



KELLY HAS BEEN ATTENDING NOVEMBER PROJECT WORKOUTS SINCE 2015. SHE SAYS, "I NEVER THOUGHT THAT RUNNING FULL OUT IN THE HARVARD STADIUM OR HOLLYWOOD BOWL COULD BE FUN. BUT IT IS, BECAUSE THE TRIBE MAKES IT FUN."

Kelly Roberts is on a mission to teach the punning community to love their bodies, minds and selfies too.

by Caitlyn Pilkington
with Kelly Roberts and Josh Maio
photography by James Farrell

Let Me Take a Selfie



Once upon a time, a runner named *Kelly Roberts* took some stealth selfies with attractive men in the background during a half marathon to make her sister laugh.



The story went viral after posting them on Instagram with the hashtag #hotguysofthenychalf. Then she started a blog that many runners might know—Run, Selfie, Repeat. Then she took off her shirt and created #sportsbrasquad, a movement motivating other women to feel comfortable baring their bellies on the run. Then she came damn close to qualifying for the Boston Marathon during #BQorBust, when she shared honest videos explaining the good, bad and very ugly of marathon training.

But it's not Kelly's addictive energy, impressive speed or boldness in shedding clothes on the run that she's most praised for—it's the message behind her madness.

"I spend so much time encouraging women to put in the work and love the skin they're in," says Roberts, who has accrued 50,000 Instagram followers along the way. "[But] I realized I'm doing everyone a disservice by just stopping there. That's only half the battle; the other half is doing everything you can to work toward the healthiest and strongest tomorrow."

Fit Like 'On Your Body

Roberts delivers her body-love message through movements like the #sportsbrasquad. "I didn't realize the importance of it until I took some time off [from running]. I felt so ashamed in my own skin. I just lost some muscle mass. How do you learn to love the skin you're in when you're not 100 percent training? You can't [train] all your life." Since her first shirt-shedding post in summer 2016, Roberts continues to try to "draw a circle around how I feel and force myself to ditch my shirt, because it's always so much less intimidating once I'm in my sports bra."

Roberts also motivated other runner women to pursue their strongest, healthiest selves by very publicly pursuing a Boston qualifying (BQ) time at last year's Chicago Marathon, where she missed by just 5 minutes in her first attempt. She tried once more at this year's London Marathon, falling short but finishing the race. Combining her knack for humor and directness, she showed every person how rewarding and devastating it can be to chase a sky-high goal.

Roberts says she is shelving her BQ dreams for now, shifting her focus onto her work to lift others up. She explains, "We've been shown what it means to be desirable and beautiful. I think honestly that's one of my favorite parts about running; strength is not tied to a number on the scale. I can have stomach rolls and muscles, because I feel like I'm the best version of myself when I'm aware of how much of myself I'm giving to a goal. That goal isn't to be skinny; that goal is to kick ass and take names."

Future Snapshots

Roberts hasn't always been so sure of herself as an athlete. The Oiselle-sponsored runner admits there was a time that she felt "I was at a party I wasn't invited to because of my shape, or because I wasn't a serious runner," after receiving comments and emails from followers regarding her "stupid" selfies. However, it's thanks to this very humor, authenticity and, yes, shape that her voice touches so many fans.

The Run, Selfie, Repeat community has now expanded from one selfie to one "badass lady gang," and Roberts has started a podcast sharing her blog's name—with a second show on the way. Roberts also plans to bring her humor to life through a self-help book targeted toward a younger generation. "I think it's important to share your shame. It's easy to look at what I've been through and think it happened overnight. And it didn't."

Through all this, her larger goal is to push the conversation forward of how we think about body image and inclusivity across running. Roberts believes progress has been made—but there's still a long way to go: "I think if we were running a marathon we would be hitting 5K."

Two Plans Are Better Than One

The main purpose of these training plans, provided by Roberts and her coach, Josh Maio (also the co-founder of Gotham City Runners), is to inspire beginners to do the (seemingly) impossible and motivate veterans to aim for their strongest 5K. Roberts says, "What do you have to lose? Write that down. It will feel so much less impossible or scary or intimidating. Ask yourself what failing means."

She explains, "I thought the second I started treating training almost like a job, it would ruin the magic. But when I found Josh Maio, I realized I was wrong. He knows how to listen just as much as he knows how to give you a good Disney movie motivational speech. He just cares."

For Roberts, enjoying the workouts is key—even if it takes a few tries before you're loving it. "Your training plan should push you outside of your comfort zone, but it shouldn't be boring." If this is your first rodeo, or you're getting your legs back underneath you after time off, the "beginner" plan is for you, says Maio. If you've been running consistently and want to push yourself—maybe go for a PR—the "strongest" plan is for you. And don't worry—the Kelly-isms along the way will make you feel confident, able and maybe even a little pumped to tackle a new workout.

Check @WomensRunningMagazine and @KellyKRoberts on Instagram this summer as we all train together, culminating in a virtual 5K for everyone!



Your First 5K Plan for Beginners

WEEK 1

MONDAY

2-min jog/2-min walk
Repeat for 20 total min



Here we go! Rule #1: This will not be easy, and your attitude is everything. The hardest part is taking the first step—after today, the hardest part is behind us! Repeat “I can do this” over and over and over again until 2 minutes are up. Then smile and get ready to repeat.

TUESDAY

Rest

WEDNESDAY

CROSS-TRAIN: 30 min on elliptical or stationary bike
If you're scratching your head or thinking to yourself, “I don't know where to find any of those machines,” find a yoga, barre or Pilates tutorial on YouTube!

THURSDAY

Rest

FRIDAY

CROSS-TRAIN: 35 min on elliptical or stationary bike

SATURDAY

3-min jog/2 min-walk
Repeat for 30 min total
Welcome to run #2! Today, we're adding a minute onto your run. Don't panic; you can do anything for 3 minutes.

SUNDAY

Rest

WEEK 2

MONDAY

2 x (3-min jog/90-sec walk + 4-min jog/3-min walk)

Use your recovery to really reset for the next repetition of running. If you're struggling, focus on taking controlled breaths. Try to smile. Believe in yourself!

TUESDAY

Rest

WEDNESDAY

CROSS-TRAIN: 40 min on elliptical or stationary bike

THURSDAY

Rest

FRIDAY

CROSS-TRAIN: 40 min on elliptical or stationary bike

SATURDAY

3 x (4-min jog/2-min walk + 5-min jog/3-min walk)



If you like to listen to music while you run, reach for a playlist that puts you in an incredible mood. I know 5 minutes of running sounds impossible. It's going to be tough. Take it minute by minute and focus on running strong. I believe in you!

SUNDAY

Rest

WEEK 3

MONDAY

1-mile jog, 6 x (2-min light sprints/3-min walk),
1-mile jog



REMAIN CALM. Yes, that's a 1-mile jog. It's not about how fast you go; it's about celebrating that you are brave enough to do it. After 1 mile, we're adding light pickups. This isn't Usain Bolt—just push yourself a tiny bit harder.

TUESDAY

Rest

WEDNESDAY

2 x (1.5-mile jog/3-min walk)
Scary workout time! But you can do this. All you have to do is give this your best effort. Will you turn into a pumpkin if you don't make it 1.5 miles? Nope! Every step forward is a win.

THURSDAY

Rest

FRIDAY

CROSS-TRAIN: 40 min on elliptical or stationary bike

SATURDAY

Jog 20 min without walking, and try for 30 min total
Magical things happen when you give yourself permission to succeed. Yes, fear and doubt will be loud today. So lean into it. Just see what happens.

SUNDAY

Rest

WEEK 4

MONDAY

2 x (1.5-mile jog/3-min walk) + 0.5-mile
Before we get started this week, think about how far you've come. Remember when this felt impossible?

TUESDAY

Rest

WEDNESDAY

CROSS-TRAIN: 30–45 min on elliptical or stationary bike

THURSDAY

Rest

FRIDAY

CROSS-TRAIN: 35 min on elliptical or stationary bike

SATURDAY

Jog 15 min to loosen before Race Day



Today is all about getting excited for tomorrow's 5K, so focus on keeping it easy and enjoying every minute.

SUNDAY

RACE DAY

Today isn't a test, it's a day to show off just how hard you've worked. Whenever you feel nervous, remind yourself how strong you are. Whenever you have doubts, ask yourself: What are you running for? As far as I'm concerned, you have already won.

Your Strongest 5K Plan With a Goal Pace

WEEK 1

MONDAY

1 mile + 6 x (2-min pickup @GP/3-min jog) + 1 mile



What's GP? Excellent question! It's goal pace, or the pace per mile for your 5K. Let's say you want to run 5K in 25 minutes. Your GP is 8 min/mile. Just see what happens!

TUESDAY

Rest

WEDNESDAY

Easy 4-5 mile run

THURSDAY

1 mile easy + 3-mile progression + 1 mile easy
When you hit 1 mile, check out your pace. From there, you're going to try to take 15 seconds per mile off for the next 3 miles. So if you ran a 9-minute mile for mile 1, that means mile 2 is going to be 8:45, then 8:30 and finally 8:15. Take "fast" out of your vocabulary and replace it with "strong." You can do it.

FRIDAY

Rest

SATURDAY

Easy 5-6 miles w/ last mile @GP
Nothing bad will happen if you give it 100 percent and finish slower. It's week 1!

SUNDAY

CROSS-TRAIN: 40 min on elliptical or stationary bike Pilates or yoga work too!

WEEK 2

MONDAY

1 mile + 6 x (3-min pickup @GP/2-min jog) + 1 mile

TUESDAY

Rest

WEDNESDAY

Easy 4-5 miles
Easy day! Whoool!

THURSDAY

1 mile easy + 4 miles w/ 1 min @GP on the mile mark and relaxed pace for the rest of the mile
Make the decision not to suffer. When your watch beeps "1 mile," push for 1 minute, then catch your breath until you hit 2 miles. The key is to stay present.

FRIDAY

Rest

SATURDAY

Easy 6-7 miles



Take a moment to celebrate the fact that this run is whatever you'd like it to be. Dance it out on street corners or take in the scenery. We're almost halfway to our goal! Run with joy and gratitude.

SUNDAY

CROSS-TRAIN: 45 min on elliptical or stationary bike

WEEK 3

MONDAY

1 mile + 4-5 x (800 meters @GP/20-sec rest) + 1 mile
Head to a track (2 laps = 800m) or mark 0.5 miles on your watch!

TUESDAY

Rest

WEDNESDAY

Easy 5 miles

THURSDAY

1 mile easy + 4 miles w/ 1 min @GP at mile 1 + 2 min @GP at mile 2 + 3 min @GP at mile 3 + 4 min @GP at mile 4 + 1 mile easy



Here we go. The progression runs are getting fiercer, but you know the drill. Think of this like we're building an ice cream sundae. Week 1 was the ice cream and now we're adding some chocolate fudge! Use the cool-down to either celebrate your courage or your life choices. Either way, you survived the workout like a boss!

FRIDAY

Rest

SATURDAY

Easy 7-8 miles
Let's all take a second to laugh at 7 miles being considered an easy run. #Perspective

SUNDAY

Easy 30-35 min

WEEK 4

MONDAY

CROSS-TRAIN: 40 min on elliptical or stationary bike

TUESDAY

Rest

WEDNESDAY

1 mile + 4-5 x (400 meters @GP/90-sec recovery walk or jog) + 1 mile
Before you have flashbacks to high school when you'd hide in a bush to avoid getting out of the timed mile (oh, is that just me?), take a few moments to breathe. It takes practice to get your pacing down, but try to focus on the straight or curve you're in. Run strong!

THURSDAY

Easy 4 miles

FRIDAY

Rest

SATURDAY

Jog 25-30 min to loosen legs

SUNDAY

RACE DAY (!!!!)



Believe in yourself. Whenever you feel intimidated by your goal, remember that you're ready. Go out there and run!

