

## A Run Story for Any Size

By Dronile Hiraldo

When Jessica Provencher started running on the treadmill in 2012, she never thought she would one day go outside and run. A self-proclaimed “big girl,” Jessica started running on the treadmill to build healthy habits and keep active. In 2013, she surprised herself and began running outside when she started hearing more and more people rave about the joys of outdoor running. For 4-5 days out of the week, Jessica made it a point to run 9K solely for the pleasure of being and running outside. After gaining confidence in her running Jessica decided to sign up for her first race—a half-marathon in Montreal—in 2014. “As I got ready for the race, I was doing long runs over the half-distance nearly two months out.” It was then she changed her registration, daring to make the marathon distance her first.

Upon finishing her second Marathon in 2015, Jessica decided she would try for the 2016 TCS New York City Marathon, her third, on November 6<sup>th</sup>. “My goal is to run 1 marathon per year for as long as I can.” Jessica reveals. Her motivation? “I really admire people who are in their 60s and 70s and still running. If I want to be one of those people, I ask, how do I get there?” She explains her identity growing up revolved around her obesity, but exercising helped changed her perspective. Jessica started her blog, [Marathonea](#), to help keep a log of her running and has inspired friends and acquaintances with her love for running. “I’m really focusing on progress in my running.”

To help train for her upcoming trip to New York for the 2016 TCS New York City Marathon, Jessica has been including a lot of resistance training in her plan. “I’m learning to really love hills.” Jessica declares. She started running on very flat terrain in Montreal, but have found her strong legs help give her an edge while racing on hills. Her current residence in Ottawa, Canada’s capital, is near a park winding all the way into downtown. “Every day I’m running in a forest. It’s really amazing.”

While the starting line at her first marathon felt foreign and out of reach, Jessica feels confident going into her Staten Island start. Encouraged by the PRs in her recent races—last spring saw her finish her first-marathon in under 2.5 hours—and training runs, Jessica is enjoying the benefits of running. “I love using Marathons as something I can be proud of.” She comments, adding the reason she blogs about her running is because she wants to look back and see her traces. “What I really want people to see is you can still be big and overweight, and be physically active and healthy.”