

RUNNING IS A SPORT THAT STAYS WITH YOU FOR LIFE

Jana Giles



Many adults look back on their childhood and young adult years with a particular fondness for a sport. Perhaps reminiscing on their university basketball days or high school varsity soccer team, it is without question that the act of participating in athletics has a lasting impression on many people. However, many adults also agree that, in their mind, they have surpassed an age and physical ability that would allow them to compete in that particular sport. That's one of the great things about running.

Throughout high school, and even now, I often notice that I am actually one of the younger competitors in any given road race. There is a surprising number of adults, of all ages and fitness levels, that enjoy running as a hobby. The diversified nature of the sport allows for a wide range of interest, and unique advantages.

This past weekend, I participated in the Hypothermic Half Marathon on Sunday morning with a bunch of other crazy runners who left the warmth of their homes to partake in this event. My fourth time running the race, it certainly does not get any easier scrounging up the motivation to suit up on a Sunday morning to run twenty-one point one kilometres. Actually, the Hypothermic organizing crew actually added two events to their roster this year, with a 5k and a 10k event to allow for an even broader range of runners to "enjoy" winter running!

While the runners that showed up to the event on Sunday were certainly a special kind of crazy (I'm allowed to say that because I'm one of them), it isn't just this one Sunday that these runners drag themselves out of their warm beds to go on a run. Each individual went through a personal training plan that led up to Feb. 5. While other people like to stay snuggled in their beds on cold winter weekends, runners trek through ice and snow to accomplish personal goals and reach a new level of health and fitness. Early mornings at the gym and quick runs during your lunch break...running is all about finding a balance in life that allows you to maintain a high level of day-to-day productivity while participating in a sport that is equally mentally challenging as it is physically challenging.

Despite what some might call "unfavourable conditions" (let's face it, winter running isn't for everyone), runners always remain so optimistic throughout every road race. Runners often go out of their way to shout "thank you" to the volunteers cheering us on and passing us water. Runners are kind to each other, and want to see everyone succeed, encouraging their running partners or even administering a friendly tap on the shoulder to another runner who looks to be struggling. Several years ago, on a really hot July day, another runner even offered me a drink of her water during a race!

No matter the strength of the individual, it is without a doubt that fellow runners contribute to one's motivation to finish a race. The huge range of participation level across all age groups and walks of life makes running, in my opinion (of course, I have no bias), one of the most impactful sports that an athlete can choose to pursue.

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