



Training for Life

On May 5, I ran in the OneAmerica 500 Festival Mini Marathon in Indianapolis. Back in December, when I decided to take a lap around the indoor track at the Southeast Monroe County YMCA just to see if I could, I had no idea things would turn out this way. But before I knew it, I was training for a half-marathon—13.1 miles.

I didn't have any significant goals for this race. Having run one half-marathon many years ago—and having hated every minute of it—my objective this time was to have fun and finish uninjured. With the help of my husband, Greg, and the other 30,000 participants running with us on that beautiful spring day, having fun was pretty easy. And with the great coaching I received at the Y over my 12-plus weeks of training, I managed to finish without injury. The fact that I got a pretty decent time (2:36) just made the day more memorable.

But now that the race is over, I feel somewhat unmoored. When you're training for an event, not only do you have a goal, you have a plan. You know what you're going to do every day, whether that means running, weight training, cross training, or simply taking a rest day. You start to think of food as fuel, so you really dial in your nutrition. All of that hard work (and those early morning workouts) means getting eight hours of sleep each night becomes a necessity. But once the event is over, you find yourself free from those constraints. Some people are happy to slip back into their old (bad) habits. Others, like me, are afraid they will.

One day, as my husband was running, a passerby asked him what he was training for. "Life!" Greg shouted over his shoulder. (Another time he might have answered, "The zombie apocalypse!" You'd have to know him.)

Now that my big event has come and gone, I realize that training for life is the most important activity any of us can ever do. It's the one event we



(l-r) Greg and Carmen Siering cross the finish line. Photo by Iconic Group

are competing in every single day. And, if you think about it, the goals I set for my half-marathon—have fun and finish uninjured—are what everyone wants out of life, too. Sure, we all age and some parts are going to hurt and not work as well as they used to, but people who stay active are much less likely to be achy and injured than their sedentary counterparts.

I've already found some shorter races to compete in this summer, and another half-marathon I want to run in the fall. But even if I don't have a race coming up, I've decided to take a page out of my husband's playbook and spend every day training for life. It's the one event I really can't afford to lose.

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