Three topics for my website:

1. Why I run
2. Resources – helpful apps, training plans, nutrition…

**Intro:**

Running has changed my life. I have always been a timid guy who dreams big but keeps it all on the inside, too fearful of what others may think. In fact, in high school I really wanted to try out for sports but had no faith in my own ability to succeed. So, because of fear of failure, I never tried. When basketball or track tryouts came around, I would always ask myself, “I wonder If I could do it?” but then I wouldn’t ever find out. It became a habit to just put things off for the future where I would never change or improve.

Running has given me an opportunity to fight back against those negative voices that tell me I can’t, or that I shouldn’t try. The voices that tell me I’m ok right where I am. The feelings and thoughts that try to convince me I will never be any better than I am right now. My message to everyone is that with consistent effort and firm minds, we can overcome these and other common challenges that try to halt our progress, and ultimately rob our lives of joy, satisfaction, and fulfilment.

**The 50-20:**

In my Senior year, the boy scout program put on an activity called the 50/20, where a participant would walk/run 50 miles in under 20 hours. I don’t really know what drew me in, but for some reason, I had no self-doubt about whether I could do it or not. It almost felt like I was living two different lives, one where I felt completely invisible and incapable at school, and one where I knew I could do anything if I put my mind to it. So, I began the 50-mile adventure with some of my family and friends. The first 25 miles were kind of fun to be honest, (keep in mind I was just walking). Something happened though when all my friends and family decided to stop, and I kept going. I kept telling myself that I was going to finish no matter what. No matter how long it took. By about mile 35 my feet had some serious blisters that made walking very difficult, but I taped them up and kept going on my way. I had amazing leaders in the scouting program that stayed up through the night and brought me ibuprofen and food when I needed it. It was in those quiet moments of walking through the night that I learned that **IMPOSSIBLE THINGS HAPPEN JUST ONE STEP AT A TIME**. At about mile 45 I sat down to eat some food and when I found it almost impossible to start walking again, my legs had cramped up and were in so much pain. When I eventually limped across the finish line it took me about 17 hours! I learned a few things that day: 1. **I CAN DO HARD THINGS** 2. If I wanted to accomplish something big, all it took was a **FEROCIOUS DETERMINATION** and **CONTINUED FOCUS**. And 3. I was not in the best shape at the time, but I learned that I love to push myself physically beyond what I originally thought possible.

**My first half marathon:**

After I had graduated high school, my older brother had been running for a while, and I had this weird and random item on my bucket list to run 100 miles one day. So, I decided to work towards that goal by first training for a half marathon. I couldn’t have imagined what would happen the next couple months as I began my training. I found a simple training plan online and followed it to the tee. I was tired of being undisciplined and afraid, so I decided to stick to the plan no matter what. This was the time where I really learned to love running. I would wake up early before work and drive to the canyon which was close by and run on the paved trail with the beautiful views of the mountains, and the river running next to me. The process of training for this race changed me. It made me more disciplined in almost all other aspects of my life. I gained greater overall happiness in life from exercising almost every day. And I started believing in myself more and more. When the race came, I ended up running way too fast in the beginning and was in so much pain towards the end because I tried to run faster than I had trained for and ended up running it slower than I had hoped. But that’s a lesson for another day. After this race, I trained for a marathon which had much the same effect, and a 50 mile ultramarathon.

**Trail running and the Bryce Canyon 50-mile ultramarathon:**

Let me preface this with the fact that I was not as well prepared for this race as I had hoped and had to walk for a good chunk of it. I’m sharing this to describe my understanding on how progress in life works. In preparation for my eventual 100 mile race, earlier this year I decided to begin training for a 50 mile ultramarathon. An ultramarathon is just any race event that is a greater distance than a marathon, or 26.2 miles. My older brother also wanted to run 50 miles, and we started together. By about mile 25 his legs were cramping badly. This course climbs about 7000 feet in elevation so it’s hard on the legs. For some reason, I don’t have problems with cramping muscles, so at about this time I left him and was on my own. This was difficult for me and took me back to when I was walking in the 50/20 alone. I had to keep talking to myself people who passed me probably thought I was crazy. Starting at about mile for at least a good 8 miles I simply walked because I was feeling sorry for myself and just kept focusing on the pain. This is when I learned the next lesson, **DON’T FOCUS ON THE PAIN**! Towards the end of the race I saw a man who looked like he needed some medical help. He was sitting when I saw him, but then he stood when he saw me and tried to keep walking. He was shaking badly. He said “I think I need some medical attention”, knowing that I didn’t know how to help him, I responded “I’ll go up ahead let someone know.” and just like that, I began running once again. I don’t know what was happening, it was like someone took all the pain away and I was able to just run. For about a mile and a half, and with some of the most brutal elevation gain on the course, I ran to tell someone who could help, that there was a man who needed help. When I finally got to the aid station to tell one of the workers, It’s like all that energy left me and I no longer was running as fast. I don’t know what happened to that man, but I was told they would go find and help him. After this I was still running, but couldn’t move very fast at all. I walked a lot, but finished soon after. It took 14 gruesome hours. I honestly couldn’t believe what had happened. There were so many lessons to be learned, the chief one among them was **WHEN WE FOCUS ON HELPING OTHERS, OUR PAIN IS RELIEVED.** My brother was pretty upset that he didn’t finish, but he made it 45 miles in agonizing pain as the muscles in his legs cramped up again and again. He is determined to beat me in his next race though. This truly was an experience I will never forget, and one that makes me excited for future races. Although once again I didn’t do as well as I had hoped because I got in my head and started focusing on myself, I learned some things that will help me improve in my next race.

**Why I run:**

I could be wrong, but I believe that everyone of us wants to see what we’re truly capable of. And that can be a scary thing working towards something new because fear of discomfort and failure make it hard to want to try. But I’ve learned that the fear of the pain and discomfort are only required barriers to the joy and satisfaction that come when working towards something and eventually achieving it. I run because It makes me a better person. I run because frankly, my life is too comfortable. We live in a time of so much convenience that I believe we need to sometimes create inconvenience. Life is more fulfilling that way. I’m not suggesting that everyone should run, but I do believe that everyone needs something to ground them in their lives, something to go back to again and again and again. Something to work on and improve. and running is a fantastic option. It’s this process that excites me and makes me want to chase my dreams. No matter how impossible they are or how unqualified I am. I have learned so much from consistently running. I still struggle some days to have the desire to run, but on those days especially when I do it anyway are the days when I grow the most.

**Resources:**

Maybe you’re wondering how you can get started, or how you can begin improving your life.

I strongly recommend running to most people. I am far from a professional, but the change it has had on my life is reason enough to recommend it to others. That being said, running is not for everyone, and not everybody would have the same experience as I did. But here are a few options for running that could help for anyone who is interested:

* Here’s a link to a 5k training plan and a lot of information on where to start: <https://www.runnersworld.com/uk/training/5km/a760067/six-week-beginner-5k-schedule/>
* This is a very helpful app for tracking and sharing your workouts: <https://www.strava.com/mobile>