



**METRO FITNESS:** When did you start running and what were your reasons?

**MARK BERGER:** I started running about 8 years ago. College got the best of me with eating bad, smoking, and drinking. Shortly out of college, I decided to change my life and running was the vehicle that got me there.

**METRO FITNESS:** Were you athletic at all before you took up running?

**MARK BERGER:** I was an anaerobic athlete as a kid. I played everything from soccer, baseball, football, basketball, and sprinted.

**METRO FITNESS:** Do you remember the first moment you felt "like a runner"?

**MARK BERGER:** The first time I felt like a runner was when I went to LSU lakes and did the 6 mile loop. I knew then I could keep going longer.

**METRO FITNESS:** What's your best way to motivate yourself?

**MARK BERGER:** Signing up for a race is my way to get motivated.

**METRO FITNESS:** What was the last race you did, and how'd it go?

**MARK BERGER:** The last race I did was the Ragnar Relay through the Adirondack Mountains in New York. It is 200 miles divided up by 12 people. We ended up 6th out of 300+ teams.

**METRO FITNESS:** What's next, race wise?

**MARK BERGER:** I am racing Jazz 1/2 Marathon Saturday morning. Yes, the day after Halloween.

**METRO FITNESS:** What, if anything, does your job have in common with running?

**MARK BERGER:** I am a running, triathlon, strength & conditioning, and nutritional coach. I am also a partner in Varsity Sport, director of Happy's Running Club NOLA, and am about to open a indoor cycling and yoga studio called Higherpower Cycle~Yoga. Running and fitness are a big part of my life.

**METRO FITNESS:** What are your lifetime running goals?

**MARK BERGER:** I would like to qualify and then Boston

Marathon. After that, stay healthy, and help others reach their health and fitness goals.

**METRO FITNESS:** Explain your philosophy on diet and nutrition, assuming you have one (and maybe you don't)?

**MARK BERGER:** I am a big proponent of eating fruits, vegetables, and lots of water as my main source of nutrition. I think moderate amounts of lean proteins/healthy fats, sweet potatoes, & healthy grains round out what is needed to fuel your body for endurance running.

**METRO FITNESS:** How about pre and post run nutrition, what do you suggest?

**MARK BERGER:** Everybody is different on what they can stomach before running. I just say keep it light and see what works for you. After, I think you need to eat healthy carbs & protein within 30 minutes to get the best results for recovery.

**METRO FITNESS:** Are you a "follow a training plan to a T" sort of runner? Or a "make it up as you go along" sort?

**MARK BERGER:** I usually write my own workout schedule, but I train with a local group called the Power Milers who help me with my track & speed workouts.

**METRO FITNESS:** Do you run alone, mostly, or with a club or group?

**MARK BERGER:** I usually run in groups. Tues-Power Milers, Wed-Happy's Running Club, Thursday-Varsity Sports, Saturday-Varsity Sports, Sunday-Power Milers

**METRO FITNESS:** What's the coolest place you've ever run?

**MARK BERGER:** New York Marathon is definitely one of the best experiences, but if you have a chance to do a relay, in a incredible place, with 11 people you really like, it is so worth it.

**METRO FITNESS:** If you could deliver one message to every runner reading this - and you can! - what would it be?

**MARK BERGER:** Running is for everyone. It is a part of our history. It is how our ancestors traveled, hunted, and played games. It is the first thing we do when we start to walk, it is a way to relieve stress, stay fit, and a tool to use to socialize with others in a healthy atmosphere. It is as natural as breathing, people can complicate it and get in the way of themselves. Whether you run for 30 seconds or 30 miles, you are a runner. Running is like any other job, skill, or technical ability, if you don't foster it correctly with efficiency, form, and consistency, there will be a law of diminishing returns.

**METRO FITNESS:** Tell us about your new business, Higherpower.

**MARK BERGER:** Higherpower Cycle~Yoga is a state-of-the-art studio with a spectrum of classes to fulfill your fitness needs. Whether a first-timer or seasoned athlete/yogi, you will work up a good sweat, burn those unwanted calories, and reach your individual goals.

Higherpower Fusion Classes will take the two disciplines and combine them for special full body workouts. Located at 514 City Park Ave next to Mopho

