Improving Your Running Form

Proper Posture: Before you start running, stand tall! Lengthen your spine by pushing the back of the top of your head toward the sky. Running erect is more efficient and reduces stress on certain areas that typically lead to running injuries. While running, occasionally review the following areas of your body.

- Flatten your neck (don't let your head slide forward or stare at the ground)
- Roll your shoulders back and down
- Flatten your low back by bringing your lower ribcage down towards your spine. Imagine a spotlight emanating from the center of your breast bone, and shine it straight forward (not upwards).
- Don't tuck your tail, and keep your behind behind you, so you can "wag your tail" like a happy dog!

Running Form: To run efficiently, you need to have sufficient mobility in your big toe, ankle, and hip to let your body smoothly roll through your stride without causing stress, compensation, or wobble in other areas of the body. Proper stretching and massage therapy can help.

- Stay upright and "fall" forward, Bending should occur at the ankles,not the waist!
- Try to run at about 180 steps per minute. This improves efficiency, avoids over-striding, and decreases stress in your knees and hips.
- Lead with your chest, with confidence, like you are going to "chest bump" someone. Don't be tentative or lean backwards.
- Try to keep your toes pointing mostly straight ahead and your knees tracking over your toes. If your knees tend to cave toward the inside, practice stretches, squats, and other drills where you practise proper alignment.
- Avoid wasted motion. Don't cross arms in front of you, leap forward, or "try" to lift your knees or kick back your heels. Keep your arms bent and close to your body to save energy.
- Run at a conversational pace (unless you are within 100 yds of the finish line!)
- Run like a child, lightly with a smile, and RELAX!!!

Try to:
- Use your glutes to push you forward.
- Drive your arms backwards instead of focusing on your legs.
- Occasionally review your posture
- Occasionally "change it up", including short walk/drink breaks.
- Try speeding up for short distances. This improves your form, and helps you learn to run better at slow speeds.

Try not to:
- Land first on your heel.
- Lean backwards.
- Bend forward at the waist.
- Swing your arms across the mid-line.
- Try to "jump" forward with each step.
- Continue running through pain or exhaustion thatis causing improper or sloppy form.

Tips For Running Downhill: Relax! Try not to brake by leaning back and slamming your heels into the ground. Minimize your effort and let gravity do the work. If you are gaining too much speed, bend your knees just a bit so you feel you are in a bit of a crouch, and increase your cadence (faster, smaller steps) to try to "spin" down the hill.

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