



## May/June 2008 – RVM Training Newsletter

### Running Pretty

Most of us got our first introduction to running or jogging in gym class. If your experience was like mine, this involved the teacher telling you to run around prior to the more enjoyable parts of the class. It was assumed that everyone could run if they tried hard enough.

Maybe the teacher just figured that if the kids did enough running that they would catch on. However most of these children never did. They either grew up to hate the activity that nobody ever taught them how to do, or are plagued by injuries caused by poor running form.

The first key to good form is proper posture. If that school gym teacher had known what to say, they would have told you to “run tall”. In other words, imagine that you are like a puppet suspended by a string. Your head is high, your shoulders are back and your chin isn't too far forward.

The next form tip is to relax your upper body. A lot of people carry unnecessary tension in their shoulders, neck and face. If you find your shoulders creeping up to meet your ears, then it is time to concentrate on loosening up.

Your arms should swing forward and not from side to side. Bend your elbows at a 90 degree angle and cup your hands into a loose fist. Your hands should come up to nipple level and swing back level with your hips.

The last big form tip is to control your stride. This is done mostly by ensuring that your center of gravity is not too far back and not excessively forward. Think of your center of gravity as being your sternum. Ideally, it should be ever so slightly ahead of your hips, giving you a bit of a forward lean. This allows you to use gravity to propel you forward. However, if your lean is too pronounced, you will start to notice tightness in your lower back.

### To Lift or Not To Lift

The question invariably surfaces: “Should I do weights when I am training for a marathon?” There are really two sides to this debate.

Many runners use weights to increase their overall fitness and to build muscular strength and endurance. Others feel that weights are not really specific to the demands of running a marathon and that they are better off spending their training time on the roads and trails. They would rather use hills to build specific running strength.

If you want to include weights in your program, here are some simple tips:

- 1) The key is to include these sessions within your schedule so as not to reduce your capacity to do the run training. Limit your weights to the easy days and preferably not the day before a hard effort.
- 2) Focus on core stability exercises. Use lighter weights and higher repetitions done in a way that forces you to use stabilizing muscles. For instance, exercises can be done on an exercise ball instead on solid ground.
- 3) Go light on the leg weights. Your running should be sufficient to keep you good and strong.
- 4) Consider asking a personal trainer, kinesiologist, or certified coach to set up a program that will benefit your running and not just make you buff for the beach.

### Lean On Me...

Do you have questions? Need some help adapting one of the programs to your work or family commitments? Dash me a note at [coachbruce@royalvictoriamarathon.com](mailto:coachbruce@royalvictoriamarathon.com). Let me help you reach your goals.

### Victoria Clinic

The New Balance Victoria Store at 1205 Government Street is hosting a clinic for those who are following the schedules. Call 250-382-9327 for details.