

10 Reasons Why I Run; Running is Just a Fast Walk

There are so many wonderful things about running, or in my case jogging, and I count myself lucky that I have free use of my body. I've always loved to walk around to explore the world around me. Before I got into running, I was doing a lot of fast walking. It wasn't crazy power walking, but I was trying to make the most of the movement.

Once I realized that I could run (seriously, I was one of those people who couldn't run a block!), I stopped walking, though I do love to hike, and really enjoy earth's treasures that abound. I wanted to share a few reasons why I love running so much, and I hope I inspire some of you to pick it up. My guess is you'll like it, too!

1. Gives me a chance to not think

With many activities taking my time, tasks to accomplish, and calls to make, it is nice to just leave it all back at home (or upstairs on the days when I run on the treadmill). When I run outside, I enjoy not talking, not typing, not looking at the computer. I could probably do the same by just sitting on the back yard patio chair, but running sort of puts me in a trance that allows me to let go of any deadlines or other stresses. Sometimes I try to push away thoughts of work or family to keep a clear mind, but often that time away from my desk allows me to think things through to gain clarity on my next step (pun intended) on what I should do in a situation.

2. I sleep more soundly

I'll admit it. Running is a challenge. It isn't a power walk,

though power walks are *also* great for your body and mind. Running knocks me out when I do it right. I relax more and have more restful nights. I find especially when I'm training for a half marathon that I sleep better because I've really exhausted my body and it takes the opportunity to shut down at night.

3. I am happier

I'm not sure if it is because I've pushed myself out the door (or into the basement) and powered through whatever distance was on the agenda, or that I have given myself enough unburdened time to do it, but my day is always brighter after a run. Maybe the sweat build up inside me being let out is where the noted release of endorphins come from (wink).

4. I can do it alone

My schedule allows me to run during the day and I am glad that I can run by myself. I can't always find others to run with at that time, and while I do like to run with my other mother runners and of course my partner Matthew, I love that I have the freedom to do it any time. I don't need a pass, and I'm not bound to start at a particular hour. Usually the miles fly by much more quickly when you have someone at your side!

5. It makes me stronger

When I get going and maintain a steady practice of running, I see that it makes me stronger in other areas of my life. There is a psychological aspect to running in terms of having to get over a challenge. As I count down the percentage (actually, it is usually fractions) of what distance remains on my run, I get over the seemingly insurmountable and that gives me

strength to power through at the end and go for a negative split.

6. It is great for my heart

The World Health Organization (WHO) suggest that adults ages 18 to 64 do at least 150 minutes of a moderate exercise or at least 75 minutes of high-intensity physical activity each week, with a recommendation of added muscle strengthening exercises. Scientists have shown that running can help prevent obesity, type II diabetes, high blood pressure, some cancers, heart disease, stroke.

7. I believe it'll make me live longer

I've read enough studies on heart longevity that show that running or even walking will extend your life. I am pessimistic about how our society is advancing, but I still want to live to the ripe old age of 99. And so, I hope to be walking until then.

8. It boosts my metabolism

I mean, for real. This is probably why most people run. Running burns fat and it burns calories. If you aren't a pig during the week, you will slim right down. One of the huge benefits of running is not having to "diet." I eat as healthy as I can, but I don't worry about eating a little more if I'm hungrier that day, as I know my metabolism is running strong, even when I'm sleeping.

9. It relaxes me

You'd think that sitting on the couch would be more relaxing than going for a run. But seriously, after I get over having to put on the sports bra, I'm 98% of the time happy, ecstatic even, that I made the effort. After the tension of 3-6 miles and a shower, my muscles are relaxed and my mind feels refreshed. This is heightened by the path I jog... trails increase relaxation tenfold.

10. Gives me confidence

If you would ask me, Heather, are you an athlete? I would laugh, as I feel far from it. While I've been running for 3 years, I'm no faster than when I started. Though I've never considered myself an athlete, I own more running pants than jeans or any other pants! The confidence that I gain from running doesn't just come from my steady waistline, but from knowing that I can do a very hard and at times uncomfortable thing to sustain a healthy mind and body. It is why I most recommend running to others.

I would love to hear the reasons why you run. Please share below!