



Mark Kennedy: Welcome to the Healthnomics podcast, Mark. Happy to have you on the show.

Mark Remy: Thanks. Thank you for inviting me.

Mark Kennedy: Yeah, no worries. Excited to chat. I've been following your site online and reading some of your articles in "Runner's World" for quite some time now, so excited to finally chat. And I'm sure our listeners are excited as well to hear you and hear about some of your stories and some of your information, with regards to running and helping beginner runners, which is what I primarily focus on, on helping out beginner runners. So anyways, why don't we start by...can you tell us a little bit about maybe where you grew up and your journey into running and what you're up to today with regards to, you know, running and work, etc.

Mark Remy: Right. So taking those in order, if I can. First of all, someone questioned whether I've grown up at all. But to the extent that I have grown up or did grow up, it happened in South Central Ohio, here in the States. And, you know, I lived in a pretty small town, pretty rural, and started out actually, as a cyclist, a road cyclist back then in high school.

Mark Kennedy: How did you get into road cycling?

Mark Remy: I'm sorry?

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Mark Kennedy: How did you get into road cycling?

Mark Remy: So I'm afraid we're already gonna go off on a tangent. I'm terrible when I go off on tangents. The short version is that there was a huge, huge 2-day, 200-mile bike ride that went kind of by my hometown every Mother's Day weekend. It's still going on. It's called the Tour of the Scioto River Valley. And I kind of caught wind of that, and some friends and I decided to...I guess you would call it the equivalent of bandoning when you...before I knew any better. So we kinda hopped on. We didn't do the whole thing, but we hopped in with the riders and did, like, half of one of the days, you know, on our, you know, department store, junky bikes. And it trashed us and everything else. But, you know, we loved it, and I certainly stuck with it. And that's kinda got me started with that. So I got better bikes and got better and faster and road longer.

So I did that for a lot of years, actually, doubled in racing, but mostly century rides, 100-mile rides. And that kinda laid the foundation, I guess, looking back, for my running life. And I kinda got into running later as kind of cross-training for cycling. So I kind of stumbled into it, I guess. You know, for most folks, it works the other way around. They start out running, and then, you know, due to injury or whatever, you know, they wind up in their older years turning to cycling a bit more. But I did it backwards, because that's how I do things, I guess. But yeah, it's been good. And I've already forgotten...see, I've already forgotten your other two questions. You had, like, at least a three-part question and [inaudible 00:03:08].

Mark Kennedy: Yeah, you know, well I threw too much at you, so apologies. But...

Mark Remy: No, no.

Mark Kennedy: What did we talk about? We talked about where you grew up, how you got into running. And what are you running now? Like, what distances did you start running? Did you, like...you're one of those people who said, "Ah, I'm just gonna do a marathon"? Or did you start with 5Ks? Yeah, what's your running journey been like?

Mark Remy: Yeah, I was just about to say, I wasn't that dumb to jump right into the marathon.

Mark Kennedy: No, some people do.

Mark Remy: But I was fairly...you know, I was dumb enough back then. Well, you know, all kidding aside, for one thing, you know, I'd been biking fairly seriously in pretty long distances for, gosh, 9, 10 years, I guess, before I got into running. So I had a pretty good, you know, aerobic base, cardio base. And, you know, I was lean and healthy. I was also 20-something years old, and that goes a long way. You're a lot more resilient when you're that young. So, you know, my first actual race might have been a 15-miler, if memory serves. I remember it was a Valentine's Day race. It was cold, I was wearing tights. And I remember doing fairly well in that, like, better than I expected. And I thought, "Wow, there might be something to this." So, you know, that kind of was another rung on the ladder.

So yeah, it wasn't long after that that I decided, you know, A, I think I'm better at running, you know, naturally, just physically. I'm better running than I am at cycling. And, you know, and by that time...like I said, I've been biking pretty steadily, pretty seriously for about 10 years, almost. So, you know, after a while, even if you still enjoy it, you kinda get a little burned out, you know. So the combination of those two things just, you know, gradually turned me from a cyclist who sometimes runs, into a runner who sometimes bikes. And then, you know, just pretty much a runner who keeps telling himself he should get back on the bike more, but really doesn't. Although I am more now, but more for transportation. Yeah, so basically, if memory serves, I think I went from that 15-mile race.

My next race, you know, per se, actually might have been the marathon. But that's only because there weren't a whole lot of races, at least that I knew about, you know, in Central, South Central Ohio back then. So, you know, in fairness, I do recall actually training for the marathon. Now maybe not very smart or very intelligently, but I certainly did put the miles in. And so I did my first marathon at age 25 and did reasonably well, I guess, and just kept going from there.

Mark Kennedy: So I know you've done a lot of marathons. How many marathons total have you run?

Mark Remy: I ran marathon number 27 two days ago at Boston.

Mark Kennedy: Oh, you ran at Boston? Oh, congratulations.

Mark Remy: Yeah, I did. Thanks. Yeah, I was in shape.

Mark Kennedy: Yeah, how did it go?

Mark Remy: It was good. I never intended to do Boston in 2017. To be honest, I had no plans on really doing a marathon again, ever, in the pretty indefinite future. Not that I was totally against the idea, but I just had no plans. And then, you know, months ago, a fellow Canadian, Tim Sullivan, a Facebook friend of mine, just shot me an email and said, "Hey, would you be interested in possibly guiding me at Boston?" Tim is blind, you know, he's visually impaired and legally blind. So I said, "Yeah," because how can you say no to an offer like that? So I wound up guiding him, and that was my first time guiding a blind runner. And it went okay. There were no major calamities. You know, we were lucky enough to have another more experienced guide with us. So there were two of us guiding, and Tim kinda running in between us. And we actually hooked with a third guide whose runner unfortunately had to drop out during the race. So by the time we finished the race, we were, you know, three guides for one runner.

Mark Kennedy: So, wow, lots of support for him. And it was a warm day. Was it a bit too warm for the marathon?

Mark Remy: Yes is the short answer. So yeah, there was a lot of...yeah, it was rough. Let me put it this way, I don't think I spoke with anybody after...I haven't spoke with anybody since the race who had told me, like, "Yeah, I had an awesome race. I had a really good time. I PR'ed, I felt great." You know, everyone I've talked to, including ones who were really in shape and really ready for it just, you know, it was a slog for everybody, I guess.

Mark Kennedy: Yeah. Do you know Mario Fraioli at all?

Mark Remy: Yeah, sure.

Mark Kennedy: Yeah, he was a guest on my podcast a few weeks back. And, yeah, I just sort of followed his updates on his race, and he said it was his worst marathon time ever.

Mark Remy: Yeah, but we're still what, like at, 230 or 240 or something ridiculous? I was like, "Yeah, boo-hoo."

Mark Kennedy: Yeah, exactly. I had no sympathy, but I think he ran a 245 or 247 or something.

Mark Remy: Yeah, I think it's around there. You're right, yeah. But I mean, you know, I joke. I mean, it's all relative. And, you know, a bad race for one runner, it would be a fantastic race for another. And it all depends on where you are and what your goals are. But yeah, everybody was adjusting their expectations down on Monday, I think.

Mark Kennedy: Yeah, for sure. And through all those numerous races you've done, marathons and other races, any favorites that stand out for some reason or another?

Mark Remy: Ah, geez. Well, you know, a related question that I get sometimes is "What's your favorite marathon?" And, you know, it sounds like a kind of a glib answer or maybe even a cop-out, but I always say Boston automatically, just because, you know, it's Boston. You know? I've kinda run out of ways to describe without sounding completely trite, but it's a pretty special race. You know, it's the Boston marathon, and it's just...you know, I struggle for words to describe those emotions when you make that final left turn onto Boylston. You know, I mean, it's emotional every step of the way, don't get me wrong. You know, and through all the towns, and the crowds are great, and Wellesley's great, and the fire station and the Newton Hills. You know, it's crazy. You know, like we see in literature sometimes, like, the marathon itself is like a character in the story, you know?

Mark Kennedy: Absolutely.

Mark Remy: It's really something else. And, you know, as far as, like, my best, most memorable race ever, this might sound like a bit of an easy answer too, but you know, Monday's race was pretty amazing, you know, just because it was my first time ever...not only my first time ever guiding a blind runner, it was the first time that I've ever really run for anybody else but myself, period. You know? I've been at this, you know, 20-some years now, and it occurred me, like, "Wow, I've never..." You know, I was never one to go the charity running route. I have great respect and admiration for those guys, but I just never went down that path, myself, for whatever reason. And I never really ran even, like, in someone's memory or anything as simple as that. You know, when I was running and really racing, it was just pure competition and wanting to see how well I could run, you know, PRs I could set, all that kind of inward-focused stuff.

So running with this outward focus, it was brand new to me, and it was

pretty incredible, you know, I gotta say. And my buddy Tim, who I was guiding, was having a bit of a rough day, not just because of the heat, but he had an injury flare-up fairly early into the race. And for a while there, I thought it was kinda touch and go, like, I was wondering, strictly to myself, of course, "I'm not sure if we're gonna finish today," you know?

Mark Kennedy: Yeah.

Mark Remy: But, you know, I tried to stay as positive as I could, and Tim was just a champion. You know, he's a super positive guy. And, you know, we took plenty of walk breaks and got lots of fluids and just got it done, you know? And we finished, and he ran all the way down Boylston.

Mark Kennedy: That's awesome.

Mark: Remy: So, but we got it done, yeah. So that was pretty memorable, you know? Probably number 2 would have been also with Boston, because, you know, you only get one first time. That was a pretty special day.

Mark Kennedy: Yeah. Well, that's great. Thanks for sharing that. And today, so you're a writer? Is that what you do for a living, primarily?

Mark Remy: I ask myself the same thing quite often. My wife asked me, "You do this for a living?"

Mark Kennedy: Who are you? What do you do?

Mark Remy: Yeah. Who are any of us really? You know? Not to get all existential. Yeah, yeah, yeah. I'm a writer. So my background is strictly in publishing. I started out, you know, at first, in newspapers, believe it or not, if you remember what those are. And I only did that for a while and still have deep affection and love for newspapers, like the actual print, physical, you know, smudgy kind.

Mark Kennedy: Yeah, as do I.

Mark Remy: Yeah, it's good stuff. So I started with that and then from there got my foot in the door at Rodale. But back then, it was called Rodale Press, which was based in Eastern Pennsylvania. And, of course, Rodale...Rodale Inc. as it's called today, is the parent company

of not just "Runner's World" but "Bicycling" and "Men's Health" and "Prevention" and all these other healthy, crunchy kinda titles.

So, you know, working there was literally a dream come true for me. I'd dreamed about working at Rodale since high school, really, you know? I used to read "Backpacker Magazine," which back then was a Rodale title. So I kinda, again, stumbled into a job at Rodale and was fortunate to do that. Man, you know, more than any other single thing in my professional life, I think that was probably the single biggest event that would kinda shape the rest of my adult professional life, was just getting that first job at Rodale. So it wasn't "Runner's World," but it was in the company. So, you know, I was close enough.

And eventually, I did make my way to "Runner's World" and worked at "Men's Health" for a while and that kinda thing. And then bounced around a bit in New York City and then came back to Rodale and back to "Runner's World," actually. Edited their website for a few years, became an editor at large and just kind of a general, you know, utility player type writer/editor there. And then three years ago, my wife and I decided to pull up stakes and move. So we came out to Portland, and have been here ever since.

Mark Kennedy: That's great. And so are you still working with "Runner's World" today?

Mark Remy: I am, yeah. I was fortunate enough to be able to bring most of my job at the time with me, minus the benefits and so on, because, you know, there were various legal and tax reasons for that. But I essentially became a contractor. And since then, my work with "Runner's World" has been kind of narrowed down and focused. I took the initiative to do that. So I'm doing a little bit less for "Runner's World" now, and that freed up time for me to launch my own website, which is dumbrunner.com. And that was back in the fall of 2015.

So ever since then, I've been, you know, continuing my work for "Runner's World," which includes a column in the print magazine four times a year, a feature articles here and there, and various other duties along with other, you know, whatever other freelance editorial work I can scrounge up. And also a lot of time i'm funneling into DumbRunner, you know, and trying to cultivate that and build a readership and have some fun with that. So yeah, I kinda got a lot of things going at once here, but it's fun.

Mark Kennedy: Well, I wanna come back to DumbRunner for sure, because I love your writing there.

Mark Remy: Thanks.

Mark Kennedy: With regards to "Runner's World," it seems like it comes up every podcast I'm with, but Alex Hutchinson, who writes "Runner's World," actually lives in my neighborhood. I see him at the the butcher periodically. I've yet to have him on the podcast, but I've been for beers with him. But yeah, he actually grew up in this neighborhood, randomly. So anyways, love his writing as well.

Mark Remy: Oh, Alex is a great guy, yeah. And I've only met him in person a few times, but we've corresponded quite a...via email and Facebook and stuff. And I have tremendous respect and admiration for Alex, you know. And not only is he, like, a bonafide, you know, really super-fast runner, but he so knows his stuff. And, you know, Alex has this super-rare talent for taking what is...you know, let's face it, a pretty dry topic, which is, you know, exercise physiology and exercise science and all this in the the research and all that kinda stuff, and kind of translating it for a mass audience in a really smart, readable way, you know, without dumbing it down. And that's a really fine line to walk, and he does it in a way that I never could, because that's just not my thing. Yeah, he's a smart guy. A smart, funny guy.

Mark Kennedy: Yeah, smart guy. And oftentimes...you know, I study Kinesiology in university and stuff, so like, I get the science aspect. But often, you know, this question comes up, and more often than not, I'm like, "I know Alex has written about this somewhere." I just search for his answer and send it to people, because I know it's simple, easy to read, easy to digest, and it's not too sciency.

Mark Remy: No, I do that myself, because it's very personable writing. You know, his voice comes through. And that's rare too, for a writer who, you know, primarily focuses on research and health and fitness and stuff like that. Yeah, it's good stuff.

Mark Kennedy: Yeah, it's actually...

Mark Remy: He's also, by the way...another thing...I was trying to put this into words, and I couldn't until now, but I think another thing I really like about Alex is that he is...at least in my opinion, he's a skeptic, you know? But he's a healthy skeptic. He's skeptical without being cynical

about it.

Mark Kennedy: Yes.

Mark Remy: You know, he's not afraid to push back and, you know, ask tough questions and, to be honest, to call BS when there's BS to be called out, you know. But never in a mean or snarky way, you know? And I admire that as well.

Mark Kennedy: Yeah, exactly. Well, I gotta get him on the podcast one of these days. Again, before I get to DumbRunner, I wanna talk a little bit...how has running impacted your life or made you, you know, a better person?

Mark Remy: Geez, that's a big question. God, where should I start? I mean, man, you know, like with a lot of things, I think running throughout my life...You know, first of all, I gotta say that, like I said earlier, I've been running more or less 20 years, a little more than 20 years now. I paved my life as a runner to, you know, my first marathon, which was 1995, which is close enough. So I've been doing this quite a while, and over that period of time...and I don't think I'm unusual in this regard, I think I'm fairly typical. The rest of my life has just been a roller coaster, you know? You know, just geographically, and personally, and emotionally, and professionally, and romantically, and everything else, it's just like everyone else, you know, life just kind of comes at you, and it's just this craziness. And the one kind of through line, through all that stuff has been running. You know, it's been this constant.

So in that sense alone, it's helped me just because it's...gosh, you know, it's kinda like a rope, a rope leading you through these, like, tricky mountain passes and then there's this, like, rope that you can grab on, and it's right there. And no matter what else is happening, you still have running. And, you know, as long as you're healthy, you know, God willing, you are, more often than not, you can just put your shoes on and go out the door and just go. And virtually, every time you do it, you come back at least feeling like a slightly better person. You know, a little more clear-headed, a little more energetic, a little more...I don't know, you have more perspective. It's just this weirdly wonderful thing. You know, it's almost magical. And it never diminishes, you know? No matter how much you do it or how long you do it, like...I could go out for a run today and come back, and it would have the same effect, you know? And that's a pretty remarkable thing. I can't think of a lot of things in life that are like that. You know?

Mark Kennedy: Yeah, I like your analogy with the rope. I never really thought of it that way, but that really resonates with me. Just like it's always there, and yeah, life is...throws twists and turns at you, I mean all the time. But there's always this rope and it's this constant that you can hold on to. And yeah, it just kinda keeps you moving in the right direction.

Mark Remy: Yeah, yeah. So then, you know, but apart from that, I think running, for me anyway, works on at least two levels, a micro level and a macro level. And, you know, the macro level stuff includes that stuff I just described, about, you know, running is a constant. It's always there, it's always available. And just knowing it's there is reassuring. You know, you have this kind of built-in stability, even when everything else is just going to pieces, there's always running. So that's, like, the macro level.

And on a micro level, just day-to-day, it helps your mood. You know, it keeps you fit and healthy. Gosh, you know, it strengthens your heart and your lungs and your soul and all this other corny stuff. And it's just great, you know? What can I say? So, you know, to look at it another way, you could ask, "Where would I be today," in every sense of the word, "Where would I be," you know, to rattle off that same list, geographically and professionally and psychologically and emotionally and all those other things, where would I be today if I didn't have running that whole time? You know, if there's some parallel universe out there that has, you know, one of me in it, but without running, I think I'd be in a significantly worse place, you know?

Mark Kennedy: Yeah.

Mark Remy: So, you know, I try to...I don't dwell on those kind of thoughts, but I do think about it fairly often, only because it's important, you know, not to take things for granted. And I try not to take things for granted. But you know...

Mark Kennedy: That's great. Thanks for sharing that. Now, your site DumbRunner...and before, I'll let you tell us a little bit about it. I just wanna read a couple little, either they're titles of articles or a couple little segments within articles or posts. It just jumped out at me today when I was just reading through. One was just a question, and I think this is a serious question someone wrote in. You can correct me if I'm wrong. "Dear DumbRunner, is it possible to freeze my twig and berries while running in shorts during the winter months in Colorado?" Did someone

write that in?

Mark Remy: Yes. Yeah, so that is from a section of the site called "Ask DumbRunner."

Mark Kennedy: Yeah.

Mark Remy: Actually, in the top navigation of the website, it's called "Reader Q&A." I think it's more clear than "Ask DumbRunner." And that's the one section of the site that's pretty much always serious, or about as serious as my site gets.

Mark Kennedy: Okay.

Mark Remy: Not to get ahead of ourselves, but most of the site is at least intended to be humorous and satirical and a little tongue-in-cheek. The "Ask DumbRunner" part is where I take reader questions and answer them. And I do try to answer everyone who writes me, even if it doesn't wind up published on the website. So everyone who writes me, hopefully, you know, gets at least a brief, personal response. And my philosophy with "Ask DumbRunner" is that...well, first of all, I included that in the site in the first place, because I didn't want the whole thing just to be a gag.

Mark Kennedy: Yes.

Mark Remy: You know, because laughter is good and necessary and fun and all that stuff, but I just felt like the site needed something that was, you know, real, I guess, and useful. A little more substantial, I guess you could say. And plus, I just like the idea of helping people out, which, you know, making them laugh is helping them too, I guess. But, you know, I have been doing this long enough and have read enough and written enough and worked closely enough with enough really smart other people, that I feel like I have some wisdom, at this point, to offer. And I try to offer it. So long story short, yeah, "Ask DumbRunner," they're all real questions from real readers. You can remain anonymous if you want to, but I'll post the question if I think it's publishing-worthy, and an actual response. And the response might be a little fun as well, but there's an actual answer in there someplace. At least I try to put one in there.

Mark Kennedy: That's great. And I like the site, the methodology to how you set it up with, you know, the humor side, the serious side, because,

I mean, "Runner's World" already exists, so there's no point, you know, sort of rehashing another site that's just like "How to do this, how to do this, what to do with this." So I found it really refreshing, and [inaudible 00:26:16].

Mark Remy: Oh, gosh. Yes.

Mark Kennedy: [inaudible 00:26:18].

Mark Remy: God, yes.

Mark Kennedy: Sorry, go ahead.

Mark Remy: No, no, no. No, I was just gonna...Sorry to interrupt. I was just gonna say that, yeah, you're right, of course. And first of all, you know, "Runner's World" is the 800 pound gorilla. You know, let's face it. And they're that for a reason. You know, they're completely dominant, and they do a certain thing, and they do it super well. And, you know, yeah, trying to establish a new kind of "Runner's World"-like website would be not only redundant but kinda stupid on my part. You know...yeah, that'd be beyond dumb, that'd be stupid.

Mark Kennedy: Yeah. A couple of the other ones I liked too. There's an article called "Let us now praise the shower of beer," which really made me laugh, because I have been guilty in the past of bringing a beer into the shower. And I don't know if it was the morning. I hope it wasn't in the morning, that'd be brutal, but I think it was an afternoon run, cracked a beer, and then we had to get somewhere. And I was like, "Well, you know, it's a warm...I'm not gonna waste this beer, so it's coming in the shower with me."

Mark Remy: Yeah, of course. Yeah.

Mark Kennedy: And another one too I just saw in one of your articles for...It might have been targeted to beginners, but it said, "When should I stretch?" And then your first line was, "I recommend stretching in 1981." Which is funny, but also true. I mean, that's sorta what the research says. And, yeah, I tell 'em on my answers all the time, you know, "By all means, if you wanna stretch because it makes you feel good, go for it. But you don't need to."

Mark Remy: Yeah, that's the thing. And, you know, I wrote a more recent bit on stretching. I don't know if you remember this, but a while

back, some research came out about flossing, Flossing your teeth, you know? And they essentially concluded that there was no...they didn't say it was useless, but their conclusion, if I recall, was that there's really no evidence anywhere to suggest that flossing is really that beneficial as far as oral health is concerned, despite what every dentist out there will tell you, including my own. So that finding was a little controversial, and some people pushed back, you know, at dentists, for one.

But I loved reading it, because it validated something I've felt in my gut my whole life, which is that...I don't know how family-friendly or unfilling that your show is, but I'll try to be PG here, is that flossing is BS, you know? And I made the analogy between flossing and stretching. And I think they're really similar. Like, you know what? If you wanna do it, if it makes you feel better or healthier, you know, God bless, knock yourself out. But, you know, don't feel that you have to, and certainly don't admonish other people who choose not to do it, you know? And most important...and this is the big thing for me, most important, don't feel bad if you don't wanna do it, you know?

Mark Kennedy: Yeah.

Mark Remy: Yeah, getting back to the stretching thing. Stretching is really emblematic of this, I think. You know, running just kind of becomes, I guess like a lot of things in life, just super and needlessly complicated, you know? You know, we've been kind of trained and groomed to overthink it and, you know, agonize and analyze every little thing and every little bit of research that comes along and this and that. And, you know, if that's your thing, if that motivates you worrying about, you know, what you should eat at what point during the run, and timing your protein intake just right. And, like, there are a thousand little things like that that are just blown up.

I mean, if you like getting into that and you really enjoy it and you really think it makes your life and your running better and happier and everything else, then again, go for it. But one of my missions in life, especially as I get older, is to just, you know, pound this home, just to tell people, like, "You know, if you don't want to live like that, you don't have to." You know? That's kind of become, like, the default for a lot of people, like, "Gosh, what running shoes should I wear?" And, you know, "What sort of wearable technology?" And, you know, "How should I fuel?" You know, the word "fuel" used like that is one of my pet peeves. I never referred to fuel as...to me, it's food. It's food and drink, you know?

Mark Kennedy: Yeah, eating and drinking it.

Mark Remy: Yeah. And, you know, it goes on and on and on and on. And you're just barraged. It just beats you up after a while. And, you know, what kills me is that people who are looking to get into running, I'm afraid, will be so overwhelmed, so daunted by this tsunami of information and tips and advice and warnings. And, you know, "Are you stretching wrong? Are you eating wrong?" You know, "Here are five ways you're sabotaging your training," and all that stuff. I think they're so, like, daunted by just seeing all that stuff that they might be discouraged from even running at all, you know, which kills me. I'm like, "It doesn't have to..." you can safely ignore virtually all that stuff. Just get out there and run. You know, there are a few guiding principles.

Mark Kennedy: Yeah, this is a perfect, actually, segue right now, because this is an article I read on your website. And after reading this, because I focus on helping beginner runners, I read this article you wrote, and immediately after I read it, I think I put a comment on your blog. And I think I emailed you a week later and said, "I need this guy on my podcast, because he thinks the same way I do with regards to beginners. And the article was "The Only Three Things You Need to Know About..." Sorry. "The Only Three Things You Need to Know to Begin Running." And you talk about three different things. One, just go. Two, be patient. And three, pay attention. Can you talk a little bit about each one of those three and how it relates to a beginner runner?

Mark Remy: Yeah. That was a nice segue, wasn't it?

Mark Kennedy: Nice, yeah.

Mark Remy: That's switch in my head was going too, before you brought it up. I'm like, "I actually wrote something about this." Yes. And so I wrote this post, but I thought it was so important that I included a link, again, in the top navigation of the website. It's called "Running 101." And as you click that, it doesn't take you to, like a section with like how to start running with tips on nutrition and gear and duh, duh, and all that stuff. It just takes you to this one article, which as you said, it's called "The Only Three Things You Need to Know to Begin Running," really. And you're right, yeah.

The first one...And this is not something that I just wrote off the top of my head, by the way. I wanna stress that. A lot of stuff I write is just stuff that kinda tickles me, and spur of the moment, and I dash it off and

publish it and walk away. But the information in this article, I think, had been kind of...oh, gosh. Had been kind of fermenting in my head for years and years and years, you know? And I finally just sat down and tried my best to distill all these thoughts into one article. And then I distilled the article into those three points, as you mentioned. And the more I thought about it though, I thought, "I think this is actually useful, good advice for anybody." And by the way, not just for beginners. I think this applies, you know, even for veteran runners.

So basically, yeah, the first part gets back to what I was saying a minute ago, about shaking off that paralysis that you might feel when you're thinking about starting to run. You know, maybe you watched a marathon or something and you spectated and you got inspired, like, "Boy, I should run. Maybe I should do a 5K or something. But, you know, I haven't run since high school, and I got a few extra pounds, this and that." And "What shoes do I run?" Like my wife, for example, was talking to someone a while back and told me that her friend wanted to know what kind of running shoes to get. She wanted to start running. And I basically told her, like, you know, go to a good running store and chat with them a little bit and just, you know, buy the shoes that feel comfortable. That's it. You know, it's really that simple.

And there's been a whole industry that's sprung up around questions like that, that are working hard to convince people just the opposite. Like, "No, you need a gait analysis. If you over put in or under. You should do the wet test, you should do..." You know, minimal, maximal, cushioning, duh, duh, duh." Like, just try some shoes on. If they're comfortable, then just go with them, you know? Don't beat yourself up. And kinda underlining what I said before, that the really sad part about this anecdote is that as far as I know, unless something has changed, this same woman still hasn't run a single step, because she doesn't know what shoes she should get. So she's been, like, kicking that can down the road.

You know, she has these shoes for CrossFit or something. She's like, "Can I wear the shoes I use for CrossFit?" I'm, "No, no, no." I was like, "This is ridiculous, man. You know, you could..." especially when you consider that when you're first starting, you shouldn't be running far enough for even horrible shoes, you know, to really mess things up. You know, you could run around the block in penny loafers if you had to.

Mark Kennedy: Exactly.

Mark Remy: Or those Oxfords you're wearing, right? And that's the thing, and that's if you're just starting, you should be running around the block. You know, run around the block and call it a success. And build from there, you know? Worry about fine-tuning your footwear later. But yeah, just go. You know. And the second point is, just kind of ties in with that, would just be patient.

You know, too many people jump into running, and I get the sense it's getting worse with that over the past 5, 10, 15 years or so as technology has gone into hyper speed, and we're all, you know, so accustomed to getting instantaneous results and immediate gratification that the whole idea of deciding to become a runner one day...you know, running for three or four or five or six months even, just very, very, short distances, very slowly, and then maybe signing up for a 5K. And after a few months of that, maybe a 10K. And then eventually, after a year, year and a half, how about a half marathon, and then a year after that, maybe you'll try a marathon. Like, that would drive most people today crazy, which is too bad.

You know, so many people wanna go from zero to marathon in a few months. In fact, I got another "Ask DumbRunner" question about that some time ago from someone asking, you know, "My son is fairly fit. He's young, he's in the military. He wants to do a marathon this fall." And this was like in the summer, so he had like three months, literally. It might have been four. It was four, tops. Three or four months. "Can you recommend a training plan?" And my response was, like, "Honestly, my advice is try to train and plan for a half marathon and do that." I don't understand the urgency, you know? Why does he need to do a marathon this fall? Just, you know, be patient, be patient.

Mark Kennedy: Yeah, there's couch to 5K, and then that sounds like now, I mean, there's gonna be couch to marathon.

Mark Remy: Couch to ultra, I guess. [inaudible 00:37:46].

Mark Kennedy: Couch to ultra, there you go.

Mark Remy: And move on to the next thing, right? And it's just a shame, especially when you consider...and it's so paradoxical, because one of the most beautiful things that distance running can teach you, if you let it, is the value of patience. And the fact that, you know, developing that discipline to delay gratification can pay off in the long run. No pun intended. You know, it can pay off in a big way. And that's a valuable life

lesson as well. But you're never gonna get there if you don't have enough patience to begin with to stick with it and just take one step at a time, you know? Again, I tell people it depends on your goals. If your goal is just to finish a marathon and then cross it off your list and move on to bungee jumping or something, or skydiving, then okay, train for one in four months and then risk getting hurt and, you know, probably hate it.

Mark Kennedy: Yeah, you wanna enjoy it.

Mark Remy: You wanna enjoy it, you know? Let's face it, even if you're well-trained and experienced, you might not enjoy it. You probably won't enjoy it. That's another story. But, you know, at least you won't wreck yourself en route. And yeah, it depends on your goals, you know? I always ask people, "Why do you wanna run a marathon?" And fairly often, they don't have a really, very good answer to that, you know? I don't think they've ever stopped to think about it. [inaudible 00:39:11].

Mark Kennedy: Yeah, [inaudible 00:39:13]

Mark Remy: [inaudible 00:39:13] about 26.2 miles or...you know.

Mark Kennedy: And then the last one, pay attention.

Mark Remy: Right, right, right. Pay attention. So this gets a little...well, actually, this works, again, on a couple levels. As I say in the article, I think, you know, just in the hear and now, you need to pay attention to your body. Too many people, I think, push themselves too hard, too fast, too long, too soon, and break something. Or get frustrated because they aren't getting the results they want or...I guess that's more about being patient. The point is, you know, if you don't pay attention to your body and adapt, then that can lead to pretty bad things, you know? On another level, you need to pay attention to your surroundings. And that means not just, you know, traffic and other kind of threats, but just nature or your surroundings, whatever.

And this gets a little hippy-dippy, but I'm a big believer in it. One of the other beautiful things about running is that if you let it...and this isn't anything you can cultivate, you know. If you let it, it can really open your eyes to so much...beauty seems like such an inadequate word, but it can open your eyes to so much beauty out there, and not just like the, you know, trees and waterfalls and baby deer, that kind of beauty, but just beauty in places you wouldn't expect it otherwise. Because too

often, we walk around, you know, staring at our phones or in our cars on our way to an appointment or rushing here, rushing there, and one of the most appealing things for me about running is that it's the time to kinda get away from all that and just, you know, take a breath and look around a little bit, you know? Sort of pay attention.

Pay attention inwardly too, to your thoughts, you know? Running is a wonderful opportunity to do that as well. And, you know, we have fewer and fewer opportunities like that to really pay attention to what's going on, you know, between our ears. And again, on a macro level, you know, pay attention and recognize how far you've come. You know, if you've been running for even just a few weeks maybe, certainly a few months, you're gonna see some difference. You know, it can be so incremental that you risk not noticing it if you don't pay attention. But, you know, if you're feeling frustrated that you're not making enough progress fast enough, then maybe try to pay a little closer attention. You know, go back and try to remember, like, "Wait a minute. Actually, I'm going around the block. Not once now, but half a dozen times. I'm not completely winded and feel like I'm dying." You know? So you pay attention and you recognize that. And that can be motivating as well.

So yeah, just go, be patient, and pay attention. One, two, three. And, you know, once you got that nailed down, if you wanna make things more complicated, you certainly can. It's easy to do, trust me. But you don't have to. You don't have to, especially when you're first starting.

Mark Kennedy: Well, and out there today with the internet, there's so many training plans available for runners, especially beginners. So what's your advice on picking a training plan?

Mark Remy: Oh, gosh. You know, not to keep plugging "Ask DumbRunner," but that's another question I got for "Ask DumbRunner" as well. Separate from the previous marathon training plan question. And my answer amounted to basically...and this might make some seasoned, actual coaches out there cringe, but I stand by it. Again, especially for beginners or for folks who...I hate to say, "just wanna finish," but you know, quote, unquote, "just wanna finish," which I think is a perfectly fine goal, by the way, especially for folks like that who aren't necessarily going for a PR or trying to run a blazing time or something.

If your goal is just to get fit without hurting yourself and, you know, just get prepared for the distance. I think that, you know, within reason, with a few obvious caveats, within reason, it doesn't really matter what plan

you pick. And that might sound ridiculous, but I truly believe it. Of course, the caveats are there, the caveats being...and I would hope this goes without saying, just use your head, you know? You know, if you know that you're probably...let's say you're running a half marathon. You're training for your first half marathon, for example. You've been running 5Ks for a couple years, you know, you run pretty routinely. You're fit and healthy and all that good stuff. You think you're ready for a half marathon, and you think that, let's say, a two-hour and fifteen minute half marathon sounds like a reasonable goal to you, then choose a training plan that just looks like it's about right for a 215 marathoner-type runner, you know?

I mean, if it's called the "Break 130 Half-Marathon Training Plan," that's not for you. You know, that's when I wanna say it's obvious. Like, because obviously, if you look at it and think, like, "Woe, that's way too much mileage, and these workouts are too intense." Then keep looking, you know? But don't agonize. Just like with shoes, don't agonize over which training philosophy or approach you need, which method, you know, how much cross-training should there be. Is it a 7-day cycle or a 10-day cycle? You know, if you look at it and think, like, "This looks manageable. I could do this. And if I do what it says, more or less," you know, you can always fudge a little bit. Or if you missed a day or two, it's not life or death. "If I do what this training plan tells me to do, more or less, between now and race day, yeah, I will probably be okay. And I'll be healthy and happy along the way," then choose that training plan.

And I tell people too, not to overthink it, because, you know, choosing a training plan isn't like signing a mortgage or something. It's not like getting married. No, if it's not working out after a couple weeks, if you realize, like, "Wow, this is way too hard for me," or, "Wow, this is way too easy for me, or just too much mileage," you can either make some tweaks to the plan itself or toss the plan and go find a new one, you know? All these things are allowed, you know? So don't sweat it too much, you know?

Mark Kennedy: Yeah, I read an article, it was about diets. And, you know, if you're looking to lose weight, there's hundreds of diets that will work for you. It's just a matter of sometimes just picking one and having the awareness. And a lot of these things will get you to the same place. It's just a matter of, you know, just going, like your first point in that article we talked about. You just gotta start.

Mark Remy: Yeah, yeah. By the way, are you familiar with the writer

named Michael Pollan, the food writer?

Mark Kennedy: Yes, the "Eat mostly plants..." yeah, he's got...yeah, go ahead.

Mark Remy: Exactly. Yeah, yeah. So I actually love to bring...I think I'll bring him up, actually, at another article I did for DumbRunner. But yeah, I love his approach, which is he just fills all of his kind of advice on eating and nutrition and diet and all that stuff into just a handful of words, which is, "Eat food, not too much, mostly plants." Yeah, like it's brilliant.

Mark Kennedy: Yeah, so simple and so amazing.

Mark Remy: Yeah, yeah. And to be honest, you know, I was kinda thinking of him in that phrase when I wrote that "Three Things You Need to Know" article. I wanted to get something similarly concise and pithy and memorable that kind of distilled everything you really need to know into these three guiding principles that you can remember. Yeah, I mean, diet and nutrition alone is just poof, it's just crazy. It's gotten so nuts.

Mark Kennedy: Yeah, absolutely. And that's a topic for another probably two podcast episodes.

Mark Remy: Oh, gosh.

Mark Kennedy: One question that I want to ask you, and this is something I wanna address on my site or blog at some point. And I sent a survey to all the people that signed up to my email list, and I've got about 700 or so people to respond. And one of the biggest struggles people come back with...and I've never really addressed it. I've never seen anyone write an article about it, is a lot of people struggle, especially beginners, with getting started running because they're shift workers. They either work night shifts or their shifts are all over the place. It could be day, it could be night. Sometimes, they work long shifts, like 12, 14 hours. And they may work 14 days in a row with shifts like that, and have 7 days off. So I'm just wondering if anyone's ever asked you that type of question, or any tips that you might be able to provide for people who worked shift hours.

Mark Remy: Oh, gosh. I don't think anyone's submitted that question to me recently. But it's certainly a question I've seen pop up here and

again over the years in "Runner's World" and so on. You know, I'm afraid I don't have much really useful advice, sad to say, except I guess my advice would be, you know, be young and single. Because I did in college, summers at college, I did shift work. And it was brutal. It was a television tube glass factory, right? And it ran 24 hours a day, so you would do 7 days in a row from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., have a day off, and then 7 days in a row, 4 to midnight, have 2 days off, and then 7 days in a row, midnight to 8 a.m., have 4 days off. So it was brutal.

But, you know, when I was working there was when I...I was biking a lot, and that was actually the period of my lifetime when I won, I think I won, like, two bike races in my entire life. And while I was doing that swing shift work was when I won one of them. You know? So I was obviously training, but my secret was being, you know, 20 years old and living at home with my parents.

Mark Kennedy: Yeah, exactly.

Mark Remy: So that's my advice. Be young and have no responsibilities except training and working. But yeah, beyond that, gosh, that's a tough one. It's tough, I don't know.

Mark Kennedy: I mean, I think a lot of it, too, maybe go back to your three points again, you be patient and you really gotta pay attention, because I mean, if your sleeping patterns are messed up, you might be more apt to get injured and sick. And you gotta be really patient, because maybe some weeks, perhaps, you can maybe run only once or twice and then other weeks, you can run five, six times. So that "be patient" really kicks in there too.

Mark Remy: Yeah, yeah. I mean, some questions are just really tough questions. And I'm just as curious anyway to see what kinda answers you come up with. But yeah, I guess I would add, at the last minute here, don't be afraid to...and this applies to any number of scenarios, I guess, don't be afraid to kinda play around and experiment. Try different approaches, you know. Try, you know, training before work, try after work. Try this and that. You know, eat this time or that time. And, you know, again, if you'll be patient, if you just go and be patient and you're patient enough and open-minded enough, I'm sure sooner or later, you're gonna land on a combination of...you know, on a balance that works for you and your sleep cycles and your own body and your own needs.

Mark Kennedy: Yeah, that's a good point. So I also, before we...I know we're moving along on time here, so before we sign off, I wanna mention you've also got...is it five books or four books?

Mark Remy: Depends on how you define "books." I'm not trying to be coy, but my most... Yeah, so I've written what you would call, I guess, four actual books and one training journal, which is book-like, but not a book-book, if you know what I mean.

Mark Kennedy: Okay.

Mark Remy: Yeah, if anybody's curious, you can see them all on dumbrunner.com/store. You can order personalized, signed copies there as well as, there are links to buy 'em on Amazon and so on. Or my personal site is markremy.com. It has, you know, similar information about all my books.

Mark Kennedy: Okay. Well, I'll be sure to put the links to your sites that you mentioned there in the show notes. But I also wanna give away, as appreciation...or a token of appreciation to you to help a lucky listener. I wanna give away a copy of each of your five or four books plus your training journal, so all five all of them to one lucky listener. And I thought to enter, just leave a comment on the show notes page, which will be at healthynomics.com/31. And it may take a week or so for me to get this post, or episode, up. But leave your comments by May 31, 2017, and I'll pick a lucky winner on June 1, 2017. And I'll contact you, and then I'll get in touch, perhaps, with you, Mark. And maybe we can arrange to get those signed as well. And I'll send you the money, and someone will be a happy winner.

Mark Remy: Oh, that's brilliant. Thanks.

Mark Kennedy: Yeah, no worries.

Mark Remy: So yeah, first prize is one copy of each of my books, and second prize is two copies of each of my books, right?

Mark Kennedy: What's that?

Mark Remy: No, it's just [inaudible 00:53:19].

Mark Kennedy: Oh, two copies, yeah. Yeah, that would be good. So anyways, again, so healthynomics.com/31. And Mark, anyways, thanks

very much for your time and expertise. Anywhere else people can connect with you online besides dumbrunner.com and markremy.com?

Mark Remy: Oh, gosh. Those are the two biggies. You know, you can find my columns in "Runner's World" magazine, of course. Eventually, they're archived on runnersworld.com. You can also find my older "Remy's World" online columns, which is like seven and a half years worth of online columns I did for "Runner's World" are still there someplace if you search for 'em. But yeah, dumbrunner.com, markremy.com, and you can find links on both those sites to my social feeds as well.

Mark Kennedy: Awesome. Well, thanks again, Mark.

Mark Remy: Thank you very much. I appreciate it.

Announcer: Thanks for listening to the Healthynomics podcast at www.healthynomics.com.