

Running Technique

Quick Reference Guide

6 Ways to Improve Running Form

AVOID OVER-STRIDING

Regardless of what type of foot contact you employ, the position of this contact in relation to the rest of your body has a large role to play in determining how heavy the impact and subsequent braking forces are.

A good rule of thumb in terms of over-striding is to look for the alignment of knee and ankle upon initial contact. Ideally we're looking for the knee to be flexing directly above the ankle on initial contact. If the runner is over-striding, you'll see the ankle ahead of the knee.

Over-striding patterns such as those seen above can be the result of a number of factors, in particular poor posture and running with a cadence (stride frequency) too slow for the given speed.

Try increasing your running cadence (stride frequency) by 5% and feel how it encourages you to reduce the over-stride. In turn you'll feel lighter on your feet as your contact time decreases.

A basic digital metronome is a great tool for achieving and maintaining an increased running cadence.

Links for More Information:

- [Research on Running Cadence](#)
- [Free Running Metronome Download](#)

RUN TALL

Your running posture is one of the keys to achieving good, efficient form. The postures you sustain at your desk during the working day, in the car or on the sofa have a real carry-over into the way you run.

Most of us spend too much of the day sitting down (I'm sitting down writing this!), shoulders rounded forwards and hips flexed. Through sustaining this type of position, we get short, tight hip-flexors and other anterior muscles and weak, under-active glutes and other posterior muscles.

This then becomes an issue when we try and run, with the body needing to maintain an erect posture and adequate hip extension. Instead, we become a product of what we posturally do most often and run in a semi flexed position – particularly at the hips.

Then, consider triathletes. Many of who suffer from all the desk-job related postural issues. We then jump on the bike for hours on end, which only goes to exacerbate the hip-flexor tightness which comes from excessive time spent in a sat down position.

It's all about working to undo the hip flexion pattern, and buy them back some range into extension.

Links for More Information:

- [Read this article on Running Posture](#)

FREE DOWNLOAD

RELAX YOUR SHOULDERS

Tension in your shoulders, neck or upper back can inhibit your arm motion. You need your arms to provide balance, rhythm and power as you run.

As with your legs, the faster you go, the bigger the arm motion should be. Conversely, running slowly should require small, yet still active motions of the arms, swinging from the shoulder. The movement pattern doesn't change, only the size of movement.

This will take some getting used to, but as you get fatigued keep your arms moving, as they help to keep the legs working at a steady rhythm.

STRENGTHEN YOUR GLUTES & CORE

No matter how hard you work on improving your running form, a serious limiting factor to your performance and ability to stay injury free is your core strength and ability to activate your gluteal muscles. These two key muscle groups play a huge role in providing stability around your lower trunk, pelvis and hips.

Weaknesses and imbalances around these areas can directly lead to knee, hip and back injuries, as well as running related problems with the lower leg.

Incorporate regular strength and stability exercises into your weekly routine to improve these key factors and your running will reap the benefits in the long term. Both in terms of injury prevention and improved performance.

Read the following articles for more information about core, glute and general strengthening exercises for runners...

Links for More Information:

- [Multiplanar Strength Exercises For Triathletes And Runners](#)
- [10 Great Exercises To Build Running Strength](#)
- [Medicine Ball Exercises For Runners](#)

DON'T BOUNCE OR ROTATE EXCESSIVELY

Running is a linear motion, as you move forwards in a straight line. Although many of the constituent movements at individual joints and segments require rotation to function correctly, your body shouldn't be rotating excessively from side to side. Excessive rotation counteracts the end goal of making forward progression. In fact it costs us energy to control and stabilise – a big inefficiency!

In the same way, your energy should be directed in traveling forwards not upwards. A slow rate of cadence and therefore over-stride (see above) often results in excessive upwards displacement or "bounce" within the stride.

For those running a marathon, for example, an extra one inch of bounce with each step (which doesn't sound like much), will equate to one extra mile traveled upwards across the marathon distance... what a waste of effort.*

*Actual figures vary with stride length – but you get the picture!

FREE DOWNLOAD

CONTROL YOUR BREATHING

The rhythm with which you breathe when running should fit in with the overall rhythm that the rest of your body is working to. The ratios with which you inhale and exhale will most likely vary as your intensity of exercise varies. Getting your breathing right is integral to your running technique and should be practiced so that you can maintain your composure on race day as your concentration is elsewhere.

Links for More Information:

- [Podcast: Running Breathing Patterns](#)
- [Article: How to Breathe When Running](#)

PLEASE NOTE

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Always warm up adequately before any workout and immediately cease any exercise which results in pain or discomfort. Consult a sports medicine doctor, Physiotherapist or other suitable exercise professional before beginning any new exercise regime. Whilst our team of specialists have specifically chosen exercises which will be appropriate and of benefit to runners and triathletes of all levels, Kinetic Revolution and its coaches/therapists, specifically James Dunne and Brad Neal shall not be held responsible for any loss or injury that is incurred through the use of the information or exercises within this document. Unauthorised replication or distribution of any of the information held within this document will be considered breach of copyright.