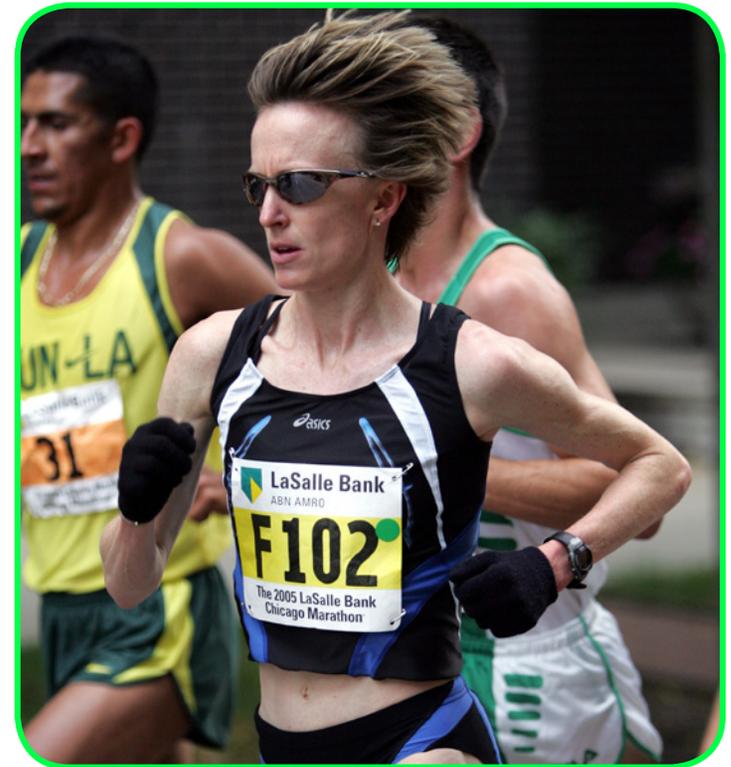
**A:** I don't care what Piper decides to pursue as long as she has passion. I take that back; I watched Black Swan last night, so I am a little averse to her choosing ballet!

**Q:** What are your short term running goals?

**A:** Make the Olympic Team 2012, win NY or Boston marathon.

**Q:** What are your long term running goals for the future?

**A:** Give back to the sport and encourage running as part of a healthy lifestyle.



“Joan Benoit Samuelson will always be the benchmark of success in this sport.”

Name: Deena Kastor

Q: Favorite running song and the artist/band  
Beautiful Day by U2

Q: Favorite time of day to run  
Sunrise

Q: How do you prefer to train?  
 alone  
 with a partner  
 in a group

Q: Most scenic place you've ever run  
Home in Mammoth Lakes, CA

Q: Average miles per run  
10

Q: Where do you usually run?  
 treadmill  
 outside

Q: What do you do while running?  
 listen to music  
 watch TV  
 talk  
 think  
 other

Q: Favorite running gadget or gear  
GARMIN 210

Q: Why did you start running?  
 to get in shape  
 to get back to pre-pregnancy weight  
 for fun  
 for sport  
 other (mom wanted me to be more social)

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

# I Got Lost Running my Half Marathon Last Night...

I should've known it wasn't going to go well when I got to the start late and most of the other runners were already gone.



I thought about scrapping the whole idea. I mean, I am nearly 7 months pregnant and this was a new course I'd never run before, part of which was supposed to be a trail through the woods. Maybe this was a bad idea. But I could still see a few back of the packers I could follow and it was after all, being chip timed so I figured what the heck and crossed that first timing mat alone.

The narrow paved street I started on almost immediately began weaving upwards and I quickly lost site of those back of the packers I had planned to follow. Despite all the twisting and turning of the particularly curvy road, a high brick wall on either side made it impossible to see anyone else in the race. But still, there was really only one direction to go, so I just kept moving.

Eventually, the narrow road turned to a well worn soft packed dirt trail that led through the woods. It was nice, quiet, and peaceful, a big change from my noisy otherwise hectic kid filled life. I liked it. That path wound its way to the side of a large building on the campus of some university who's name I somehow managed to miss.

It seemed odd to me that this half course would include running through a building, particularly since the door I ran through led into the stairwell. I seriously did not remember reading that anywhere in the course description and was starting to think perhaps I had run off course. I mean, where were those aid stations and gosh darn mile markers for crying out loud?!

But then again, there really hadn't been any place to make a wrong turn so I had to be in the right place. The only decision I needed to make was to go up or down the stairs. Since

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"The narrow paved street I started on almost immediately began weaving upwards and I quickly lost site of those back of the packers I had planned to follow."

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I could hear quick footsteps coming from not to far below me, I figured that had to be the right way to go and I set off to catch the unseen runner ahead, below.

I have no idea how many flights of stairs I ran down, but it was A LOT. And every once in awhile I'd catch a glimpse of that runner just ahead of me, an elbow, a shoe, but it wasn't until I hit the bottom floor and found myself in the basement that I actually saw him.

He was skinny, super skinny. Not much more than skin and bones and he was wearing a singlet that was ridiculously too large for him. It was flowing behind him almost like a cape and he was some sort of superhero or something.

I could tell he was running fast, but for some reason he wasn't getting that far ahead of me, yet I also wasn't running fast enough to catch up. He was light on his feet and although his running had made plenty of noise in the stairwell, for some reason now as he ran down the cement hallways of the basement, he wasn't making any noise at all. He's the butterfly runner I thought to myself, floating like a butterfly through the race with his billowing singlet wings.

I knew at that point that this was all crazy, that I was entirely lost and that chasing some weird running guy through the basement of this university building had nothing to do with the race that I entered and was just a crazy thing to do. In fact, it was not only crazy, but sort of getting creepy. Still, I just had to keep running and for some reason I figured butterfly runner would eventually lead me out of this massive building.

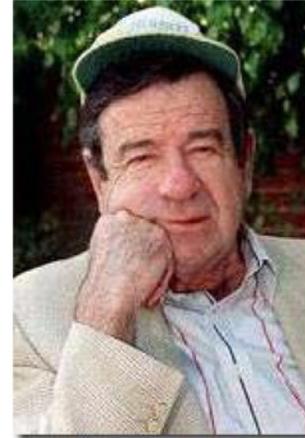
Fortunately, he did just that and then he was gone. I have no idea where he went and I frankly, didn't care. I was just glad I didn't have to climb any stairs to get out of



“Where were those aid stations and gosh darn mile markers for crying out loud?!”



that place. I was already pretty winded and being so pregnant that's not the condition my OBGYN has given me permission to run under. So I stopped. I still wasn't particularly panicked that I had no idea where I was, but I was starting to get concerned.



That was until I saw them, not more than a few feet away, a couple of bibbed runners. I was thrilled to have somehow found my way back to the half course. And they weren't just any bibbed runners. One was my mom. The other? Well, the other was Walter Matthau...

My mom and Mr. Matthau kindly led me back to the point where I had gotten off course so that I could finish the race. Interestingly enough, that point happened to be Walter's house, which actually was far smaller than you'd ever imagine a celebrity's house to be and full of much more clutter.

We were all pretty far behind the rest of the running field, so we went in to take a little break at which point I learned that Mr. Matthau is a huge conspiracy theorist and fairly certain that government agents are out to get him. As he went downstairs for a moment to provide my mom and I with proof, there was a knock at the door which happened to ironically be from a

government agent out to get him. Fortunately, Mr. Matthau had foresaw as much and came up from the basement wielding some sort of hi tech black market silent sort of weapon that no one has ever seen before and used it to knock the agent unconscious before he ever knew what hit him. And then...

My alarm clock went off.

Weird pregnancy running dreams. Gotta love 'em! I suppose that's what I get for researching half marathons that I can run about this time next year too close to bed time. Now, as for Walter Matthau (God rest his soul) and how he worked his way into my dream. No clue.



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 mix-



ing pregnancy, mommyhood, and running at Secrets of A Running Mom ([www.runfast-mommy.com](http://www.runfast-mommy.com)) or visit her at her coaching website [www.runningcoachformoms.com](http://www.runningcoachformoms.com).



# TRI and Do It

With four half marathons and over three dozen 5Ks and 10Ks under my belt I started to look at different types of races to change things up. I was looking for a fun challenge, something that would enable me to continue to run but not put any pressure on myself about meeting a specific time or something that required an intense training schedule. I wanted to have fun. I thought about maybe doing a Mud Run, Warrior Dash, or possibly the Tough Mudder.

A Triathlon was a thought, but it flew in one ear and out the other. I knew one day I'd do one because I loved all three disciplines but it felt like something that was a long way off. I figured my first TRI would be with my sister, a veteran triathlete. She had several huge races scheduled for 2011 so I put it out of my mind. I had no one else to do it with me; I couldn't get my friends out of bed to take a free boot camp class or train for a 5k. Hell, I can't get them to take a darn walk with me. Imagine asking them to train for a race that required them to be seen in a bathing suit? Never!

After a few days of perusing several websites trying to find the right challenge for

myself I ventured over to Facebook. I took full advantage of my children staring blindly at Sponge Bob. I figured I might as well ignore them a little more! As soon as I clicked on to Facebook I immediately saw that a friend signed up for his first TRI. I commented on how awesome that was, and that my intention was to do one in the next few years. I immediately got pinged with an invite. I replied, "Thank you but not now."

Over the course of the next week my friend kept at me, trying to entice me to do the race with the lure of wearing a wet suit. Really? A wet suit that's so tight you barely have room for a fart? He tried to use the old she likes her wine trick, with emails filled with sweet nothings about spending time in wine country after the race. Wouldn't I be too tired to drink let alone drive to see the sights? And then he hit me with the notion that we would have serious bragging rights. Hmmm bragging rights? I love me some bragging rights! I casually looked at the race website and then BAM! I signed up. Just like that. With visions of bragging rights dancing in my head, I didn't think about the race details: location, distance, or the fact that I've never done a Tri before. I channeled my inner Scarlett O'Hara: "After all tomorrow is another day" and figured I'd have time to think about it. After all, the race was five months away. Except five months was much closer than it seemed.

"I so loved training for a Tri and really who wouldn't when you have killer calves?"

By the time 12 weeks rolled around I figured I needed to stop running and start to bike and swim. Unlike my regimented training schedule for my half marathons, it never occurred to me to obtain a training plan. I figured I'd run, bike and swim the distance of each discipline. The distance was manageable as I chose a sprint Tri (500 meter swim, 8 mile bike, 3.5 mile run) and it didn't seem as overwhelming as training for a half marathon. When someone mentioned that I should be bricking, practicing transitions or threw other unfamiliar terms at me, I hit up Twitter along with my sister and my friend with a plethora of questions. I got a lot of really fast responses. A brick, besides being a thing you build stuff with, is basically training in two disciplines at once. Really? I can't even walk and chew gum, but yeah I'll do a brick. The best advice that I received was to treat each part of the

race as its own. Focus on the swim when you're swimming, the bike when you're biking and the run when you're running.

Oddly enough my training was going unbelievably smooth and I was having so much fun. I loved changing it up. I never got bored. I never experienced a horrible bike or run. My ego soared and my calves looked great! I so loved training for a Tri and really who wouldn't when you have killer calves?

For the first nine weeks I ran and biked the required distance or a few miles more. I did some small bricks; a 6-mile bike and a 2-mile run. I never swam. Never even thought about the swim part of the race until someone told me - no insisted that I get my ass in the pool. It was four weeks away. I was taking the training seriously but not the swim. I swam in high school. I was confident and cocky. It was 500 meters, a little over four 100x's. If I couldn't swim that, then shame on me.

At this point, I only had the opportunity to get in about five training swims. I gave it my all when I did get in the pool and tried to increase my distance by 10%. I practiced my "sighting or alligator eyes" whatever that meant, and tried not to push off the walls. I even dragged a friend to the beach so she could watch our collective five kids and I could do an open water swim.

She may not want to race with me, but what a great friend, eh?

At this point, I began to turn up the volume and put together tougher bricks 10 mile ride, 2 mile run; 12 mile ride, 3 mile run; 500 meter swim, 6 mile bike, 3 mile run. I felt great. I couldn't believe I could handle this. Training was fun and easy. I couldn't understand why! Was it because I made it fun and easy? I was training to finish, not to post an unbelievable personal record. It was my first so anything would be a PR!

I felt great, rock solid until race day started to approach and the anxiety started to kick in. The transition is what had me walking the floors at night. I couldn't picture myself zip-ping through the transition from swim to bike



I peppered so many people with questions that they were anticipating race day as much as I. I was advised to treat the Tri as you would any other endurance race when it comes to fueling, hydrating and tapering. I was happy to hear that because I have a few specific rituals when I run a half marathon. Once I knew I could stick with my usual plan I calmed down.

Race day was here! I sprang out of bed at 2:30 AM! I whipped through my race day ritual of coffee, peanut butter, and banana on a Wasa cracker. I did a quick once over of my gear bag and got on the road by 3:30 AM. I arrived at

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"With visions of bragging rights dancing in my head, I didn't think about the race details."  
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with ease. I'm about as coordinated as a horse putting on pants. Was I really expected to put on socks? I planned on incorporating the good tips that I picked up: pouring water on yourself after the open water swim to wash away the salt, make sure your bike is facing out, opening up fuels, and how to taper.

“I flew by so many people, got kicked in every part of my body, and didn’t mind one bit! I was passing people from the wave before and was actually smiling in the water!”

little. I thought I’d be racing from the sand. I thought I’d be able to run into the water and dive in. Had I paid attention to the race details, I would have known this. Duh.

When it was time to enter the water, I made sure I was the last head in; I wanted to ease into the swim. 30 seconds to start, 20, 10, go! I started the swim strong and ended strong. I flew by so many people, got kicked in every part of my body, and didn’t mind one bit! I was passing people from the wave before and was actually smiling in the water! When I exited the water, as I suspected, the transition was the hardest. I couldn’t put on my socks and my suit got stuck. I was a total mess, but once I got my stuff together and onto the bike, it was smooth sailing. I ripped through all eight miles with a shit-eating grin on my face. The transition from bike to run was seamless. I started the run slow and steady, and as I picked up the pace I was so happy. I was literally running with a smile on my face, and it was apparent because as I passed the same spectators they said to me, “You’re still smiling!” And this time it wasn’t because I was clenching my teeth in pain trying to finish. I was genuinely smiling like my sons eating ice-cream. That happy!

As I was coming up to the last mile I cranked it up the best I could and finished strong. I exceeded my expectations! I finished in 1:23:24 with a goal of 1:30 and a cushion in my own head of 2:00. I am so proud of myself! I can’t wait for the next one. Whoever said that triathlons are addicting is 100% right! **I suggest you tri and do it!**

the race location by 5:00, found my friend, and we were on our way to the race start by 5:45. Our wave started at 6:53. It was perfect timing to set up our transition areas, go to the bathroom, and take care of any last minute prep.

The hour or so before the race FLEW by. I set up my transition area and headed to the bathroom. I engaged in conversation with some seasoned triathletes and found out that it was an “in swim” start. I panicked a

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).



# Does Long Slow Distance Work?

I often get asked if I believe in the long slow distance principle for long runs. I do. I typically run my long runs 1 minute to 1 minute 30 seconds slower than my goal race pace.



As I have matured and learned more about the science behind running and long runs I now know that I was running my long runs way too fast when I first started training. When I was running around the 4 hour mark my long runs were just as fast as they are now. I was running way too fast to reap the full benefits of the long run.

I wrongly assumed that if you were able to maintain that pace for 20 mile long runs then it was an appropriate pace for them. I was wrong. I was essentially giving it my all during my long runs and not taking into account that I needed to train my body to run well at 26.2 miles, not just 20.

As I fell short of my Boston qualifying goal of 3:40 during the marathon I decided that maybe I needed to start doing 22 milers or more and that it would prepare my body for the full marathon distance. Again I was keeping the speed too fast and was not getting the benefits. It would have been better to complete 20 milers slower in the time it took to run 22 miles, than it was to just go out and run 22 miles.

I made the jump from a 3:59 marathon to a 3:36 marathon once I fully understood the purpose of long runs and how to execute them. I do believe there is value in doing progression runs for some long runs but without some long and completely slow long runs I do not believe you are giving your body the full benefit of the long run.

In terms of length I do not go any longer than 22 miles (typically I only do one of these each



training cycle and believe that for most marathoners 20 miles is the optimal distance for the longest long run).

If you aren't sure what pace you should be running for your long runs visit the McMillan Running Calculator and plug in either your most recent best race performance or pick a reasonable, achievable marathon goal time and work backwards.

Here is a table break down of my long runs run outside for the training cycle leading up to National Marathon.

	12/31/2010	1/8/2011	1/17/2011	2/5/2011	2/12/2011	2/20/2011	2/26/2011	3/5/2011	3/19/2011
Mile 1	8:51	9:46	9:07	9:23	9:21	9:20	9:32	9:12	9:06
Mile 2	8:42	9:17	9:21	9:30	9:32	8:54	9:23	9:19	9:03
Mile 3	8:28	9:03	9:05	9:32	9:29	8:31	9:22	8:56	8:27
Mile 4	8:16	9:36	9:01	8:46	9:07	8:30	9:18	8:41	8:42
Mile 5	8:30	9:21	9:06	8:48	8:53	8:40	8:59	8:43	8:56
Mile 6	8:23	9:27	8:56	9:03	8:45	8:37	8:53	8:43	8:43
Mile 7	8:23	9:10	8:59	8:57	8:44	8:24	8:59	8:34	8:46
Mile 8	8:25	9:22	9:03	9:15	8:36	8:32	8:57	8:43	9:03
Mile 9	9:19	9:10	8:37	8:53	8:36	8:32	8:40	8:43	9:04
Mile 10	9:19	9:32	8:25	9:08	8:19	7:34	8:40	8:28	8:59
Mile 11	9:16	9:50		8:57	8:21		8:52	8:18	8:56
Mile 12	9:16	9:46		9:18	8:30		8:41	8:20	8:33
Mile 13		9:44		8:54	8:39		8:28	8:27	
Mile 14		9:55		8:41	8:49		8:43	8:31	
Mile 15				8:40	8:26		9:00	8:38	
Mile 16				8:44	8:27		8:51	8:51	
Mile 17				8:36	8:18		8:41	8:36	
Mile 18				8:42	8:12		8:51	8:26	
Mile 19					7:38		8:18	8:47	
Mile 20					9:05		7:54	8:49	
Mile 21							8:16		
Mile 22							9:08		

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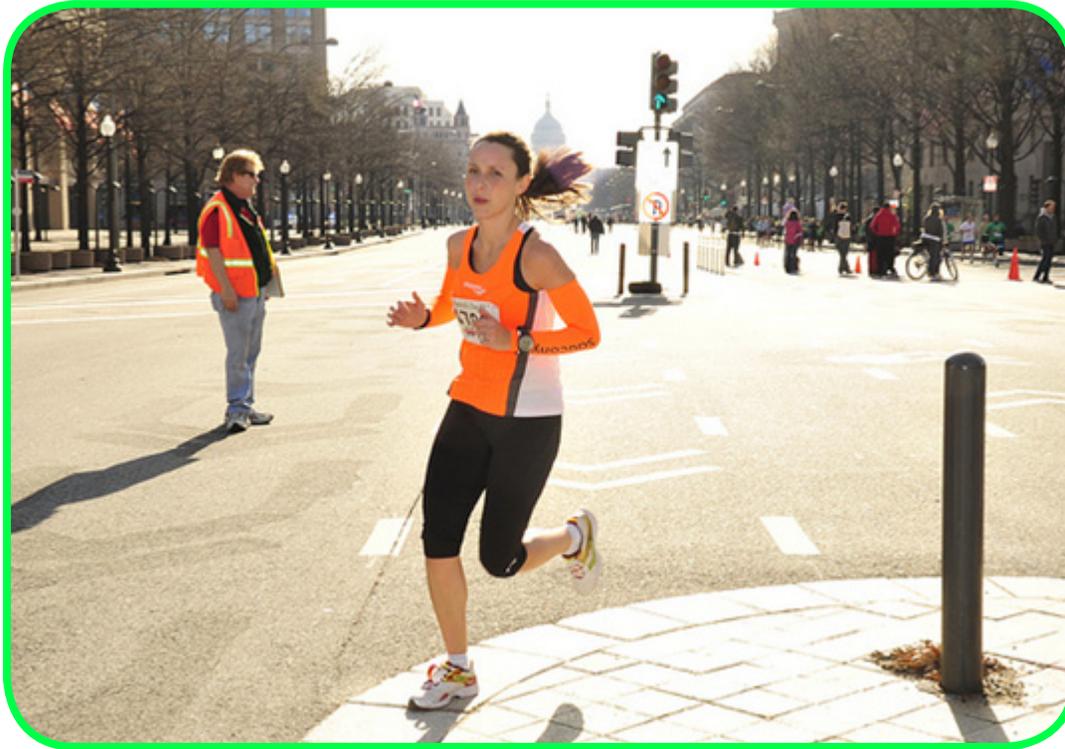
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“I was running way too fast to reap the full benefits of the long run.”

On the earlier runs you will notice that my pace is more like 2 minutes off of my goal marathon time and well over 2 minutes off my marathon PR. The slowed pace is due to the fact that when I began training for National Marathon & Boston Marathon it was less than 2 months after having baby C. At this point my body was still healing and I assure you that those paces were top speed for me and hard to hit. As my body has had more time to repair itself my long runs have progressively gotten easier to maintain. The hardest long run of this season was my last 20 miler before the taper.

I typically feel out of shape on my long run three weeks out from a marathon. This represents the pinnacle in my training, and so mentally I try to remind myself that I feel broken down because my body is broken down. My body has three weeks from that point on to recover and taper for my goal race, at which point I should feel completely “in shape”.

These long runs helped me achieve a 3:26:43 at National Marathon, a 3:30:58 at Boston Marathon, and a 3:23:43 at Potomac River Run Marathon - for my 2nd, 3rd, and 4th fastest marathon times ever.



“I made the jump from a 3:59 marathon to a 3:36 marathon once I fully understood the purpose of long runs and how to execute them.”

Dorothy Beal is a mother of 3 children under 5. This past May she completed 3 marathons, National, Boston, and Potomac River Run marathon, in 5 weeks, 5 months post baby #3. She started running in college to lose weight, get healthy and kick some bad habits. 10+ years later she is still addicted, has run 16 marathons and has her sights set on an ultra in the future. You can find her running around Northern Virginia pushing her little ones in a single, double or triple stroller. Her most recent accomplishment she is most proud of is running 13.1 miles while pushing all three of her kids in her triple! She serves as a National Marathon Ambassador, is captain of the Saucony Hurricane Athlete Team, and is the Director of Volunteers for The Great Pumpkin 5K in Reston, VA. Check out her blog at [www.mile-posts.com](http://www.mile-posts.com).



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"Running has given me the courage to start, the determination to keep trying, and the childlike spirit to have fun along the way. Run often and run long, but never outrun your joy of running."  
.....

*- Julie Isphording, marathon winner*

**This Mother Can Run**