



PSYCHOLOGICAL
PREPARATION IN LONG
AND ULTRA-LONG
DISTANCE RUNNERS: A
SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

Mijalković Stefan¹, Momčilović Aleksandra¹, Raković Aleksandar¹,
Stanković Daniel¹

¹Faculty of sport and physical education, University of Niš, Serbia



INTRODUCTION

Psychological preparation as a long-term process of learning, means teaching young athletes to learn and accept certain forms of behavior with the help of psychological skills and to form certain characteristics in order to achieve the best possible sports results. However, when psychological preparation as a short-term process is discussed, it's understood as the process of preparing top athletes for an important competition (Milojević, 2004).



METHODS OF LEARNING TECHNIQUES BY TRAINING PSYCHOLOGICAL SKILLS

1. Cognitive methods:

- mental rehearsal;
- mental imagination and visualization;
- repetition of visuomotor behavior;
- cognitive-behavioral therapy.



2. Somatic methods:

- biofeedback;
- progressive muscle relaxation;
- meditation.



LONG AND ULTRA LONG DISTANCE RUNNING

Races of:

- 5 kilometers;
- 10 kilometers;
- half marathon;
- marathon:
- one hour running;
- running for one day and night.



The aim of this study was to determine the psychological preparation in long and ultra-long distance runners by summarizing and reviewing published studies.



METHOD

Research data found for the purposes of this study were collected through electronic databases: Google Scholar, PubMed, SCIndeks.

Key words: *athletics, long distance runners, psychological preparation, motivation.*

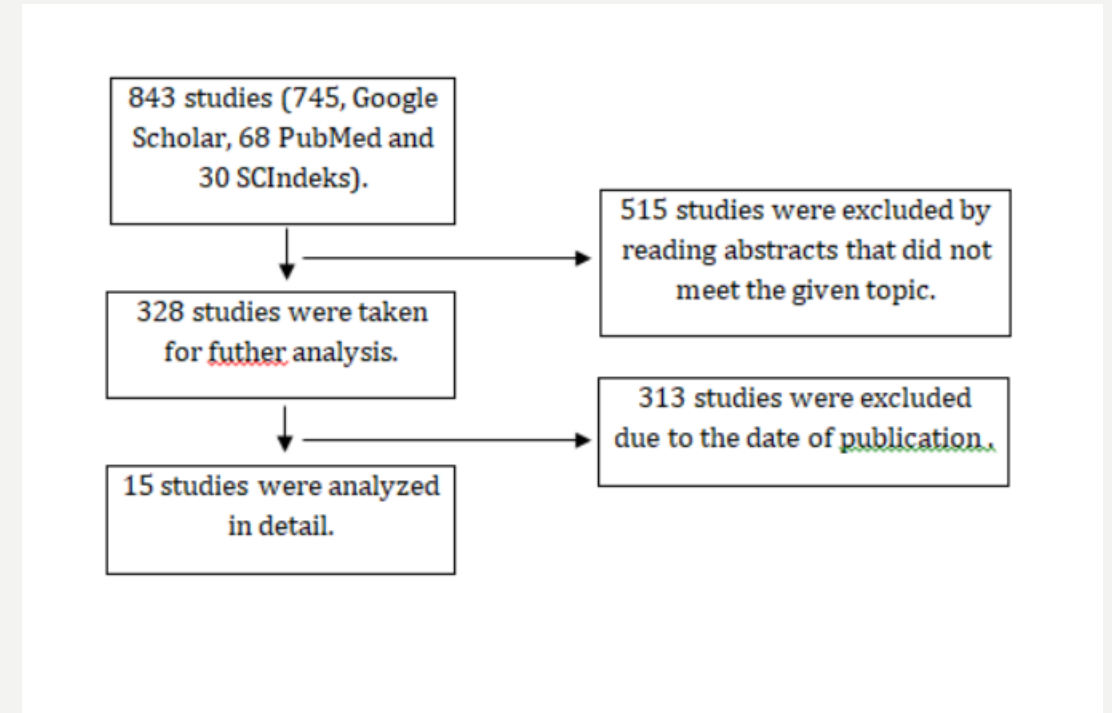


Figure 1. Flow chart of studies analysis.

METHOD

For the purposes of this study, the following methods were used:

- analysis and synthesis;
- comparison method
- descriptive method.



DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

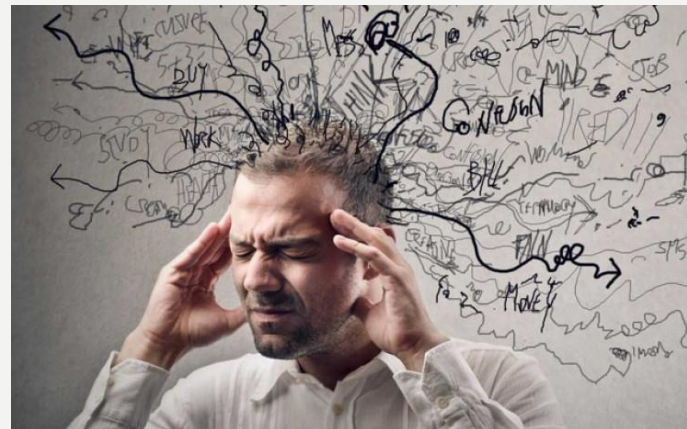
All runners in these disciplines need motivation to endure strenuous hours of training. Self-confidence and self-belief are important psychological factors in running long and ultra-long distances (Winter et al. 2021).



DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

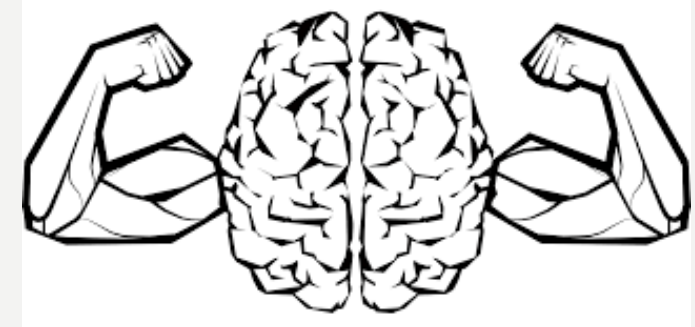
Challenges typical for competitive running are:

- fatigue;
- boredom;
- pain;
- anxiety;
- negative thoughts.



DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Mental strength could be defined as the ability of a runner that allows him not to give up the race, but to continue to push his physical and mental boundaries that may appear during the race (Jaeschke, et al. 2016; Yousaf et al. 2017).



DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

More experienced and successful runners on long and ultra-long distances are characterized by:

- better psychological preparedness;
- greater self-confidence;
- greater motivation to achieve.



DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Injuries caused by excessive training, due to the inability to train, lead to frustration, fear, and some general psychosocial problems resulting from changes in behavior and psychosocial stress, which can later negatively affect on the results in sports achievements (Hamstra-Wright et al. 2013; Russell et al. 2015).



CONCLUSION

Psychological skills that have a positive effect on improving performance in running long and ultra-long distances are: imagination, self-talk, goal setting, self-confidence, self-belief, motivation and mental strength, which could be said to be one of the most important psychological skills because they encourage the runners not to give up the race but to continue and overcome their obstacles. Also, the coach has one of the most important roles in motivating athletes, for instance, more experienced runners are more successful, so they are better psychologically prepared, have greater self-confidence and greater motivation to achieve their goal. When sports injuries occur, there is a change in the behavior of runners and worsening of sports performance, which indicates that psychological preparation after injuries is very important for long-distance athletes to help them regain their general condition and perform to the maximum.



THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

No matter how hard you train,
if you don't believe that you can finish,
you never will.
Train hard. Believe harder.

