

# Lazy girl running

Looking back at how tough her first ever run was, Lazy girl running wonders how long it will take before she completes her first ultra race

I'm not one for marking anniversaries. Aside from having a forgetful head when it comes to dates, with the remembering of good things that happened on a certain date also comes the memories of the bad. There is, however, one date that, when it pops up in my calendar, I think 'Ha, another year! How time flies'.

It's six years since I became a runner. I didn't emerge fully formed out of a slothful chrysalis wearing neon Lycra and cushioned trainers ready to lay down some mile reps - I couldn't run a mile for quite a while. Then six years ago I did what would become the first of a series of runs that led to me calling myself a runner.

I still have the notebook where I wrote down everything that I did in the gym when I first started going. I hadn't intended to become a runner, I just knew I needed to start doing more exercise. Joining a gym was what other people, with no predisposition to any sport or activity, seemed to do. So I handed over my £50 a month and started spending a couple of my lunch hours every week in a basement surrounded by lots of machinery.

My first run was on the treadmill and my ledger informs me that this run was for 1.14km and I'm sure that .14 of a kilometre mattered as much to me then as a few seconds off a 5k PB does now. Just over one kilometre sounds quite quite respectable for a new runner, but alongside the distance there's also the time it took me: 14 minutes. I'm pretty confident that I could walk 1.14km in 14 minutes, but back then it was a massive achievement. Back then I didn't stop at saying 'I'm going to get fitter'; I didn't sign up to the gym then never go. I was determined and didn't stop until I had run as far as I could that first time.

I now lead a beginners' running group and take women who've never run before, or at least not for many years, from running for a minute at a time to completing their first 5k.



**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**  
Laura Fountain is a blogger, author and editor living and running in London. She's run seven marathons and is now training for an Ironman but just six years ago she couldn't run 400 meters. Her book *The Lazy Runner* was published in 2012. She's a UK Athletics qualified run leader and helps beginner runners learn how to run and, more importantly, how to enjoy it.

I believe that this is the hardest part of running: those early runs where everything feels so hard, your legs are heavy, you struggle for breath and a minute feels like an eternity. Each week I tell my group what we will be doing in the session: running for five minutes, 10 minutes, 20 minutes, and the response is always the same: "I can't do that!" Every week I ask them just to try, and they always end up surprising themselves.

Those first few weeks are the hardest because, for many, not only are our bodies unfit, so are our minds. The self-belief that you can run for a certain distance at a certain speed is something that needs to be trained and nurtured, too. When I finished my first ever 10k it took all the energy and will I had. I couldn't comprehend how you could add 20 miles onto that distance and run a marathon. Eighteen months later I was doing exactly that and

six years after running for just 1.14km, I'm preparing for my eighth marathon. Each time you do something you'd previously thought was impossible, it makes you think about what else you might be able to do. So while the furthest I've ever run is still 26.2 miles, I know there's a medal for a 50 mile race out there with my name on it.



*My last long run before the London Marathon*



*All smiles for my beginners' group first parkrun*