

[Melissa W.](#)

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.

This week's #WhatARunnerLooksLike Wednesday feature is self-described "Boy Mom" and "Obsessive Runner" Melissa from [@melissalynwilliams](#).

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

Melissa (M): I started running in High School, but back then did more socializing than running. I continued running after but phased it out for a bit during my pregnancies. After I had my 2nd Son, I circled back to it to begin my journey back to a healthier lifestyle.

WRC: What Do You Love About Your Body?

M: What it is capable of. I love that it reached a place during my pregnancies that I never thought it would come back from. I love that with proper nutrition, training and a lot of dedication it transformed back into the healthiest version of myself. Going from pregnancies to running marathons is an amazing feeling.

WRC: How Has Running Helped You Appreciate Your Body?

M: It helps me feel more in tune with my body, and that if you don't respect and take care of it during this sport it can take you out at any given time...or race!

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

M: Running is my outlet – my happy place. It's a reset button after a tough or sad day, or an extra surge of energy on a good day! Running can be therapeutic when done alone, or some of the most memorable times when done with people who share the same love of it.

WRC: What Do You Think About When You're Running?

M: Food. My boys. Really it depends on the day I am having. I either use the time to sort out and work through things that have been bothering me, or just listen to music and shut out the world for a bit.

WRC: What Do You Love Most About Running?

M: The feeling of power that it gives me. I CAN do hard things!

WRC: What's Your Favorite Part Of Being A Runner?

M: The overall feeling of health and happiness that it gives me. Also, running has connected me with some of my favorite humans – it's a community like no other.

WRC: Do You Engage In Other Sports or Activities? If So, What And How Often?

M: I'm a Spin Instructor and enjoy logging miles on the bike as well! It's great low impact workouts and great cross training for me. It played a role in my post baby weight loss and increase in running speed!

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

M: I have a runstreak going, 480+ days – it's not for everyone, but it works for me! I have a slow 1 mile minimum on my "rest days" and my Sister is doing this streak with me. We help keep each other motivated! There have really only been a handful of days (illness and post 26.2) that it's taken some extra motivation!

WRC: Most Memorable Race Or Running Accomplishment?

M: This past November I ran my 4th 26.2 (the pic I shared) – this one was different though. It was the first one I ran as a Mom. I put in the effort and the training required and it far exceeded any training I had done for my 3 prior marathons – back when I had extra time and extra sleep! This one I trained for as a full time working Mom of two very energetic toddler boys, and it was a 35 minute PR. I set a goal to run under 4 hours and cried when I crossed the finish at 3:51.

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

M: Don't do too much too soon. I often see people who initially take up running and log too many miles when they first start. That causes burnout and injury. My best advice is to follow a plan, there are so many great free plans online to

help ensure you ease into it correctly and take appropriate days to rest your body as a beginner!

WRC: What's Your Favorite Affirmation?

M: One run can change your day, many runs will change your life.

