

Stride Length: why understanding it matters

You've probably heard the popular running slogan: 'stride length + cadence = speed', which implies that if you want to run faster, you should increase your stride length and cadence. However, this is a common misconception that can lead to over-striding and slower running.

While it is true that faster running generally involves longer strides, simply stretching your legs in front or behind your body does not actually increase your stride length. Instead, it only increases your range of motion, which can be counterproductive to your running speed.

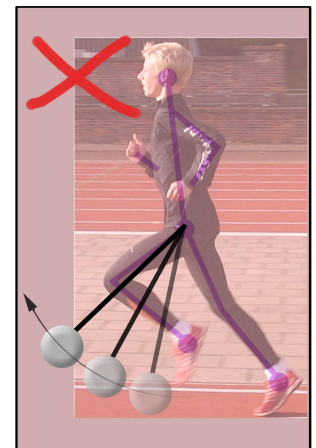
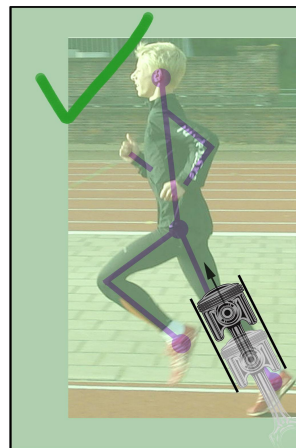
In fact, your stride length is determined by how far your body has traveled between two consecutive right or left foot landings. Therefore, it is a consequence of your speed rather than a cause of it.



So, don't waste time and energy stretching your legs as you run. Instead, keep your ROM compact by pulling your feet up under your body, as you would if running in place. With this compact movement, you can accelerate forward without the drawbacks of over-striding or leg repositioning delays. This will naturally lead to a quicker

cadence and increased speed, enabling you to enjoy a longer stride

Try this cue to help improve your running: imagine your legs moving like quick-firing pistons *underneath* your hips rather than long pendulums swinging *from* your hips. As you accelerate, you may feel a natural instinct to reach forward with your leg, but resist this urge and instead focus on quickening your cadence so your legs keep up with your body.



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