

Race Walking Teaching Progression

- 1) Race Walking is a progression of normal everyday walking
- 2) Start walking in group down the track. Slowly building up speed. As you do, you will note that you need to shorten your pendulums (arms) into a 90 degree position.
- 3) Swing arms from shoulders, arms bent at elbows 90 degree. Swing arm from centre mid point of chest back to hip. Keep shoulders relaxed and swing smoothly. Do not swing arms across this centre point. This will cause you to "fly" with these wings that then poke out sideways! Hold hands loosely open and vertical, with thumb sitting on top of index finger.
- 4) Just prior to landing the front foot, flex toes up. This gives extra stride length and helps to straighten knee at point of impact.
- 5) Front leg must be straightened at point of contact and remain straightened only until the vertical position as it passes under your body. (knees rule)
- 6) At least one foot must be in contact with the ground at all times. (contact rule) This is visible to the Judges eye (not video equipment)
- 7) Shorter more frequent strides takes less energy than long ones, therefore as distance increases - stride length should probably decrease fractionally!
- 8) Look forward - 20 metres in front - not your feet
- 9) Very slight forward lean of entire posture (not bending forward from hips) but not as much as running and not straight up and down either!
- 10) Drills - stationary (swing arms whilst hips rotating in opposite directions) for hip mobility
- 11) Drill - stationary (swing arms and bend knees/drop hips)
- 12) Drill - walk along straight lane line
- 13) Drill - walk along lane line with arms held up at shoulder height (out sideways) don't let shoulders twist - keep arms still
- 14) Drill - walk zig zag between the lines in one lane - helps hip mobility
- 15) Most importantly - stay relaxed (especially shoulders)
- 16) Get participants to walk past the group (showing their style)
- 17) Judges can caution you for knees once and contact once. Once they have reported you, they cannot report you again. This may or may not be verbal (depending on age groups). Three reports will DISQ athlete - but only after race is complete. This is different to the Olympics and Road Walks where they try to make sure that the winner is the one that crosses the line first, thus they signal the athlete that they are to "pull out" as they have been DISQ.!

Race Walking Technique

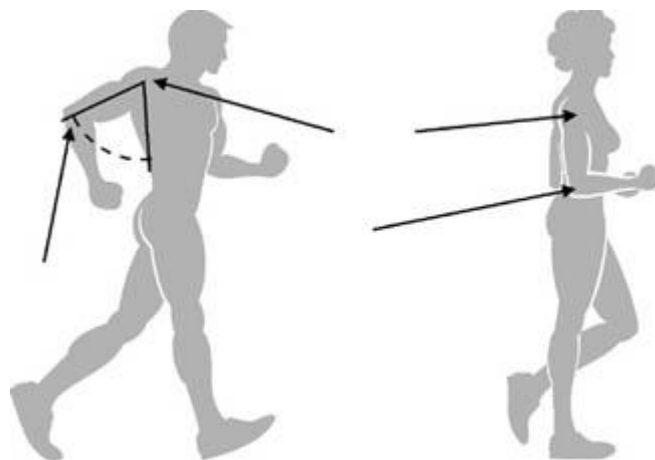
Head and Posture

- Head level, eyes looking approximately 20 metres in front of the body.
- Relax, avoid tension in the neck. The jaw should also remain relaxed.



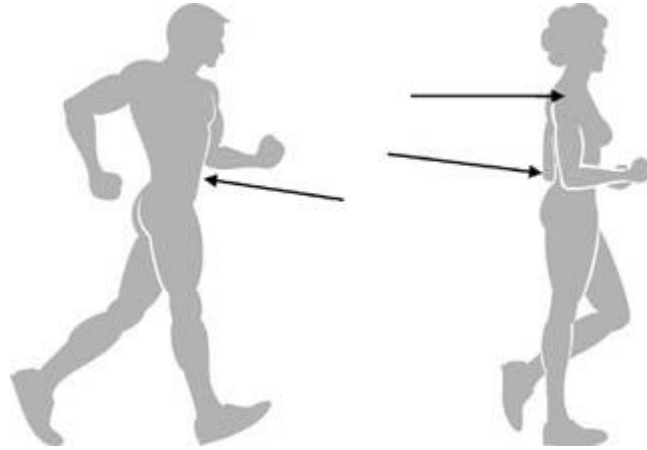
Arms

- Arms should be bent 85-90° at the elbows - at all times.
- Swing arms loosely and vigorously, pivoting from the shoulders.
- Keep hands close to the body, heel of the hand brushing by the hip bone.
- The hands should not cross the vertical nor horizontal midline of the torso.
- At the completion of the forward swing, the upper arm should be parallel with the torso. In the forward swing, the hands are not driven upward.
- During the back swing, imagine you are reaching for a handkerchief in your hip pocket. Avoid extending the arm past your current range of motion - this can lead to bent over posture and restricted breathing.
- Keep the hands relaxed - a loosely clenched fist with the thumb on top is the most effective technique.
- Proper arm action is very important in achieving and maintaining a powerful torso and leg technique - resulting in a faster, controlled pace.



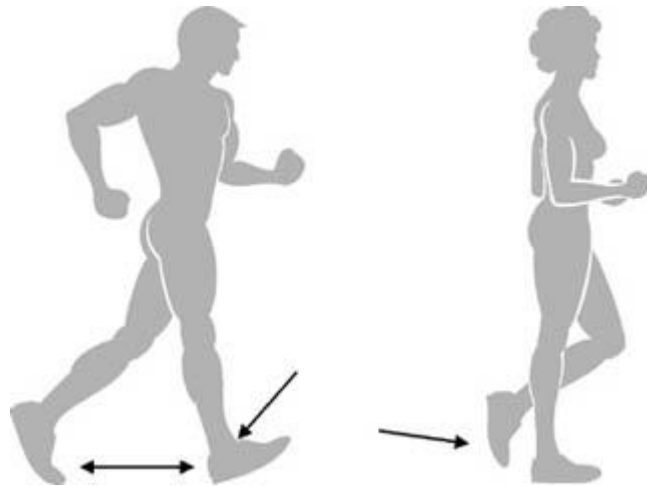
Torso

- Keep the body posture relaxed and straight. In other words, walk tall.
- Avoid leaning too far forward or sitting back. This can result in a loss of power.
- Keep abdominal muscles firm to maintain neutral lower back curvature. Over tightening of the abdominals can cause lower back discomfort. Over relaxation of the abdominals can cause "sway back".
- The shoulders must remain relaxed. Avoid "hiking up" the shoulders as this will cause tension in the neck and shoulder area and possible loss of contact.



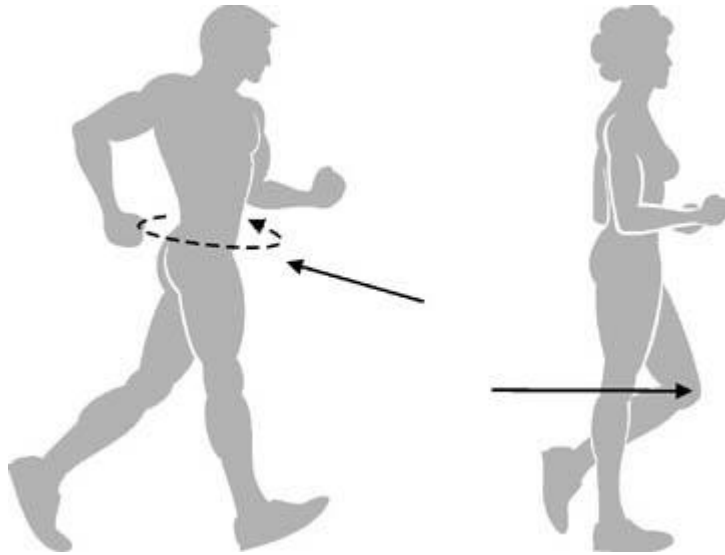
Feet

- One foot must constantly be in contact with the ground. The lead foot must make contact before the rear foot loses contact.
- Landing too far forward of the torso is over-striding and an inefficient technique that will slow the pace, cause "soft knee", and possibly lead to an injury of the Iliopsoas (groin) and Popliteal (behind the knee) muscles. On up hill terrain, the hamstrings and gluteal muscles can be injured by over-striding.
- Land on the heel, ankle flexed within your range of motion. Roll straight forward through the center of the forefoot and off the end of the toes. Be sure not to lift the toes when flexing the ankle - this can stress the tendons at the top of the ankle.
- As the advancing foot has rolled off the toes, keep the ankle relaxed and the toes pointed towards the ground until past the supporting leg, at which time the ankle will begin to flex in preparation for the heel plant.
- Anterior Tibialis (shin) tightness, burning, or soreness may occur in the beginning, so take it easy until these muscles become conditioned.



Hips

- Flex (rotate) pelvis forward and back horizontally.
- The Oblique (side abdominal) muscles are the primary flexors for this action.
- Avoid excessive lateral (side to side) hip motion as this can lead to an injury to the Gluteus Medius and Minimus (side of hip) muscles, additionally this shortens the stride length, which can slow the athlete down or results in a loss of contact.
- Driving the knees forward and towards the centerline of the body will help bring the pelvis around. Flex (rotate) pelvis forward and back horizontally.



Legs and Stride

- The knee of the advancing leg must be straightened when the advancing foot makes contact with the ground.
- Bring the knee through low when the advancing leg swings forward, avoid a cycling motion which has a high knee action, this results in a loss of contact.
- Move legs slowly at first, then gradually increase leg speed (cadence).
- The better way to achieve a faster pace is to increase leg speed, not over-striding. Maintain the natural stride length for your body and increase the number of strides per minute. Gradually work towards achieving 160 steps per minute. Over time, you may reach 180-200 SPM. However, initially your stride length may shorten as the cadence is increased.

