

Distance Running Form

Run Lightly

You should always feel like you are very light on your feet. You never want to run with "heavy" strides. Some common specific cues that might work are imagining you're running over rice paper and don't want to tear it. Or visualize running over an icy surface and try not to fall. Other possible cues are trying to run quietly without making any noise or pretending you are running over hot coals.

Glide

Your stride should always feel very smooth and fluid. Almost like you are gliding across the ground rather than running. Imagine you are running with a beanbag on your head. You want to keep your upper body very still with little or no vertical movement.

Quick Feet

Slow turnover is often the problem when your stride doesn't feel quite right. You should be maintaining a stride rate of around 180 steps or 90 full strides per minute. If your stride rate falls much below that you may be over striding or spending too much time on the ground. Focus on very quick, light strides rather than long strides. If you run smoothly and efficiently your stride will feel right.

Pull Through

Sometimes when a runner becomes fatigued they tend to drop their feet to the ground quickly resulting in a stumbling under stride. You should always feel your knee pull your foot through and forward to land efficiently under your center of gravity. Note that you should not be driving your knee high. Just use your knee to pull your foot forward to begin a new efficient cycle.

Heel Kick

Another common stride flaw when you become fatigued is lack of a heel kick. You don't want to paw your heel back powerfully, just lift it and flick it up and back behind your body. That will promote a slight paw back before foot strike and also assist with your knee pull through. It's easier to pull your knee through when your heel kick forms a smaller angle between your upper and lower leg.

Hips Forward

Be sure to keep your hips pressed forward rather than letting them fall back into a slight "sitting" position. If you fall into a sitting position your body will begin to move more excessively up and down. You won't be able to use your forward momentum to maintain a smooth forward gliding motion.

Avoid the Heel

Do you feel yourself landing on your heel? If you do you are over striding and your running form is breaking down. Always land flat-footed or slightly on the ball of your foot first, directly under your center of gravity. You will avoid the form busting "breaking effect" of over striding.