

Essay: How do you meet the requirements listed and what role has running played in your life? (350-500 words)

To be a runner, it is almost a prerequisite that you be at least slightly off your rocker. Why else would you subject yourself to miles upon miles and hours after hours of running? Any other person in their right mind would just do some squats or go for a hike—anything but running in a circle for no apparent reason. Not to mention the problems that any seasoned runner has come across in his or her life:

- Blisters
- Cramps
- Chafing
- Insatiable hunger
- More blisters
- Cotton mouth
- Emergency mid-run bathroom breaks
- Post-run chills
- Blisters on top of your other blisters
- Knee pains
- Ankle pains
- Lower body pains in general
- Mother Nature (98°, -10°, rain, hail, snow, night)
- Chafing due to popped blisters
- Inconsiderate drivers
- The Wall
- Did I mention blisters?

Put like that, it's a wonder I've ever run at all, regardless of how far.

However, it's because of these problems running is such an amazing sport. Not only do you have to be physically strong to run nine miles in weather so cold it hurts to breathe and your eyelashes freeze, you have to be mentally strong as well. When the lazy (and sane) part of my brain lists a million reasons to stop running, I force myself to list a million and one reasons as to why I need to keep going. Not to mention there is no feeling in the world quite like that after having just finished a hard run. It makes me feel invincible. If I can battle rain and puddles and the splashes of oncoming cars and live to tell about it, what can't I do?

Running has taught me so much; more than just how to layer clothing and the correct lace tension in my shoes so that my feet won't slip around. I have learned self-control. I have applied this mental strength to more than just tackling daunting hills in my life. From everything to doing homework, other sports, and independent projects, running has taught me that, while hard work is no fun, if I concentrate and work through all the pain and the voices telling me to stop, my effort will pay off. By applying the concentration I have learned while running to community service, my academics, and personal aspects of my life, I have discovered that all it

takes to succeed at my endeavors is a little bit of perseverance and elbow grease (even if it is metaphorical). But when times get tough and work piles up and it seems like I'll never get my life back in order, I've found a wonderful stress reliever that always helps me relax and gives me some time to sort out my problems. That's right, when life is hard I run from my problems (literally).

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