

# Positive Self-Talk for Runners



Positive self-talk is crucial for track runners because it directly impacts their mindset, physiological responses, and overall performance. By training using self-talk, runners rewire their brain to respond to challenges with resilience rather than fear, which will ultimately boost performance and enjoyment of the sport.

## Regulates Stress and Anxiety

- Runners often experience pre-race jitters or performance anxiety. Negative thoughts can trigger the brain's amygdala, increasing stress hormones like cortisol (our fight or flight).
- Positive affirmations activate the prefrontal cortex (front of your brain), which helps regulate emotions and prevent stress from escalating

## Affects Brain Chemistry

- Positive self-talk triggers dopamine release (responsible for happy feelings), which enhances motivation and a sense of reward.
- It also helps maintain optimal energy levels which are somewhere between not too anxious and not too relaxed. This keeps runners in their ideal performance state

## Encourages a Growth Mindset

- Instead of framing challenges as failures, runners who use constructive self-talk view setbacks as opportunities for growth.
- Statements like "Every race is a learning experience" foster resilience and long-term improvement.

## Enhances Focus and Concentration

- Running, especially in sprint and middle-distance events, requires precise attention to pacing, form, and technique.
- Positive self-talk helps block out distractions, keeping the runner's mind centered on execution rather than external pressures.

## Improves Motor Skills and Efficiency

- The brain-body connection is crucial in running. Negative self-talk can cause tension, leading to inefficient movements.
- Positive affirmations like "Stay relaxed" or "Smooth and strong" help maintain proper biomechanics and rhythm.

## Increases Pain Tolerance & Endurance

- Runners face mental battles against physical discomfort. Self-talk like "I am built for this" or "One more mile" helps override pain perception.
- The brain's cingulate cortex, responsible for pain regulation, responds to positive self-talk by reducing perceived exertion.

