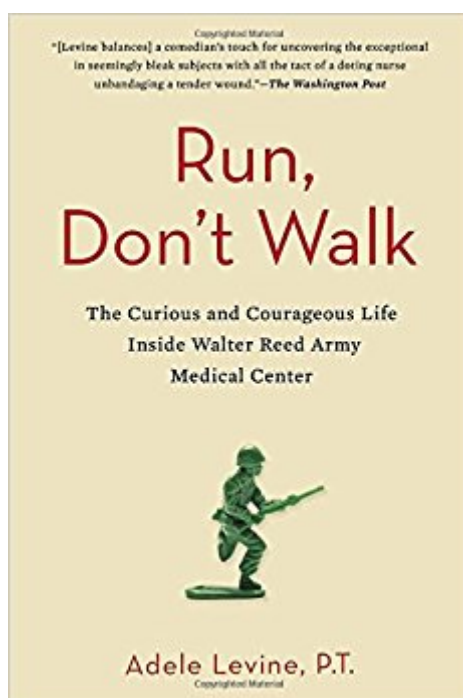


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# Run, Don't Walk: The Curious And Courageous Life Inside Walter Reed Army Medical Center



## Synopsis

*M\*A\*S\*H* meets *Scrubs* in a sharply observant, darkly funny, and totally unique debut memoir from physical therapist Adele Levine. In her six years at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, Adele Levine rehabilitated soldiers admitted in worse and worse shape. As body armor and advanced trauma care helped save the lives of not the limbs of American soldiers fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq, Walter Reed quickly became the world leader in amputee rehabilitation. But no matter the injury, physical therapy began the moment the soldiers emerged from surgery. Days at Walter Reed were intense, chaotic, consuming, and heartbreaking, but they were also filled with camaraderie and humor. Working in a glassed-in fishbowl gymnasium, Levine, her colleagues, and their combat-injured patients were on display at every moment to tour groups, politicians, and celebrities. Some would shudder openly at the sight but inside the glass and out of earshot, the PTs and the patients cracked jokes, played pranks, and compared stumps. With dazzling storytelling, *Run, Don't Walk* introduces a motley array of oddball characters including: Jim, a retired lieutenant-colonel who stays up late at night baking cake after cake, and the militant dietitian who is always after him; a surgeon who only speaks in farm analogies; a therapy dog gone rogue; and Levine's toughest patient, the wild, defiant Cosmo, who comes in with one leg amputated and his other leg shattered. Entertaining, engrossing, and ultimately inspiring, *Run, Don't Walk* is a fascinating look into a hidden world.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Is it possible to write a funny memoir about being a physical therapist who works with amputees at Walter Reed Army Medical Center? Surprisingly, yes. It helps that the soldiers hit by "improvised explosive devices" manage to keep a sense of humor. Some wear T-shirts with sayings like, "I Had a Blast in Afghanistan." Others teasingly call each other names like "Ugly Stump." Colorful, expletive-spewing Cosmo is the central patient in Levine's engaging story, though readers learn at the book's conclusion that he's actually a composite figure created "for privacy reasons." That aside, Levine shares fascinating historical tidbits about Walter Reed (which in 2011 closed its famous Washington, D.C., building and moved to Bethesda, Maryland), beginning with its being named after the young army doctor who discovered the cause of yellow fever. Celebrity watchers will like learning that the prince among the many Hollywood stars who visit the wounded warriors is Project Runway star Tim Gunn. Levine also openly and admirably talks about her female partners. In all, an eye-opening and compassionate chronicle. --Karen Springen --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

"A bittersweet chronicle about caretaking for the nonlethal casualties of war... a moving volume suffused with pain, hope and bravery."-- Kirkus Reviews "Run, Don't Walk captures the essence of what it was like to be at Walter Reed during its darkest days. And it is told by one of the true un-sung heroes of the wounded from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan: The Physical Therapist. It is heartbreaking and hilarious. Levine captures the disappointments, the heartache and the triumphs of the injured troops and the spirit of those determined to save them. Truly a remarkable book that tells a side of the war story very few ever witness or live to tell about."--Cami McCormick, CBS News Correspondent "Adele has captured the unique, frenetic, protective world that was Walter Reed Army Medical Center from 2003 until its closure in 2011. Her dedication and the dedication of all who labored mightily there to save and rebuild our Wounded Warriors' broken bodies and detoured lives is an overlooked part of modern warfare. Reading this book brought me right back to the hours I spent on a treatment table surrounded by my fellow Wounded Warriors as we pushed each other, using grit, gallows humor and even bribes of cookies in order to face yet another day of pain on our road back to our new futures. Read this book to gain a window into an aspect of combat and a cost that our troops, their families and their caretakers must bear that is no less heroic than those of the battlefield."--Congresswoman Tammy Duckworth, Iraq War

Veteran, former Assistant Secretary of Veterans Affairs "I've never read anything like Run, Don't Walk, except possibly the first chapter of Catch 22. Humor heals, comforts, and saves. Don't take my word for it. Read this magnificent book." • Josh Hanagarne, author of The World's Strongest Librarian "An amputee rehabilitation center is a crucible of emotion, and this book throbs with the pulse of a human heart. The characters are hilarious, harsh, eccentric, brave, and real, portrayed with tenderness and unflinching honesty. Yet Levine moved me more with what she didn't say. A master of understatement, she paints a picture of what it's like to work at this strange job, patching up broken soldiers only to be sent back to war and tells her own story, setting her own sorrows and struggles beside the pain of her amputee patients." • Lydia Netzer, author of Shine Shine Shine

I have only read 3 books cover to cover in 1 day, and Run, Don't Walk was one of the 3. I LOVED this book and I want to meet Adele! I'm a Critical Care Air Transport Team physician and an ICU doc. Which means I've cared for a lot of patients like hers (at different institutions) before she sees them. When I'm in charge of the ICU, I see my patients leave with 2 women wearing big belts and wheeling a walker and a patient. I never knew what they did when they were gone. Until now. The PT's where I work are truly miracle workers. I can bring them back from the dead, but only people like Adele can give them any meaningful quality of life. This book is a mix of Catch 22 and Mash with more enjoyable characters. I liked so many people in this book. This is our generation's war, and I hope everyone reads this book. Few know the true cost of this conflict, and even fewer pay it.

I am a high school student who is interested in becoming a Physical Therapist for war veterans and amputees, so I found this book at the perfect time. This is a memoir, so I was expecting personal stories and not a step by step guide to becoming a PT. I was touched by the selflessness and humanity in some of the characters, and I laughed very hard when the main character went into Home Depot looking for a rug. It was an easy read, that I finished in a few days. This book kept my dreams of becoming a physical therapist alive, and I am considering contacting the author with a few questions about her profession. I would recommend this book for anyone who enjoys helping veterans or people in general and for anyone with an interest in physical therapy.

Adele Levine's stories of her work at Walter Reed Army Medical Center as a physical therapist during the height of the casualties in Iraq and Afghanistan give us a poignant, at times sobering, but at more times touching and humorous account of her daily experiences there. The stories trace her

years as a physical therapist, from how she joined the field to how she stayed with WR much longer than she anticipated, along with all of the characters she met and relationships she built. What struck me most about this book were two things: a very unique perspective on the aftermath of the wars in the middle east, and Adele's easy, welcoming prose. She manages to relate her own life events through the narrative, including her accomplishments as a long distance swimmer and avid cyclist, and some celebrations (meeting her partner) and losses (the death of her father). The way she weaves these in along with the stories of her patients bring a recognition of how the boundaries we often draw between work and life are much more fluid than we often try to make it seem. Adele resonates as a humble narrator, inviting you into her crazy little world of prosthetic limbs, quirky therapists who bake pound cakes, volunteers who bring puppies to the hospital, and patients dealt heavy losses but determined to surmount them. I kept turning the pages because I wanted to read about what antics Adele would encounter in Walter Reed's "fishbowl.". Here's to hoping Adele continues to find the time to keep us laughing while she keeps on healing.

One review I read called this book "mordantly funny." It is funny, as only a medical comedy can be. Yet, above the laughter, Levine's love for her patients and co-workers arches like a rainbow above the story. It gets gritty as Levine honestly describes the burnout of the second hand smoke of war and dealing with an extremely difficult (and famous) patient population. Buy this for a loved one who is a veteran, loves a veteran, or works in patient care.

Having spent a lot of time as a Marine w/ recovering wounded from Vietnam in 67 and the last 10+ years, I can not recommend this book enough. An incredible unique insight with a sense of humor. What the recovery for vets and their care givers is really like. 5+ stars!

As I do research for the novel *Run, Don't Walk* I'm working on, I've discovered some fascinating books. Adele Levine's *Run, Don't Walk* is one such jewel. You might think reading about wounded warriors would be depressing, but Levine manages to reveal the heartache with humor and a dose of humanity. This book is educational, entertaining, emotional and satisfying. Levine's writing style is approachable, easy to digest. However, the narrative is circuitous, non-linear, and I found that a bit jarring at times. Despite that, the people she described became tangible and the stories she shared were engrossing. Wounded vets walk our streets, are interviewed on news channels and populate television commercials, but what we see is far different from what Ms. Levine beheld in the amputee

clinic. At times my brain wanted to shut out what she was describing, but these men and women deserve our notice. They literally gave parts of themselves for their country. If you like memoirs and aren't squeamish, this book is a must read.

From the very first sentence, this book pulled me in and didn't let go. A gripping, funny, irreverent, serious story about a physical therapist's personal growth coming at the same time as the increase in seriously injured military personnel from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. I urge you to Run, Don't Walk to get this book!

What an incredible book! I brought this book with me on vacation, and literally devoured it in 3 days! It was so captivating I could not put it down. I am also a physical therapist, and though I have never had the experience of working in a military rehab capacity, I can certainly appreciate the demands of such a place. Levine brings to life the amazing happenings of the rehab clinic, with wit and humor, and ultimately sheds light on a place most of us can never imagine. Her story invokes a true sense of awe and inspiration, not only towards our brave soldiers, who put their lives on the line to keep us safe, but also to all those medical professionals at Walter Reed, and other military facilities, who dedicate their lives to working with the wounded warriors. Thank you, and God Bless you.

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