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Intermediate Student’s Book

Life

2.23

Steve Holman is one of the competitors in the annual *Marathon des Sables*, shown here. Steve is 52 years old and his friends think he’s crazy. Why? Because he’s running 200 kilometres in the Sahara desert. And he has to carry all his food with him, in a backpack that weighs twelve kilos. With the temperature hitting 38 degrees, he struggles up massive sand dunes, sometimes crawling on his hands and knees. This race is one of the key events on the ultrarunning calendar. Any race longer than a regular 42-kilometre marathon is called ultrarunning, but there is more to this kind of running than simply the distance. Ultrarunners push the human body to incredible limits – and it’s stronger than you’d imagine. As ultrarunner Leslie Antonis, a 47-year-old who ran 160 kilometres in 34 hours, says, ‘It’s amazing what you can do without sleep.’