

I AM NOT A JOGGER

John "The Penguin" Bingham

I AM A RUNNER

because my runs have names. I do temporuns and threshold runs and fartlek runs. I do long, slow runs and track workouts. My runs are defined, even if my abs are not.

I AM A RUNNER

because my shoes are training equipment, not a fashion statement. The best shoe for me is the one that makes me a better runner. I choose the shoe that goes with my running mechanics, not my running outfit.

I AM A RUNNER

because I don't have running outfits. I have technical shirts and shorts and socks. I have apparel that enhances the experience of running by allowing me to run comfortably. I can say "Coolmax" and "Gore-Tex" in the same sentence and know which does what.

I AM A RUNNER

because I know what effort feels like, and I embrace it. I know when I'm pushing the limits of my comfort and why I'm doing it. I know that heavy breathing and an accelerated heart rate--things I once avoided--are necessary if I want to be a better runner.

I AM A RUNNER

because I value and respect my body. It will whisper to me when I've done too much. And if I choose to listen to that whisper, my body won't have to scream in pain later on.

I AM A RUNNER

because I am willing to lay it all on the line. I know that every finish line has the potential to lift my spirits to new highs or devastate me, yet I line up anyway.

I AM A RUNNER

because I know that despite my best efforts, I will always want more from myself. I will always want to know my limits so that I can exceed them.

I AM A RUNNER

because I run. Not because I run fast. Not because I run far.

I AM A RUNNER

because I say I am. And no one can tell me I'm not.

Waddle on, friends.