

New York

# runner

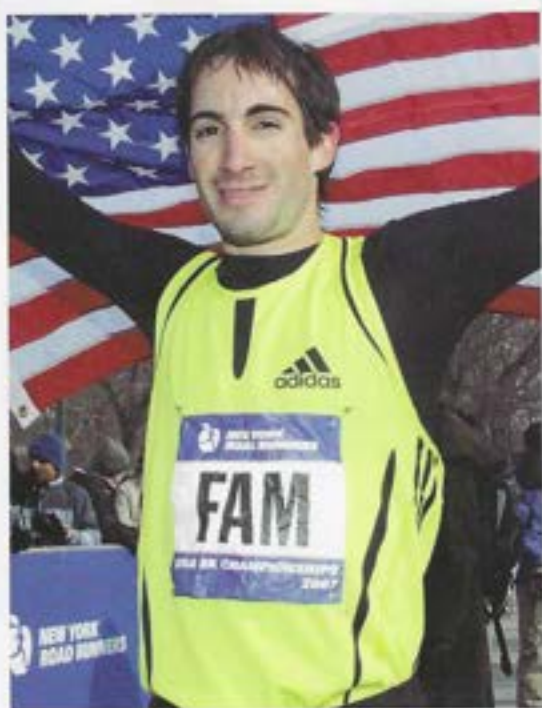
35

**Famiglietti  
Takes USA 8K  
Championships**

24 **Salute to  
Allan Steinfeld**

30 **Yes, you can make  
a comeback**

44 **How, where, and  
why to run at lunch**



HALF-  
More MARATHON

7050

## Why Are You Running?

*How to set a goal for your training and racing so you can achieve success*

by Mindy Salkin

How many times have you finished a training run or even a race only to say to yourself, "Gee, I wish I would have done better?" But what does better really mean? Perhaps you wanted a faster overall finish time, a higher age group place, or thought you'd zip through your best mile more quickly than you did.

**With a clearly stated goal, a defined baseline, a plan, a support team, and a positive attitude, you'll find more enjoyment and success in running.**

The fact is, going through the motions of being a road runner—that is, training and even completing races—can be unfulfilling and disappointing without a goal. With a specific objective, you'll bring focus not only to competition, but also to daily training runs. A well-defined goal will identify the baseline from which you're starting, help you organize a plan, and set intermediate goals that will help you reach your ultimate target. Well-thought-out goals will help you find rewards in your effort as well as the final outcome.

Setting goals can impact your entire life in a positive way. If you create a "who, what, where, when, and how" blueprint for reaching your goal—and write it down—you will be more likely to achieve your goals and become a more successful runner.

### MAKE YOUR GOAL WORK

**Write it down.** If all you do is talk or think about your goal, it will never become reality: You need to write it down. Use a tool that you are comfortable with and enjoy. For example, if you work best when you log info on a computer, use Excel or find another calendar or project management software. If writing is pleasurable

for you, then write your goals in a paper notebook or journal—use colored pens or pencils and let your inner artist shine.

**Establish your baseline.** Your baseline should be current and quantifiable—a set of numbers. Established this way, you'll have something specific to refer to and, in months or years, you'll be able to see clearly where you started and what you've accomplished. A goal that looked daunting and insurmountable will be proven doable. Once your goals are reached, you can determine new baselines and the system will continue to take you to a higher level. For instance, depending on your goals, you may record:

- PRs (personal records) at certain distances
- Miles run per week
- Dress or pant size
- Blood pressure
- Cholesterol level

**Set your goals and create a timeline.** Start with your ultimate goal and work backward, creating process objectives or mini-goals along the way. These mini-goals should not be set in stone; after all, goal-setting is a work in progress and you need to be prepared to deal with obstacles along the way. But your goals should be challenging, believable, realistic, and achievable. Here's an example:

- Ultimate goal: Run NYRR New York Mini 10K (June 9) in 60 minutes.
- Mini-goal #1: Run four times per week during May.
- Mini-goal #2: Lower blood pressure to 120/80 by May 15.
- Mini-goal #3: Drop a dress or pant size by June 1.

**The greater "why."** Beyond your health and fitness goals, it is important to determine why you are devoting yourself to running. For example, you might be looking for:

- Improved self-esteem
- Stress management
- A group of friends with similar interests
- A disciplined routine

**Create your support system.** In order to achieve your goals, you'll need a network that you can depend on for support. It helps to have different kinds of support, such as:



Mindy Salkin is owner and head coach of The Running Center in New York City.

- Professional support: coach, personal trainer, nutritionist, physical therapist, massage therapist, sports medicine physician
- Personal support: family, friends, teammates
- Training system: A written training schedule—determined by you, a coach, or an online program—to make you accountable and credible.

**Use positive affirmations and imagery.** Use positive self-talk and high-energy images to keep you focused. See yourself running like a cheetah with grace and speed. Visualize yourself as a strong and able person moving through life. The language you use is important. In my years as a coach, I've found that a person's chance of success in meeting their goal is directly related to their mental attitude and the self-talk they use. Change your language and you could change your outcome as well. For example:

If you say	Then your chance of success will be
I won't	0%
I can't	10%
I don't know how	20%
I wish I could	30%
I want to	40%
I think I might	50%
I will try	60%
I think I can	70%
I can	80%
I will	90%
I did	100%

With a clearly stated goal, a defined baseline, a plan, a support team, and a positive attitude, you'll find more enjoyment and success in running—and in every aspect of life. ■