

Editor's Note

There are some inaccuracies in this article Beth would like to correct:

"I was not merely 'down,' but instead I was depressed. For those who have experienced true depression, saying you feel 'down' is grossly misrepresenting the condition. The next errors are directly about the brace: the brace has a spring-like response, it is not 'spring loaded.' Lastly, the brace is made of an intricate, highly complex combination of carbon fiber and kevlar, making it stand out from other bracing options. It is anything but a 'carbon copy.'"

INSPIRATION ■ WOMEN WHO MOVE

Life Changers

"Running changed my life!"

Stories from women runners just like you...

As told to Aubrey Rissler

BETH DELORIA

AGE: 47

GREENSBORO, NC

Community outreach manager

Growing up, my back would hurt from time to time, but I never gave it much thought. It didn't affect my life too much, so I just chalked it up to having a "bad back."

In my 30s, I was completely hooked on marathons. In my first 26.2-mile race ever, I qualified for Boston, and I continued to return to the race year after year. However, after the 2004 Boston Marathon, my back pain started to worsen. One day, it was so severe that I passed out on my kitchen floor. My



**RUNNING
GAVE ME THE
COURAGE**
*to overcome my
physical
handicap*

MY BEST ADVICE

**FALL SEVEN TIMES,
BUT GET UP EIGHT.**

No matter where you are, focus on getting back up. You will never make it through the finish line if you can't get back to the starting line.

friend had to break into my house to get me to the hospital.

The trip to the emergency room turned into a nine-hour surgery to repair previously undiscovered birth defects. Two of my discs had ruptured and, worst of all, a vertebra had collapsed, damaging the nerve controlling my left shin and ankle. I woke up with rods, plates and a paralyzed left leg.

I had gone from a

marathon runner to a person who could barely walk. My first step toward getting better was healing my spine, then I started trying different leg braces. About eight months later, I was walking when a group of runners breezed passed me. The realization that I no longer could self-identify as a runner hit me as I watched them go. I started to feel down but became determined to run another marathon one day.

Two years after surgery I found a lightweight, carbon-copy brace called ToeOff. I cried when I tried it on because I knew that it would work.

In October 2006, I was once again standing at a marathon start line. I finished that day, qualifying for Boston. With the help of my friends, family, leg brace and spirit, I know that I am a runner who can overcome anything.