

Today, I would like to talk to you about something that is near and dear to my heart, although it hasn't always been: running. Two years ago, you would have never found me in a gym or on a treadmill. And you certainly wouldn't have found me competing in a race with actual athletes. As fellow working moms, I'm sure a lot of you can identify with many of the challenges I faced. From overcoming years of physical inactivity to trying to fit jogging into my busy schedule, I just never thought I could do it. Well, I was wrong. I did do it. And you can too. Let me tell you how.

The first key to running for fitness is to start small. When I began running, some coworkers and I used a smartphone app that allowed us to run as little as 1/8 of a mile (halfway around a standard track) at a time. We ran three times a week and, after 7 weeks, were running in our first 5k race which is just over 3 miles.

Another essential element to achieving your goals is finding a way to work regular jogging into your schedule. Get up half an hour early while your family is still sleeping. Go to the track immediately after work before picking the kids up from daycare. Find the perfect time when you can squeeze it in without compromising the other things that place demands on your schedule.

On a similar note, make sure you have accountability. I could never have stuck to my running plan and accomplished everything that I have without those co-workers I mentioned. They encouraged me on the days that I struggled and scolded me when I tried to slack off. Without someone to hold you accountable, it's way too easy to give up on your goals.

The final tip I have is to wait patiently for the moment that you begin to love running—yet another event that I never thought would happen in my life. It took some time, but eventually running became such a big part of my life that I felt incomplete when I didn't do it. And it's not just the benefits of running that I enjoy, although there are many. I've lost weight. My blood pressure is down. My energy level is up. I look better. I feel better. I sleep better. But on top of all that, I actually love getting out and running. It's a great excuse to get outside (or into the gym if that's your preference), listen to music, or just enjoy the silence.

Today, I welcome all of you to take the same challenge that I did two years ago. Have a talk with your spouse and figure out the best days and times for you to begin jogging. Find a plan to follow and set some small goals for yourself. Then get yourself a partner and get started. Start small and work your way up. Sign up for a race to give you something to work towards. And don't stop after that first achievement. Wait it out. You'll love it before you know it.