

Mr Small suddenly understood what they meant by the loneliness of the long distance runner



Mr. Small

## 2

# SETTING GOALS

It doesn't matter if you are a beginner runner or an elite athlete competing in the Olympic Games - setting goals will help improve your chances of succeeding. By setting goals, you will give your training meaning, and have something to work towards during those long and lonely hours of training.

Goal setting will give your training the direction and purpose that you need to make sure you get the most possible from your running experience! Setting goals takes time, patience and planning.

HERE ARE A FEW THINGS TO THINK ABOUT WHEN SETTING YOUR GOALS:

- **Be realistic.** Your goals should be challenging, but achievable. If you have just started a training programme, you may not want to try and run ten miles the first time you put on trainers! But running ten miles might be a more realistic goal after a few months of consistent training.
- **Be specific.** If your goal is to finish a marathon, don't just say that you are going to finish one. Choose the exact marathon that you want to run, register for the event as early as possible, and train hard for it.
- **Take baby steps.** If you are aiming for a race that is six months away, have a short-term goal. A good short-term goal might be a race that is a few weeks before your goal race. This race will give you something to aim for, and give you an idea if your training is on track for the big race.
- **Get some help.** No one says that you have to do this alone. Try finding a training partner that has similar goals, or a coach or running club that can give you additional support in your mission.
- **Put it in writing.** Talking about your goals and writing them down are two completely different things. By writing down the specific steps that you will take to reach your goals, it will give you another reason to stay motivated and stick with your programme. Many of the best athletes in the world write down specific goals. You will often see these athletes posting these goals just about anywhere—from their racing shoes to their bedroom wall—their goals are always in front of them!
- **Reward yourself.** It is very easy to be hard on yourself when you don't see immediate results. Make sure you reward yourself for the progress that you make along the way. You can do this by taking an occasional day off, or enjoying a treat that you gave up during your training. But remember, too much of a good thing will defeat the purpose of your training programme, so don't go overboard and keep your goals in the back of your mind.

