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Why aren't we all ultramarathoners?: Tying evolutionary data to modern cultural and social practices about endurance running

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ABSTRACT

Endurance Running (ER) is a practice shrouded in myth and misconception. Previous research has shown that the anatomy of the foot, breathing ratio, and skeletal system of humans all lend themselves to endurance running. This study aims to identify the reasons that most humans do not practice endurance running, despite their proven evolutionary running abilities. A critical literature review was conducted, along with a survey which was distributed to both runners and non-runners to investigate their beliefs and conceptions regarding distance running. The results of the literature review and survey showed that discrimination and lack of access due to class and race, the incompatibility of modern running gear with natural running anatomy, and strong misconceptions about the sport were the main factors preventing people from practicing it. Building off of this research, a concerted effort should be made to create more inclusive running communities, change running shoe designs to enhance the foot's natural haptic feedback and discredit the popularly misheld ideas regarding endurance running.