You're listening to You've Got This, episode 421.

Welcome to You've Got This, a weekly podcast for higher education professionals looking to increase their confidence and capacity for juggling the day-to-day demands of an academic life.

I'm your host, Dr.

Katie Linder.

On this episode, I wanted to share some of the steps that I took to get back to running a 5K distance or about three miles in the first two months of this year.

Now, you may remember that one of my side quests for 2025 was about running more.

And at the end of this month, I'll be sharing kind of a quarterly update on how all of my side quests are going, but I wanted to do a deeper dive on one of my specific goals for running, which was increasing the distance that I'm running.

So last weekend, as I record this, I was able to run 5K for the first time in like 10 years.

And I had a few things that helped me to accomplish this goal that were particularly helpful.

And so if you are someone who's like doing a couch to 5K, or you are kind of trying to get back to running, and maybe this will have some things that can translate into other habits and routines as well, I'm happy to share the things that worked for me.

So the first thing was a running plan, and specifically a running plan on the Peloton app.

So this was a six-week long plan.

There were four sessions each week, and I could take roughly a day off in between each run to get a little bit of recovery.

And I will say that some of the running programs I've done in the past were more than double that length.

And I actually think that kind of worked against me because I would fall off the plan due to like an illness.

Sometimes I would just get sick and then I'd have to like start over, and then, you know, just all kinds of things that can disrupt something that's really long.

It's like 14 or 16 weeks.

It's a long time.

So doing this plan in six weeks felt much more manageable for me.

Now, one of the other things that I really appreciated about this plan is that it included warmup runs and speed work and interval training with inclines.

And then the last run of each week was either like a recovery walk or a jog.

And although I found some of the sessions to be challenging, I also felt like they were doable.

And part of the reason for that is when you're doing a running plan, you can kind of pick the speed with which you're running.

And in this case, I was really trying to increase my distance.

So it really helped me to focus on increasing the time that I was running and not the speed that I was running.

Now, I knew that with the speed I was running, I would need to go for just a little over 40 minutes.

And I'm a very slow runner, which helps me to avoid injury.

That is kind of the primary thing that I'm worried about.

And I don't want to worry about the speed when I'm increasing my mileage.

And so working with a run plan that allows you to kind of focus more on time than on, or focus more on distance or time on your feet, than about how fast you're going, I think can be really helpful.

Now, another thing that helped me to get into going longer distances was also getting into just kind of like a rhythm with my running.

So I was having regular runs multiple times per week and in the same order of instructors.

So it would be like the same person on a Monday and then a different person on every Wednesday and then a different person on every Friday.

And I got into kind of like a habit or a routine.

I was able to make the running be something that was more familiar.

And I think this also helped me to test different things, like what I ate before a run or how a certain run made me feel or different kinds of factors, even like the clothing that I was wearing 'cause I knew I was gonna run this on my tread.

So trying to kind of get all of that dialed in over the six weeks was really helpful.

And then the morning of my 5K, I had like some light carbs, but not a full meal.

And that worked really well for me.

So I was able to kind of test some of that stuff out.

Now, another thing that I did that I thought helped a lot was to get mentally stronger about running.

And this is a big one because once I had kind of stronger legs and more breath control, the harder thing is not getting bored while I'm running and wanting to stop.

And I will say that moving to Denver, which is a higher altitude, I did notice when I first got here that there is an impact on kind of breathiness and kind of your lung capacity.

And you start to kind of get better at that over time.

I mean, I've been here now many years, but I do find that when I'm exercising and particularly when I'm running, it takes me a while to kind of build that back up again.

And I will also say that whenever you try a new exercise and running, I would definitely put into this bucket, you work different muscles.

So it has taken me a period of weeks and it's still continuing for like my feet, like muscles in my feet to get stronger, my ankles are affected differently.

Even I noticed my elbows are affected because I'm swinging my arms back and forth in a way that I'm not used to doing.

And also, of course, like I always get tight in my hips.

So all of these things, like I can work on all of those things.

I can do different stretches, I can figure out all the things that are kind of like dial all that in.

But the mental part is something that you do have to practice on.

But I think you also have to have kind of a plan of like what you're gonna do to keep yourself mentally engaged.

And one of the things that I was really grateful for is one of the instructors that I enjoyed the most was the one that did the 5K on Peloton.

And the reason that I appreciated this instructor is because she had a tendency to tell stories and to kind of talk pretty much throughout the entire workout so that you would have something to kind of pay attention to.

And I've tried a number of different things to keep myself engaged when I'm running.

And I found that this instructor actually helped quite a bit.

So like listening to an audio book is like not as interesting to me.

Watching something on TV is also not necessarily something that helps me.

I think that if I was just doing a long run that was not pushing myself, that might feel different than trying to do like a time trial with a particular distance.

So I was glad that this instructor was able to be there.

And then the other thing that they did in this particular class of 5K is as you can imagine, there's all different kinds of people at all different kinds of speeds and experience taking this 5K plan.

And so you can't start everyone off at the same spot in the final class because not everyone's gonna finish at the same time.

And so basically what they did is they took the slower runners and you started earlier and then people who were going faster paces, they kind of let them out of the gate later on in the class.

And that was also something that actually served as a really nice distraction because it was almost like a countdown because there were six different groups that were gonna be going on this run.

And so every time a new group released, it was like that much closer to the end.

And I actually started even before the first group because I was like so slow.

I was slower than even the first group that got out of the gate.

And I wanted to not feel rushed.

I wanted to have plenty of time.

I wanted to not have that be the thing that was going to distract me of like, am I gonna cross the finish line in the right amount of time?

So all of those things kind of kept me engaged.

And I think also there's that, I don't know, like slight anxiety when you're running a race, basically.

Even if it's by yourself in my gym, on my own treadmill, like that kind of nervous energy of like, can I do this?

And because I hadn't done it in like 10 years, that was also kind of keeping me engaged as I was trying to go this distance.

So all that to say, the plan is something I would definitely do again.

And I've actually already started another training program that is meant to help me increase my speed.

So it's not focused on distance.

It's more focused on pacing.

And I've not really ever attempted that before.

It's not been something that I've really like felt strongly about, but I feel a little bit more confident now, now that I have several weeks of running under my belt and I can kind of play with the speed a little bit and see what I think.

So all of those things got me to checking that box of running a 5K in the first couple months of the year.

Now I have other goals that I'm trying to get to, including a 10 minute mile.

And I will tell you right now, I am nowhere close.

So we will have to see.

We will have to see what I can do for the rest of this year.

But of course I would love to hear if you've ever done a progressive movement plan like this in the past and how it worked for you.

You can always email me at hello@drkatylinder.com.

As you know, I always do love to hear from you.

Thanks so much for listening.

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