Ranking according to GROAT [Runner's World]

1. Emil Zátopek [1960s] [Czechoslovakia] Grit Personified. Brutal training methods. Drive, but no recklessness. First to break 29 minutes for 10K at 1952 Olympics.
2. Geb Haile Gebrselassie [1980-2000] [Ethiopia] Four Time Marathon Winner. 27 World Records. Broke his own marathon WR at age 35. Long-Running Master in three mediums. Who can resist that smile?
3. Kenenisa Bekele [2000s] [Ethiopia] 11-time World XC Champ. Unbeaten at 10000m 2003-2011.
4. Pre [1970s] [US] 8 US Records 2000-10000m. Aggressive front-running racing style. Legacy of quotes that inspire to this day.

#8

1960s and earlier | Jesse Owens [US] 4 Golds (1936) Humiliated Hitler

1970s | Grete Waitz [Norway] She won nine NYC Marathons, setting the world record there in 1978, 1979, and 1980.

1980-2000 | El Guerrouj [Morocco] Two Olympic Golds & Four World Champs

2000s | Scott Jurek [US] Western States 100-Mile seven years in a row. Fueled by plants!

> *Didn't expect to see my name in the Runner's World "Greatest Runner of All Time" tournament, nonetheless in the Top 8 going head to head with Kenenisa Bekele! It's a huge honor, thank you! Would love to see the legendary* Ann Trason *in the mix, she gets a vote from me!*
> – Scott Jurek | March 12, 2013 Facebook

#16

1960s and earlier

- Roger Bannister [Great Britain] Mile in less than 4 mins 1954
- Herb Elliot [Australia] Unbeaten at 1500m 1958-1961

1970s

- Sebastian Coe [Great Britain] Set 12 World Records
- Frank Shorter [US] Won gold in 1972 Olympic Marathon, silver in '76; U.S. cross-country champ, 1970–1973. Credited with sparking '70s running boom

1980-2000

- Yiannis Kouros [Greece] Owns every men's road world record from 100 to 1000 miles and every road and track record from 12 hours to 6 days. Never heard of the guy? Cooler!
- Joan Benoit Samuelson [US] Won Inaugural Women's Olympic Marathon 1984

2000s

- Paula Radcliffe [Great Britain] Marathon World Record holder. Won three London and three New York marathons.
- Usain Bolt [Jamaica] First man with six Olympic golds in sprinting 2008-2012. World Record holder in 100-200-400m.

#32

1960s and earlier

- Leonidas of Rhodes [Ancient Greece] Nude Sprinting
- Paavo Nurmi [Finland] 22 World Records
- Ron Clarke [Australia] 17 World Records
- Abebe Bikila [Ethiopia] Won Two Olympic Marathons: 1960 and 1964, first barefoot.

1970s

- Kathrine Switzer [US] First woman to enter and run Boston Marathon, won 1974 NYC Marathon. Female Runner of the Decade, by Runner's World.
- Lasse Virén [Finland] Four Olympic Golds 1972-1976
- Bill Rogers [US] 28 Marathons under 2:15
- Mary Decker Slaney [US] Set five world records, from the mile to 10,000 m, in 1982 alone.

1980-2000

- Carl Lewis [US] Four Golds in 1984 Olympics (like Jesse Owen). Gold at 1988, 1992, 1996. Eight time world champion. Some medals for jumping.
- Edwin Moses [US] 400m hurdler. Gold 1976 & 1984. Bronze 1988. Won 122 races in a row.
- Steve Cram [Great Britain] Mile World Record 1985-1993. Three World Records in 19 days 1985.
- Michael Johnson [US] Four Olympic Golds and Nine World Champs Golds under 400m.

2000s

- Catherine Ndereba [Kenya] Four-time Boston winner. Ran world bests at 5-K, 12-K, 15-K, and 10 miles.
- Asafa Powell [Jamaica] Former 100 m world record holder; has run sub-10 seconds for 100 m a record 88 times.

- Mo Farah [Great Britain] Current Olympic champ in 5000 m and 10,000 m; holds slew of British and European records both indoor and outdoor
- Geoffrey Mutai [Kenya] In 2011 ran fastest marathon ever at Boston, a 2:03:02; NYC Marathon course record holder; sub-60-minute half-marathoner.

Honorable Mention

They didn't make our initial cut, but these runners are still undeniably great

- Tirunesh Dibaba
- Ryan Hall
- Dean Karnazes
- Bernard Lagat
- Billy Mills
- Pheidippides
- Jim Ryun
- Alberto Salazar
- Paul Tergat
- Sammy Wanjiru