

## Running Forward!

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**F**orty-two kilometers (or 26.2 miles) . . . Wow, I admire these people who somehow manage to run that long! That is the kind of idea that really excites me, and I have always dreamed about it, “Maybe one day, I will become a marathoner, too.” At least, that is what I used to think. . .

My name is Isabelle, I am a 43 year old full time working mother of three beautiful children (15, 13 and 9 years old). I have been practicing as a pediatric physical therapist for the past 20 years.

Like many of us, and probably more than ever now, I have been trying as best as I can to find the optimal balance between my family, my professional life, social activities, and opportunities for personal interests or accomplishments. Does that sound familiar to you?

Anyway, one of the key elements working for me in order to keep a modestly successful, and functional ‘mental-physical-emotional’ equilibrium, has been sports. As we already know, the multiple benefits of physical activity for the well-being of the human race have been proven before. My point here is just to state that I belong to this category of people who became addicted to it; I started competitive triathlon training 9 years ago and without running, swimming, or biking, my body and mind can go downhill quickly. Whether you train and compete at an amateur or professional level, the greatest challenge for any athlete is to stay injury-free. Well, I failed.

About 4 years ago, during a triathlon race I injured my right hip. Wishfully thinking, I tried to convince myself that it was nothing serious. Driven by this well-known addictive physiological and mental need to work out, I very wrongly continued to train for weeks after the race. “It’s ok, I have a high pain tolerance,” I kept believing, “I’ll rest for 2 or 3 weeks and I’ll be fine.” I trained on and off for months until, out of huge frustrations, I had to accept the seriousness of the problem and decided to take action.

This was the beginning of a series of medical investigations including back/pelvis x-rays, arthrograms, osseous scintigraphy, CT-scans, and MRI. I consulted with a couple of orthopedic specialists (for a first and second opinion), a chiropractor (specializing in sports injuries and who works with the national US Triathlon Team) and finally with a physician specialized in sports medicine. None of the tests mentioned above revealed any clear structural abnormalities, nor soft tissue damages. Stress fracture, bony lesion, labral tear, discs compression, lumbar discal-radicular conflict, spinal stenosis, spondylolysis were all ruled out. However, a few diagnoses were given to me including hip impingement syndrome, piriformis syndrome, sciatic chronic pain, degenerative arthritis of the hip joint, and chronic tendinitis of the hip flexors.



Isabelle Renard-Fontaine

As far as treatment, I started with the chiropractor for a few sessions of manual therapy (spinal adjustments) and the use of the Graston method (technique that aims at breaking scar tissues from inflammation located in muscles or around tendons) in addition to a Home Exercise Program (progressive strengthening). This was also combined with the traditional ultra sound and electrical stimulation modalities to reduce pain and inflammation. I felt better but only temporarily. I then tried the Deep Tendon Release (DTR) method for a few visits which I loved very much. However, each time I attempted to resume running, the hip pain (and sometimes lower back pain, too) would reappear immediately. At one point (18 months after the onset of the problem), I agreed to try a cortisone injection into the hip capsule, at least to find out if this was the accurate location of the pain but it did not provide any pain relief. Intermittent complete rest periods were somewhat successful but as soon as I would resume running (or swimming or biking), the pain returned.

As a physical therapist myself, I knew by then that my issues had to be related to misalignment, inadequate posture and/or a possible lack of freedom of movements in my pelvis and lower back. I really had to figure out what was the underlying cause. I went to see a friend of mine, an excellent physical therapist who is also an anatomy professor at St. Augustine University. After assessing my posture and range of motion, one of his conclusions was that I had abnormally limited extension in my lumbar spine (almost no anterior pelvic tilt). He treated me for 8 visits using pretty much a traditional physical therapy approach. I think we got closer to the issue but something was still missing. . .

It had been 2 years and 4 months since the injury. I was so far away from that time when I used to picture myself running a marathon. Nevertheless, at 41 years old I could not accept that I was going to be forced to quit running, biking, or swimming for good. . . no way!

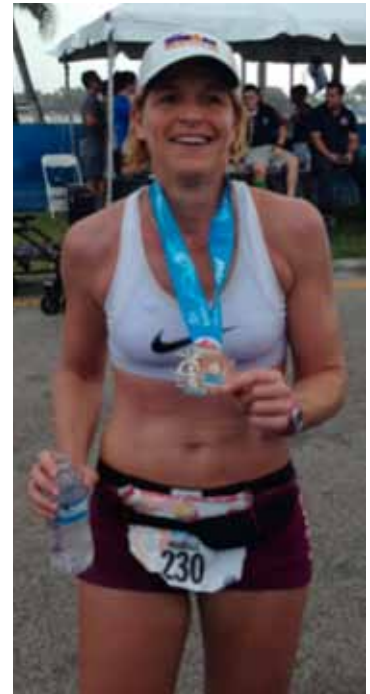
Meanwhile, on the professional side, my colleagues (2 pediatric OT's) and I were talking about continuing education. As therapists, we always hope to find 'the' super exciting class from which we come back with novelties, new strategies and 'tricks' allowing us to better treat our young patients.

Well, after hearing about it from a community support group for children with special needs (Bridge To Healing in West Palm Beach, Florida), I attended in June 2011 a course named: *Postural & Dynamic Neurosensory-motor Reflex Integration*. This was my very first introduction to Dr. Masgutova's method!

At the end of this 4 day class, my colleagues and I went through a clear emotional burst. I still clearly remember the excitement of becoming aware of the concept of Reflex Integration but yet this was an incredibly overwhelming feeling. For sure, my expectation of learning new 'tricks' was way more than exceeded. I had no idea at that time, but this course was going to change my life (and I mean all aspects of it) in the most positive way I could have ever hoped for!

After allowing myself several months to digest this newly acquired knowledge, I took a second class, followed by a third, a fourth, and quite a few others. (The more you learn about the Masgutova techniques, the more you find out how much more you need to learn.) Yes, it is completely addictive, you can't just get enough of it! And I will not even start describing the impact on your limbic system (emotional regulation center) when you start getting involved in the Family Conferences. In summary, after 20 years of being a 'traditional' pediatric physical therapist, a whole new world opened to me and I saw an amazing chance to become a more efficient therapist providing greater positive changes in my patients' lives.

My mind was so set on a professional focus (it was about me being a therapist) that it took me a little longer to finally wonder if that Reflex Integration approach could also be effective in the treatment of sport injuries? Could this all possibly be good for myself (as the patient)? "What reflexes would be most likely involved in hip/lower back issues?" I asked Dr. Masgutova at the end of a class in September 2012. Led by her unlimited innate desire to help people, before I realized what was happening to me, she had me lying down on the massage



Isabelle, back in the game.

table. With Dr. Masgutova on one side and Pamela Curlee on the other, I could feel their four 'golden hands' sensing and addressing my body's struggles (for one hour). I felt like I had won the lottery ticket that night! I also felt changes in my body and most importantly, I received some answers to my questions; I needed to work, at least, on Core Tendon Guard, Spinal Perez, Trunk Extension, and Foot Tendon Guard reflexes.

My next obstacle then was how was I going to do this? These techniques were still new to me and I did not have access to a MNRI® specialist or anyone trained to work on me.

It was not until March 2013, when I attended the MNRI® Archetype Movement Integration course that I realized how much I could actually accomplish independently. I learned that archetype movements are the basis for inner control and self-awareness, that they are the foundation of primary movements and the blueprint of all movements (and can be done by one's self). I learned that goal oriented, effective, strong, and harmonious movements could only be possible with a proper balance between flexion and extension, stretching and contracting, pushing and pulling. I learned all the techniques, and how to work on the 8 Archetype Motor Patterns (actively) and which pattern serves as the basis for the development of what specific reflexes.

From that day, I rigorously performed my Archetype Movements in addition to a couple other reflex re-patterning (i.e. Foot Tendon Guard, Bauer Crawl, Segmental Rolling) on my own and every day. I was able to feel 'pleasant' changes quickly and gradually I resumed swimming, biking, and running.

"Truly, did I just run 3 miles without pain?" I would ask myself. "I should try 4 miles next time." By June 2013, I was enjoying more frequent and longer runs, up to 50 minutes! My body was most likely slowly and properly integrating some important reflex patterns allowing more effective and logical movements during my runs.

On December 7, 2013 one of my long-time dreams became true. After battling my hip injury and being forced to discontinue running for over 2 and a half years, I started it all over again. Without the Masgutova

Neurosensorimotor Reflex Integration® method (as well as the strong support of my husband and children), I would not have been able to claim this. I reached a very special finish line 42 kilometers away from the starting point. It took me 4 hours and 30 minutes of enjoyment mixed with deep digging before I realized with the greatest emotion that I had just ran my very first marathon!

Thank you Dr. Masgutova for your profound understanding of brain development and function!

My next dream is to become an MNRI® Core Specialist!



Isabelle reunited with running.

To be continued...



*Congratulations on using our amazing program to heal yourself! Thanks for your inspiration! Good health and training to you. – MNRI® Team*