

# More running

There are days I wake up very congested. I have allergies all year. They make me miserable despite antihistamines. On the days that my face hurts because my allergies are raging, all I want to do is make it all go away and sleep.

I get up anyway. I run on days I've scheduled for running. On other days, I make a cup of tea, read a little, and catch up on emails. My family stays asleep because the noises I make while getting ready or puttering around are not abnormal noises. It may be ridiculously early in the morning, but I'm up and I'm moving. I'm happier for it.

I'm not sure when I transitioned to actually looking forward to running. Part of it is that I know that, miserable as I might be while I'm actually running, my congestion is usually a lot better by the time I'm done. Knowing that I'll be able to breathe through both sides of my nose for the rest of the day is ridiculously exciting. The primary reason is different, though. I actually like running now. I'm not proving anything. I truly don't care what my times are, though I'm sure that will change again as I get closer to a race. Running is my space, my time. No one cares if I'm fast or slow. Other people do care, though, that I'm a better person when I'm running regularly. I'm happier, more relaxed, and less likely to get irritated over small things.

I used to be a night owl, but I get more done in the mornings. I'm up at least an hour and a half before the rest of my family and, by the time I get to work, I've already accomplished something. I know the day might hold its challenges, but I can work through almost anything when I've had my bit of time to myself.

Since I started getting up early every day instead of just running days, I have felt calmer. I sometimes feel like I am

defined by everyone else in my life. I'm Katja's mom and Xander's wife and related to a bunch of other people, too. I love my family. I don't have a problem being identified as their relation. Sometimes I need to remind myself, to be reminded, that I am my own person, too. I'm not responsible for anyone in that time. I am, simply, myself, with no one tugging at me or needing me or even wanting me. The strongest pressure I get is from the cat. She'd really like to be on my lap on days that I'm not out running.

It isn't always easy to haul my often-tired body out of bed when it's still dark out. I regularly want to stay in bed more than almost anything else in the world. The more times I get up, though, either to run or to sit and read and sip hot tea, the easier it will be the next time I am tempted to succumb to the silence of the early morning.