

**April 2014**

**Featured Runner**

**Name:** Alysha Oglesby

**Age:** 29

**Occupation:** Customer Service

**When and why did you start running?**

I started running about four years ago. I eventually broke down and bought into the idea that I have to be thinner in order to be attractive. I started walking around the parking lot where I lived. That got boring fast. So I ran like a little kid. I liked it and sought to challenge myself further. I ran for thirty seconds each session and then added on. Two years of off and on again I signed up for my first race, a half marathon. Go big or go home. Signing up for races kept me on track and before I knew it, I found the mythical runner's high. You can still see me plastered with a smile for days after a long race or a new PR.

**Why do you run now?**

There are so many reasons. I've lost quite a bit of weight. With a new job and running, I lowered my blood pressure along with my risk for diabetes. I've been able to focus my mind on writing and I get better work done when I'm running regularly. I run through my emotional baggage and self-esteem issues. I have less anxiety around people and I'm extremely sociable at races. I don't think I would have progressed this far as a person or this much confidence if I didn't run.

**What is your biggest running/fitness accomplishment so far?**

I faced my biggest fear during the Fall Foliage 10K; I got lost. Being slow means you always have someone to follow. The rest of the runners were just well trained and I was left behind. I never wanted to be last or in the worst case get lost. Yet both happened. Then a very kind man, Keith I do believe his name was, saw me come back and I just started to cry. I was worried I would have to drop out since I got lost. I can't stand not to finish a race. He was nice enough to run with me. It was a terrible finish time but I got second place. I finished what I started in the toughest of circumstances (it was really cold, rainy and muddy). And as a personal growth, I asked for help.

**What is your next running/fitness goal?**

My first attempt at a marathon had a half-baked training plan. I stopped short of 14 miles. Though I plan to still run the Indy 500 Mini; I will train to complete the Monumental Marathon in November 2014.

**Describe your typical running week.**

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I get a full hour in no matter how fast or slow on the treadmill at least twice a week; five time if I'm good. I do elliptical if I'm tired. Then two half hour sessions a week of strength training.

**What other activities do you use to supplement your running?**

I do strength training with body weight whenever I can. I even do squats and core at home if it's too snowy to get to the gym.

**What is your favorite running-related snack/product/gadget?**

I like running because it is bare bones. Just give me a good pair of shoes, workout clothes and music.

**What are your pre-race rituals?**

I try to get an hour of swimming in the night before. I noticed that I'm much more limber the next day and don't struggle as much if I do.

**How do you get through a tough run?**

I change to a fast beat song and use my imagination like every writer should. I like to imagine the cheering people as I run a half or full marathon on a cool beautiful day. Or sometimes I'll pretend I'm running in an action scene from a book or movie.

**What is your favorite thing about running?**

It's a road trip for the soul with your feet. Everyone needs a good road trip now and then. With the rising cost of gas it's just cheaper to do it with a good pair of shoes. You interact with the world in a different way. There's just an enjoyment of the outdoors you can't get any other way. I clear my mind and find answers that were always there but I couldn't find. I explore everything from relationships and my self-esteem to where I last put my car keys or check book.

**How do you motivate yourself on days you don't want to run?**

I will always feel better after a run no matter how bad or good the day is. It takes all the junk and emotional jumble out of my mind so I can think clear and take on the next day.

**Who is your running hero and why?**

Everyone that is in front of me in a race. I aspire to be as fast as them one day.

**What is your biggest running-related pet peeve?**

Don't have one. To each their own; just don't trip anyone.

**Are you a morning or evening runner?**

Depends on how late I get to the gym. If I'm on time, than it's evening. If I'm late, then it's one in the morning. I enjoy a run right before bed.

**Are you a solo or group runner?**

I'm an introvert by nature. I enjoy races with people but all other work outs are just me and my music.

**What is your favorite type of run?**

Every once in a while I get to stay over at my parents in the countryside. I wake up before dawn and lace up my shoes. I leave the driveway at light and just pick a road to go down. I love to run out doors when there's no one around. You just hear the pavement thump under your feet and the music soothes the notion of being tired. The road cuts and bends around the fields. The sun rises over the hills and trees. You feel the air warm to the sun as you breathe it in and out. Life is just waking up while you already logged a couple of miles. I never felt closer to the world than in that moment.

**Fill in the blank:**

I love running because: *I can reach that mythical runner's high and it is the best feeling.*

When I run I think about: *my fantasy world and fictional characters. I practically write a book.*

The hardest part of running is: *getting out the door to do it.*

The best running advice I ever received was: *add strength training. All I thought I had to do before was run but adding muscle had made a huge difference.*