

Leona F.

The #WhatARunnerLooksLike Wednesday series features everyday women runners and their real thoughts on running, their accomplishments, struggles and bodies. We created this series as a way to help ordinary women runners tell their extraordinary stories. We have been inspired by the stories of other women runners and received much strength to know that we are not alone in our struggles. Some interviews are silly, some are long, some are short, and some are profound. We hope you enjoy, and if you're interested in sharing your #WhatARunnerLooksLike story with us or know someone in your running circles that has an inspiring story to share, simply use this online [form](#) to submit your story.

The first installment in our #WhatARunnerLooksLike* Wednesday series is with blogger and self described "unlikely runner, an accidental swimmer and a terrified cyclist" Leona ([@jaxrunnergirl](#)).

Women's Running Community (WRC): What Made You Take Up Running?

Leona (L): I initially started running to lose weight. I also had friends who ran, and I would see other runners around town and I would think "those people are so strong" those people are amazing" I wanted to be like them and so I started running.

WRC: What Do You Love About Your Body?

L: I love that my body proves to me I can do things my brain says I can't. I love that even though it does not look like I want it to most days, it is strong and it puts up with a lot of abuse by me. I love that my body even when it hurts and in my head I think I cant go any further it can, and if will push me to things my mind does not believe it possible.

WRC: How Has Running Helped You Appreciate Your Body?

L: Running has taught me that my weight does not define me. It is not my body shape or my dress size that makes me a runner. This has taught me to love myself even at the weight I am.

WRC: How Has Running Helped You Physically, Mentally, Emotionally, and/or Generally In Your Life?

L: Running has helped me learn to cope. It has taught me so much more than just that I can run. It has taught me how to believe in myself. It has taught me how to take chances in life. Running has really taught me that I can be so much more of a stronger person than I ever could have dreamed or imagined.

WRC: How Do You Stay Motivated When You Don't Want To Run?

L: I am so beyond lucky that I am part of the best running club ever and I have an amazing support system. If am not motivated all I have to do is look and see how hard they are working or just chat with someone and it quickly changes my outlook on running and working out.

WRC: Most Memorable Race Or Running Accomplishment?

L: I have 2 most memorable race accomplishments. I am not sure I can only give you one right now.

1. In November of 2014 I finished my first half marathon. This was something that I worked so hard and overcame a who lot of adversity, problems and just junk to get to that day. That was a day that I almost gave up a few times but with friends

throughout the course and then when I crossed the finish line I have never been more proud of myself for not quitting when things got hard.

2. A couple of weeks ago I was running a bridge race called Mt Acosta. It is basically a 2.2 mile loop of a bridge. It was hot and I really did not want to do it. I knew it was going to be a hard one. I gave it everything I had and was having an amazing time. This was the first time in a race that I remember having that much fun and working as hard as I possibly could all at the same time. I finished that race and was just as proud of myself as I was the day I finished my half marathon.

WRC: What Is Your Best Tip Or Advice For A Newbie Runner?

L: Have fun and work hard and find a community. If you do these three things running will no longer be just something you do to lose weight or whatever your reason is, it will be something that you need to do to live.

WRC: What's Your Favorite Affirmation?

L: The quote by John Bingham that says "The miracle isn't that I finished. The miracle is that I had the courage to start."



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THE MIRACLE IS THAT I HAD
THE COURAGE TO START."

~JOHN BINGHAM