

## My Journey Back to Running

-Justin Carson, Doctorate of Physical Therapy, Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist

If you are reading this, then you are probably a SOR member, and hopefully running well. I am a newer member and have recently returned to jogging as part of a healthful life. It has been a great and interesting experience, and one I thought worth sharing, in the hope of helping others.

In high school, I did competitive cross-country and track but it was not a lot of fun. Throughout college and physical therapy school, with poor flexibility and progressive back pain, the only aerobic exercise I continued was cycling. When I tried jogging it was slow and painful, so I avoided it. Last year I was frustrated and thought I was too young to give up any form of exercise. I thought as a physical therapist I should know how to get going on my own. Looking back, maybe it's like the old legal saying, "A person who represents himself has a fool for a lawyer."

I finally had a co-worker put me through a physical therapy evaluation, and he found I have a short right leg. With a shoe lift, over the counter arch supports, great fitting shoes from Rogue Valley Runners, and a digital video treadmill analysis, training is now pain-free and enjoyable. I also recently bought a tool to loosen up muscles called "the stick" that is basically a glorified rolling pin ([www.thestick.net](http://www.thestick.net)). What I want to share is this---there are a lot of resources and tools available to improve your running. You don't have to do it all on your own.

Of course if you are pain free, and running as fast or as long as you could ever want, then no help is needed. For myself, I needed and appreciated the help working up from a 5K to 10k, from a 10k to the Pear Blossom, and hopefully half marathon or more this summer. Runners are good at following training plans and paying attention to nutrition, but maybe we should get more help for our bodies!

If you are having any aches or pains, or would like to improve speed or distance, see your local physical therapist. After evaluating and treating runners (and a few club members) in my physical therapy clinic, we know we can help!

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