

I LOVE RUNNING

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I fell in love with running the day I ran my first half-marathon. Actually, I started to really love it when I crossed the finish line at that first race. The endorphins kicked in, and with my medal around my neck, I felt unstoppable. It was late August 2006.

Running changed my life. It helped me connect with myself. It made me believe in myself. It showed me that if you work hard, big dreams can come true.

At first, it's hard. Everything is hard. I admired runners and found them inspiring. How did they run like that? What were they chasing? I always loved that scene in *Forrest Gump* where Tom Hanks just keeps running because he feels like it. Running after life, running after chances, running for well-being. You have to be a runner to understand runners. That strong desire to get out and run. The blood rushing through your veins reminding you that you're alive. Doesn't it make you feel invincible and ready for any challenge?

I'm deeply in love with running. When I'm training, sometimes I hate it for a few moments. Those moments of pain make me ask why I'm doing this, but I know they will help me reach my goals. Running hurts, but it's good for us. No pain no gain, as they say. Running is like giving birth: it's painful, but you're always ready to do it again.

The key is to start. One day at a time. One step at a time. Take things slowly. Run for one minute, walk for one minute, repeat 10 times. That's how you start running. There's no right or wrong way. It's just baby steps at first. But taking those first steps is key. 10 minutes. 15 minutes. 20 minutes. What did you do this morning? I had a 15-minute run. You will feel so proud, right? One day, if you're interested, you may be able to say you went for a short 5K run, 10K run, 25K run... just for fun.

But you have to start at the beginning. And then keep going, never stopping and never making excuses. Make a date with yourself, with a healthy lifestyle, with feeling great, with your well-being. That's the true motivation. You do it for yourself. It's in your diary and you do it, just like you'd keep an appointment with the dentist. As I often say, you're the most important person in the world... in your eyes. That's why you need to look after yourself. Because if you don't, who's going to do it for you? Nobody.

The best way to get motivated is to sign up for a challenge. Don't go crazy at first with a marathon (42.2 km). If you're a beginner, start with a 5K race. And remember, 5 km is actually 5,000 meters.

Then see what the future brings. When I started, I thought I'd only ever do that one half-marathon (21.1 km) and that would be it. But when I crossed that finish line, I was hooked. The following year, on the same day, I ran my first marathon (42.2 km), where I qualified for the Boston Marathon. At that time, I was in my late twenties. My life was chaotic. Running helped set me back on track. It showed me my potential, taught me perseverance, and proved I could reach high goals.

Now I'm over 40, I have two young children and two businesses, but I dream of running a marathon in under 3 hours. My best time is 3:08. I want, and I know I will, cut those eight short but very long minutes. I just know I will. (And it's running, my best friend, that taught me to be so determined.) When are you going to start?

READING COMPREHENSION

Read the text and choose the best option to answer each question.

1. What is the main purpose of the author of this text.

- a) To describe her first experience as a runner.
- b) To motivate readers to start running.
- c) To explain why running can be difficult.
- d) To promote a healthy lifestyle.

2. What was the author's initial attitude towards running?

- a) The author thought running was an easy way to feel full of energy.
- b) The author felt inspired, but found running difficult.
- c) The author admired other runners, but she thought she couldn't be like them.
- d) The author loved running, but hated training.

3. What does the word "rushing" in paragraph 3 mean?

- a) Beating
- b) Leaving
- c) Moving
- d) Blocking

4. Why does the author compare running to giving birth?

- a) Because this is a commitment for your entire life.
- b) Because it hurts, but you may want to repeat it.
- c) Because it is a necessary step to reach your goals.
- d) Because sometimes women hate the fact of giving birth.

5. What advice does the author give to someone who wants to start running?

- a) Start by running for 15-20 minutes at a time.
- b) Begin with 10 series of a 1-minute run plus a 1-minute walk.
- c) Sign up for a 5 km running challenge.
- d) Run as fast as possible for 10 minutes.

6. What does the author suggest for staying motivated to run regularly?

- a) To consider running as a commitment with yourself and your health.
- b) To go running with the same attitude as you go to the dentist.
- c) To believe that running makes you the most important person in the world.
- d) To run to support the people you love and look after.

7. What is the author's ultimate running goal?

- a) To complete a 5K race
- b) To complete a 10K race
- c) To complete a half-marathon
- d) To run a marathon in under 3 hours

8. What is the main message the author conveys about running?

- a) Running is a solitary pursuit that makes you reflect about your future.
- b) Running is a chore that must be endured, even when you hate it.
- c) Running is a way to achieve your dreams and improve your life.
- d) Running is an activity that can be painful, but it is absolutely necessary.