



# Getting Back in the Game

By Brian K. Sims

*After getting in the best shape of my life at the end of last year, I did an interesting thing. I stopped working out completely.*

*Last year I decided that I was going to become a Runner (see "Am I a Runner Yet" PhillyFit Sept/Oct 2006). I decided that I wanted to join the ranks of the leaner, fitter, healthier (and hopefully happier) among us who regularly pound the sidewalks, trails, and streets of Philadelphia. I wanted to be a Runner, and in November I took a serious step (well several thousand of them) towards that goal by finishing the Philadelphia Marathon. I even had a respectable time.*

**Then it happened. At the height of my running peak, I stopped!**

I stopped eating well, stopped feeling good, and stopped looking good. I'm still not entirely certain what caused my retreat. I've told myself several times that the long runs leading up to the marathon, the three hours spent traversing the city mile after mile, wore me down. Perhaps the time my weekday runs were taking up was simply too valuable. I even thought that I was just "taking a break" before getting back in the saddle.

**Instead, my horse ran off without me.**

So what's a former Runner (if even just for a few months) to do? To help guide me, and hopefully countless other former runners, I turned to several of Philadelphia's running coaches and trainers for some help. The advice was almost the same across the board and is certainly worth repeating: start slowly!

I was told time after time to start out slowly, take my time, and not to think I can rush back into the type of shape I was

in last November. Luckily, the fit on my running shorts keeps reminding me that I'm definitely not there yet. Overall, however, the advice was very positive and helped motivate me to schedule a few races during the last month.

It's now early summer and I think, "Just maybe, I've got the itch again." No marathons, three hours runs, or endless miles, but maybe just a few organized races. So far I've managed a 5K with my younger sister (her first) a 10K with some friends, and a five mile race that have all gone well. I'll soon be running the Broad Street run and I'm convinced that will be my longest race of the year.

As I have become reacquainted with running, I've learned an incredibly valuable lesson: getting back in the game has less to do with my physical fitness than I previously thought. Not that being in shape isn't one of the most important parts of playing that game, but having the motivation, know-how, and experience to get back out on the street is so much more important.

That's been my experience this spring. What about you? I'm very curious to hear from other runners, from experienced marathoners and rookie recreational runners. I want to know what's motivated you, what's de-motivated you, and what's kept you going? I'd like to follow up in a few months and pass along some of the advice I've gotten, and hopefully share some of my own. Until then, heed the advice of the professionals and take it slow.

***Just be kind if you pass me on the Schuylkill Trail. I'm just getting back in the game.***



Brian K. Sims is an attorney with The Law Offices of Mark. F. Seltzer & Associates, P.C. in Philadelphia, PA and concentrates his practice on Disability Insurance matters nationwide. Mr. Sims is an Associate Editor of the Philadelphia Bar Reporter and regularly reports on activities within the city's legal community. In his spare time he is still trying to become a runner and enjoying everything that Center City Philadelphia has to offer. He can be reached at [bsims@phillyfitmagazine.com](mailto:bsims@phillyfitmagazine.com).