



# BROOKLYN\_BORN

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## Gunfire caused a very stressful run

Monday, February 18, 2013

I hesitated to write this because of the volatile atmosphere surrounding any mention of guns in our society. This is not political, so please do not respond with comments that are. It's important to preserve the supportive, non confrontational atmosphere of SP. I only want to describe what happened and my thoughts as I ran.

It's difficult to run any distance on my country road. There are no shoulders or sidewalks. The lanes are narrow and traffic often exceeds the speed limit. I keep close to home and continually repeat distances of 1/4, 1/2 or occasionally even 1 mile.

On Saturday I planned a long run. As I started up the road I heard the unmistakable sound of gunfire. There are a lot of guns in our area. I'm used to hunters and hearing shots in the distance, but this isn't hunting season and this sounded close. This was also constant.

I went back home to describe the situation to my husband who knows more about guns than I do. He used to hunt with his father when he was young. DH said that someone was probably doing target practice and he described how this can be done safely.

As I resumed my run, the shots continued. I wondered if the shooters had really set up the safe range DH described. How would I know? I certainly wasn't going to check it out. I thought about stray bullets and the distance even I know they can travel. What if these people weren't being careful? I don't know everyone on my road, but I have no reason to believe they are not good people. Yet, what if they were drinking and their judgment was impaired?

As I continued my run in tense ¼ mile sections, I thought about people who live in high crime (usually low income) areas where gunfire is a way of life and usually indicates malicious intent. Is it any wonder that they don't just "get out and walk" or do some other form of outdoor exercise as they are often advised to do to improve their health? Their limited access to healthy food has been well documented. Gym memberships and home exercise equipment probably isn't in the budget either. Obesity rates are highest in the lowest income areas. Education can help, but environment is difficult to overcome.

Saturday's experience finally affected me enough that I gave up and drove to the gym. I can do that because I have options. Not everybody does.

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## Member Comments About This Blog Post



**STRIVERONE**



I'm coming in late with this comment, but I just saw the blog entry and it resonated with me. I live in an extremely rural area. I can run my half marathon loop without seeing any moving vehicles other than farm tractors. At certain times of year, gunshots outnumber car sightings by a factor of at least ten. Anyway, I don't think much about them. What I do concern myself with are dogs. Loose they are like heat seeking missiles or smart bombs. I like dogs but I like me more and a few have torn my clothes and suffered for it. Still, I am worried that one of them is going to draw blood someday.

3035 days ago

Comment edited on: 2/21/2013 11:59:41 AM



**GINIEMIE**



Safety is so important, and I applaud your choice. You made some very thought provoking comments. And in the suburban area I live in the dangers are broken sidewalks/uneven roads, and loose dogs. We all have to weigh our options, and some of us are luckier than others to have multiple options.



3037 days ago



**MJZHERE**



This is a common problem when we go camping and quading. Sadly, those target shooting almost always are not considering others as far as safety goes. I can say this as my DH has had to speak with everyone that has done this in the vicinity of our rv. And often, not always, even though it was our lives they were putting in jeopardy, people got angry when my DH explained to them they were putting us in danger (and he is very good with speaking to people). My DH and DS hunted as DS grew up so it was not uncommon for us to target practice. The inconsideration of others in such a serious matter really angers me.

3037 days ago



**MISCHAKEO**



I think you were wise to go to the gym. You are right..you don't know the people shooting the guns and what condition they are in.

You are right about obesity and low income areas. With gunfire, no wonder they do not walk. Unfortunately many low income people eat junk food.

Good for you going to the gym.  
3037 days ago



**SWEDE\_SU**



excellent thought-provoking blog. we have to avoid being outdoors in hunting season because of stray bullets - there is always an idiot around, no matter how safety conscious others are. and that in a rural area where guns and hunting are appropriate, at least during the right seasons. you did the right thing by heading to the gym.

3037 days ago



**KELLIEBEAN**



Very thought provoking blog. I'm very glad you made it home safe.  
3037 days ago



**MERRYMARY42**



glad you got home without incident,  
3037 days ago



**CD13252816**



You are so right to be concerned. I don't think there is any reason to be shooting unless it's hunting and range practice. If you want scared people, then visit my town, Chicago. There are places where no one wants to go outside and several people have been shot on their front porches. The violence knows no bounds, even when Hadiya was shot and just the week before had been in DC for the inauguration. The two men they brought in looked so "empty" and were probably victims as well in other cases. So I don't want to get on a soap box but the Tribune did an undercover story of how a man was able to purchase more than 20 guns in an afternoon by just driving over to Indiana where they don't have any checks in place. I am so sad about the violence and it really brings home the point of feeling safe in your own neighborhood...if you get out and

walk, you may be carried home.  
3037 days ago



**DONNA5281**



I am happy to hear that you are home safe and sound.



3038 days ago



**ROSEWAND**



I strongly disagree with BOILHAM. Not all gun owners are responsible and it only takes one to cause an accident. My sister lives in the North Idaho woods where many gun owners are not careful with their shooting and as you know bullets will travel long distances until they hit a target. She must be very careful when she hikes or walks in her own woods.

I, myself, many years ago, was walking in the woods in another state when bullets literally started flying by my head! I was fortunate to avoid being hit. You were wise to protect yourself first.

3038 days ago



**TORTOISE110**



Scary! I hate being scared when running, I really do. Glad you are home and safe.  
3038 days ago



**DAPHNE\_RUNS**



So many thoughts go through my head when I head out the door for my runs. Like you, I run on the road and when I do my surroundings are always my first and most important thoughts. I can totally agree with your blog. I live in a community where I feel safe to go out and exercise by myself. When I lived in my old neighborhood, I did not exercise as much because I did not feel safe.....and then I slowly started to gain a pound or two (okay about 20 more). My husband just mentioned a possible job opportunity in Palm Beach County again. Funny how my first thoughts are going to looking for a neighborhood we can afford to live in that is safe for me to exercise alone and also the quality of schools there.

Great job on heading to the gym to finish your exercise!  
3038 days ago



**KA\_JUN**



It's an insightful blog post. It's good to be aware of how conducive our surroundings are for fitness and health. Everyone has a different tolerance for different conditions, but we should always have a good situational awareness of our surroundings, whether we're running, cycling, hiking/backpacking, or whatever our sport/fitness interests are.

I agree, it's also important to think about the structural barriers for people to pursue fitness and health, and perhaps what we can do to help alleviate those hurdles.

Great blog!  
3038 days ago



**CD13227574**



I might hear occasional gunfire out here where I live. Wouldn't stop me from walking. After last summer I'm more afraid of a forest fire being started while I'm out walking and not being able to get back home than someone target practicing.  
3038 days ago



**SUZYMOBILE**



Loose, vicious dogs are bad enough.  
3038 days ago



**CELIAMINER**



When I got to my trainer's house last week just outside Manassas, I asked if her neighbors hunted on their land. She asked if I'd heard shots, and when I said yes, she said they shoot to scare the vultures away. Apparently the vultures land on the roof and pick out pieces of shingles or chew on any rubbery insulation.  
3038 days ago



**WATERMELLEN**



Often when I'm on Spark People I realize that there are profound differences between Canadian and American culture: and that too is meant to be an apolitical and "not smug" comment. Because: there are areas of our big cities where kids can experience random gunfire from time to time . . . and I'm pretty sure that childhood obesity is linked to safety here too.

So glad you made the right decision and are safe.

3038 days ago



**WILSONWR**



If I would have heard that in town, I would have been concerned. When we're at the ranch, we hear gunfire in the distance all the time. If it's a single shot or two, we figure it's someone hog hunting (there is no season on the feral hogs). If we hear, multiple shots at regular intervals, we know that someone is target practicing. Most people here are extremely safety conscious - they always have the target with a hill or some other backstop behind the target. If you never hear gunfire in your area, you probably did the smart thing by going to the gym...

3038 days ago



**JAHINTZY**



important thoughts, thanks for sharing :) I will say that my bad neighborhood most certainly influenced my lack of exercise in college. I lived in a section 8 neighborhood and it was just a bad area on the outskirts of campus - I gained around 30 or 40 lbs in a year of living there. So yes, I think that the question of a safe environment is absolutely a factor in being able to make healthy choices. And it's a factor that isn't always given much thought.

3038 days ago



**BOILHAM**



I'm sure by now your DH has advised you that all the gun owners he knows are safety conscious. Safety is number 1 especially in rural areas like yours. I doubt the shooting you heard was a dangerous situation for you.

Having said all that, I think you made the right decision. The process of growing older has made us sensitive to potentially dangerous situations, and we tend to make the right decisions so that we may continue to grow even older.

For me, I would have done the math on the potential for danger, and continued running. You did what you felt was right for you, so you did the right thing.

Good call.

3038 days ago



**SADWHITEWOLF**



Gun violence (and other crimes) are the whole reason I can't just "get out and walk" on my lunch breaks. I work in a very sketchy area.

3038 days ago



**CD13167855**



Safety is important. When there is snow on the ground, I walk at the gym, not on the streets. I'm not afraid of gun fire. I worry about drivers. When it snows, there is less sidewalk in a place poor of sidewalks. I have to walk inches from cars speeding by. A man on the bus told me he was hit by a car in that situation and bed bound for five years after. It's not worth the risk. I rather walk in a gym and not fear being hit by a car.

3038 days ago



**MIRAGE727**



Disturbing to say the least. Obstacles like these I don't need on a run!



3038 days ago



**DOTTIEJANE1**



Glad you had the option to go to a gym . Have a safe week .

3038 days ago



**ONEKIDSMOM**



Your mind went a place I have been down before. And not just with "bad neighborhoods" but with latch-key kids and parents encouraging them to "stay inside and not answer the door" contributing to childhood obesity. I don't say a lot about it here in Spark, but I certainly think about security, in where I choose to run or walk, and what time of day.

I have been known to pace inside the house (before I sprang for the treadmill) to up my activity level, and to walk perimeter of the basement at work, where there are others around, in lieu of outdoors due to weather or darkness. There are options that do not require money, but creativity is definitely required. You have to admire those who fight the odds, whatever their source.

3038 days ago



**CD11026554**



Something else that I've just realised I take for granted. Glad that you had the gym option.

3038 days ago



**SOUTH\_FORK**



Glad you're safe! You're absolutely right though, good health requires making the right choices- some aren't lucky enough to be able to make.

3038 days ago

**JSTETSER**



That would certainly stop me.  
Forget about good health. Living is important



3038 days ago



**COCK-ROBIN**

That IS terrifying. It's why I don't run in my neighborhood.

3038 days ago



**CD13167855**

Terrifying. I would have ran in loops near the house or stayed inside.

3038 days ago



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