

Today's Thank You Thursday features Dean Thornton. Dean is a hard worker and being a doctor, he loves analyzing his workouts and results in detail. He enjoys road running, but really loves trails. He is the pragmatist of the group and keep us all in line all the while being a wonderful team cheerleader and offering everyone a lot of encouragement! Dean is an important part of the Resolute Running team and for that we say, "Thank You Dr. Thornton!"



*1. Tell us about your running background: when you began and what made you start?*

As I was about to turn 35, I realized I was desperately out of shape. I had always depended on team sports like basketball and softball to keep me in shape. But those weren't enough anymore. So I decided to run a half marathon thinking that would be the motivation I needed to get started. I knew nothing about running, but I trained as best I could. I ran the 2004 Mercedes Half Marathon in 1:58. I really surprised myself by breaking 2 hours. I was so encouraged that I decided to run a marathon later that year. Now I was really out my depth. I arrived at the starting line of the 2004 Atlanta Marathon ill-prepared, under-trained, and overweight. I did finish the race, but I did not have a good experience. I called my wife from my car and said, "Never again."

My running over the next 5 years was sporadic at best. Then, a friend of mine suggested that we run a marathon together. I was on the brink of 40 and barely in any better physical condition than I was at 35. So together we trained for 7 months. Neither of us knew what we were doing. I toed the starting line of the 2009 San Antonio Rock 'N Roll Marathon in better shape, but none the wiser. A hot, humid day spoiled my chance at a good race. But, now I was really determined.

I learned a little more about running and put in even more miles to train for my next 2 marathons. The 4 hour mark had become my white whale. But despite my best efforts, I twice failed to achieve my goal. It finally dawned on me that I could

use some help. Fortune led me to Resolute Running.

*2. What was your "aha" moment when you realized "I'm a runner!"*

Despite running a bunch of races, including several half marathons and marathons, I never considered myself a "real" runner. But 2 years ago, I put in the miles to qualify for the BTC 1200 Mile Club. When I crossed the 1200 mile mark for the year, that's when it hit me that I might, in fact, be a "real" runner.

*3. What made you decide to hire a personal run coach, and join RRTC?*

Pursuit of that elusive sub-4 hour marathon! I needed a plan and someone to help me implement it. I always thought I was a self-motivator, but knowing that there would be someone teaching me and pushing me was just what I needed.

*4. What results have you seen as a member of RRTC?*

I understand so much more about running now. I know the purpose of different runs. I actually do real speed work now. I know how to do a long run. But what I had not expected was the positive effect that having a group of like-minded runners would have on me. Whether through the Facebook group or in person at a training session, I love the way we motivate, inspire, and encourage one another. I thought I had given up team sports by taking up running. I was wrong. Running can be a team sport!

With the help of Resolute Running, I harpooned my white whale last fall. At age 44, I was in the best shape of my life. I am proud to say I ran the 2013 Soldier Marathon in 3:47, a 15 minute PR! Along the way, I set PRs at every other distance from the mile to the half marathon.

For 2014, I am running 7 races in the Southeastern Trail Series, starting with a 10K this spring and ending with a 50K this fall.

*5. That is amazing, Dean! What other services at RRTC do you utilize?*

One thing I use on a regular basis is the Massage Therapy service at RRTC. I'm a big believer in therapeutic massage -- but by someone who understands the needs of athletes. Carol Lewis has helped me recover from a recent bout of IT Band Syndrome.

*6. What is your advice for those considering a personal run coach and RRTC?*

If you have any sort of goal related to running -- breaking a PR, bumping up to a longer distance, getting into shape -- Resolute Running's team approach can help. I've seen people who don't consider themselves runners conquer the

marathon, and I've seen really good runners qualify for Boston. Since I've joined the team, I've never enjoyed running more.