

Growing up, there was never a moment when I was still. Jumping, running, skipping, and tumbling through my life made my parents joke about taking their "puppy" out for exercise. Movement without purpose was my way of relating to the world.

When I was a child I was far too shy to participate in organized sports, so I made do by running around in my backyard, jumping over logs and off swings. In middle school I joined the cross-country team. Though I loved the team, I found it unfortunate that nobody wanted to have conversations with me while we were in a race. I thought it was fun to run and chat and just enjoy ourselves. That is what running has always been about for me; an experience that I can enjoy.

Entering high school, I joined a variety of new sports including the track team. Track is the season I look forward to the most because it doesn't require me to learn any crazy skills with sticks and pucks and balls and zone strategies with a million different components. Track is the sport that I am the best at because I've been practicing my whole life. Meets thrill me. I run as hard as I can for a specific distance and afterwards I feel so proud of myself for the burn in my muscles and the stitch in my side. Running makes me feel truly alive.

Something I did have to learn when I joined track was how to hurdle. The days of jumping over sticks and lawn furniture were over, and I was faced with new words and ideas that seemed very foreign. Lead leg, trail leg, four-stepping. I didn't know what any of it meant, but I was determined to learn. Hurdling combines many different ways of moving that I enjoy. Sprinting, jumping, and leaping to be precise. Over the past four years I have built up my skills in the 100 and 300 meter hurdles. I am very proud of how far I have come and I am committed to improving.

Running has allowed me to excel in other sports - I play midfield in field hockey because I can run up and down the field all day with glee. I almost always beat opponents in a race to a stray ball. Sports have helped me to make friends, stay healthy, compete, and release my stress. Why sit still when there are so many possibilities waiting for me?

In college, I won't need to try-out or understand the definition of intramural in order to run. I can go out by myself or with friends any time and do what I love. I know that each time it will make my body feel good, boost my mood, and take my mind off anything that may be bothering me. Running is a tool I can use to excel and to enjoy myself in college.