



STAMFORD STRIDERS

RUNNING TECHNIQUE

Head position and posture

Your head weighs roughly 6lbs. If you have a supermarket handy, why not grab three bags of sugar and check out the combined weight. Quite something, isn't it?

And so, conventional wisdom has it that your body, and your spinal column in particular, will find the going a lot easier if you try to adopt a fairly upright stance, and try to keep your head on a reasonably even keel.

So while you're running and sending punishing vibrations through the central core of your body, do give your back a break by trying to stand up straight and keep your head fairly upright.

Using your arms

'How important are the arms in running?' the correct answer is: 'Just as important as the legs.'

Arms should swing nice and relaxed at the sides of your body try not to swing across the chest

Getting the swing of your arms right is essential to a good running technique.

First off, try this simple experiment, preferably when no-one is looking. Run for 50 yards without swinging your arms. Done that? Well, yes, you looked pretty silly. But more importantly, that was really, really hard, wasn't it?

Now run 50 yards with a fairly exaggerated arm swing? Couldn't you feel the difference? Running without using your arms, then running whilst using them is actually a very valuable exercise.

It demonstrates to your conscious mind that running really is a joint exercise between arms and legs, with some fairly plucky support work being done by abdominal and shoulder muscles.

Getting your stride length right

Whatever length of stride you take is fine, if it feels natural. And on your early runs, just doing what feels natural is the best thing you can do.

But once you've been running for a while, there are a few things you can do with your stride length that can really help you.

For instance, while you're still building up your stamina, you're going to reach a point on most runs where your legs hurt or feel heavy.

Well, if you're thinking about your technique, why not lengthen or shorten your stride a little, just for a few minutes. Chances are that just the change of stride will make your legs feel like they're being given a break.

Thinking about technique while you're running

OK, so just to recap, the most important parts of developing a good running technique are keeping upright, using your arms effectively, and remembering to vary your stride length a little if you're tiring or tightening up.

So far, so obvious. The point is though, that basics like these are what we all tend to forget when fatigue sets in, when most new runners will hunch up, stop using their arms properly, and basically make their run so much harder than it should be.

Another little tip is this if you like to take a drink out running then try to invest in a bottle holder that you can wear around your waist as this does not interfere with your arm action. Carrying a bottle in one hand is a bit like swimming with one hand and is not efficient.

And don't forget our earlier handout on tips on buying running shoes so that you run with the correct shoes for your particular running style.

SO REMEMBER RUN TALL AND RELAXED

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