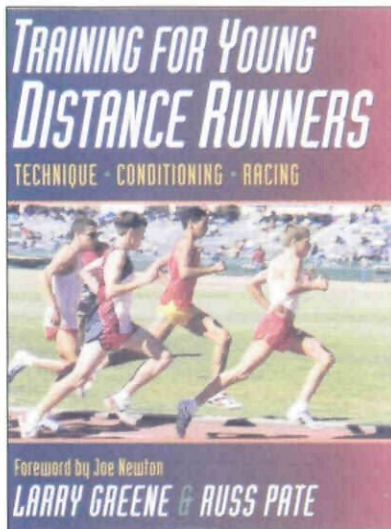


Training for Young Distance Runners

by Larry Green and Russ Pate



Training for Young Distance Runners is a comprehensive training manual written especially for young distance runners. Larry Green and Russ Pate, both top-class distance runners themselves and scientists who have a wealth of knowledge upon which to draw, provide 12 to 18 years old runners and the people who help them with the information, techniques, and programmes which will produce the best possible outcomes for them.

Two major themes convey the authors' philosophy in the book. First, positive outcomes require a developmental approach to planning training and competition. This means that all of the young runner's experiences should promote a gradual

progression toward their ultimate potential. In this developmental approach, the most important goal of all in the authors' opinion is self-improvement. The second major theme of this book is that training young runners involves the art of applying science. This means that planning successful programmes requires both an understanding of the scientific foundations of distance running and a creativity in designing training and competitive experiences.

Based on this philosophy Greene and Pate provide the scientific principles and guidelines young runners need to make good decisions about the types and amounts of training that will bring out the best results for each individual. Because each runner is unique and has specific training needs, there are no ready-made lists of daily training sessions included in this book. Instead, principles and procedures are presented to help youngsters apply the science of running to the art of designing and implementing training.

Training for Young Distance Runners is divided into three parts: following a brief introduction about youth distance running, *part I* ("The Science of Distance Running") covers topics on the science of distance running using knowledge gained from reading about and conducting studies on the physical and psychological capacities of children and adolescents. The science of distance running is presented as it relates specifically to 12- to 18-year-old runners. The authors focus on developmental factors (chapter 1), nutrition (chapter 2), physiology (chapter 3), psychology (chapter 4), and biomechanics (chapter 5). The reader learns how the runner's body and mind work and how their functioning can improve with training.

In *part II* ("Essential Training Methods") the authors introduce and describe the most effective training methods for developing runners. In chapter 6 they present general principles and terminology of training and show the reader how flexibility, mobility, technique, and recovery can lead to improved performance. In chapter 7 they discuss two more fundamental methods that build the runner's endurance capacity: strength

endurance and aerobic endurance. Finally in chapter 8, advanced training methods are presented, including interval and continuous tempo running, specialized endurance training, anaerobic or speed endurance training, even- and varied-paced running, and fartlek training. These methods add to the fitness base and prepare the runner for the specific demands of competition.

Part III ("Designing an Effective Training Program"), which includes chapters 9 to 12, is the most important part of the book because it covers the process of planning progressive training and racing experiences to help runners reach their goals. The reader is guided through this process by a series of five steps:

- 1) developmental assessment (chapter 9),
- 2) goal setting (chapter 9),
- 3) periodization of, or mapping out, the macrocycle (chapter 10),
- 4) planning daily training sessions (chapter 11),
- 5) evaluating and revising the training programme (chapter 12).

The authors advise the reader to keep three key points in mind: first, training is not always a linear process. Flexibility and change are key ingredients in an effective programme. Second, the guidelines for planning training and examples of training sessions presented in this book are purposefully generalised to help the reader design progressive training programmes that meet individual needs. Third, an important key to planning effective training is record keeping.

Records of training and racing are reminders of the methods and strategies that worked best and worst for runners pursuing their competitive goals. In part III the authors therefore help the reader to develop a system for keeping detailed written records. In addition, guidelines for recording goals and training objectives are presented. Finally, the reader is shown how to record training data so that they can use this information to evaluate the effectiveness of their programme. To provide the reader with as much help as possible, the authors present many examples of forms, charts, and calculations that the reader can use for designing training and record keeping.

In conclusion it should also be said that although science-based this book is easy to understand. There is not much prior knowledge assumed for each section or chapter because the authors essentially start from scratch. It is also worth mentioning that the information presented is not only applicable to young distance runners; senior athletes will benefit from reading this book, too.

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