

I Am a Runner



Running is something I've always wanted to do. Growing up, I was chubby during my leanest years and obese the rest of the time. Running the mile in gym class was torture. I remember giving it my all and only making it about half way around the track before having to walk. I longed to know what that felt like-to run and not feel like I was going to vomit and pass out.

In September of 2015, I experienced some vertigo and vision issues that ultimately led to a diagnosis of MS. Along with establishing a treatment plan, I researched how the foods I was eating could reduce or increase chronic inflammation in my body and decided to give up grains, dairy and sugar. 180 pounds melted off my body in less than 18 months.

I found myself with this incredible amount of energy and a renewed desire to run. I started slowly-running for one-minute increments and adding on to that each time I ran. I decided to train for a half-marathon in January of 2017 and was able to complete two half marathons in 2017. In 2018, I ran a half marathon in April and a full marathon in October with a team of other MS runners and our spouses and supporters called Run a Myelin My Shoes (RAMMS).

I would never say I'm a fast runner, and I don't plan to win any races in my lifetime. Most runs, I take about 10 steps and begin thinking, "there is no way you're going to be able to finish this run today," but then I pray for God to give me strength and endurance, and He's never failed me yet. If it's hot or if I'm pushing myself a bit too hard, my cheek tingles and my right toes begin to go numb. My lip will usually quiver and I can either choose to slow down and it will stop or push through and it eventually gets better.

I don't run for the crowds or the praise or a t-shirt and medal waiting at the end—I run

because I can. Someday, I might be limited on my mobility and running will be a thing of the past. But as Martin Luther King, Jr. said: "If you can't fly then run, if you can't run then walk, if you can't walk then crawl, but whatever you do you have to keep moving forward." Today I can run, so I will run. And I'll keep running as long as I have legs to do so. You can read more about my story at nottodayms.com.

One of the greatest joys of my life was completing the Detroit Free Press Marathon in October 2018 with RAMMS. We are from all over the US and have virtual teammates from all over the world! We are led by marathon superwoman and MS Rockstar, Cheryl Hile, and meeting these people and forming a community of support has been wonderful. The team is gearing up for our next venture—the Richmond Marathon in Virginia on November 16, 2019. My husband and I won't be able to attend, but we're planning to run virtually by running a half-marathon around our hometown. We would love to have more teammates to join us! If you would to participate with RAMMS in-person or virtually, send us an email at info@runamyelinmyshoes.org.