

**Team in Training**  
Greater Los Angeles – EASTSIDE TRIATHLON

## **Running for the Triathlete**

The Nutshell: Run in shoes that fit properly and still have a lot of life in them. Run using shorter strides for faster and safe running. Run often.

The best shoes are the ones that fit you properly. Running in ill fitting shoes or shoes that don't support your foot and your mechanics can cause injuries. Go to a reputable running shoe store and have an educated professional guide you to some proper options. The shoes that you choose for race day need to be broken in by race day, but not broken down. If you stumble onto the perfect pair during training, then it might be a good idea to set them aside and keep those for race day while you train in another pair.

Cool Trick: Triathletes are always trying to shave time off their race – you will rarely see a dedicated triathlete tying his or her shoes in transition. Lace locks or elastic laces make for faster transitions and never have you stopping to retie. Look for products like “Yankz”.

Every runner is interested in two key things: running faster and avoiding injury. It's a rare and wonderful thing when the two biggest concerns are solved in one simple action, but it is possible! Practice running at 180 steps per minute. A faster cadence can feel odd at first but it will be beneficial over the long term. You can check your cadence by using your watch to count steps during a training run. Count every foot fall for 10 seconds – 180 steps per minute equals out to be 30 steps for every 10 seconds. Even easier, just count right foot strikes for 10 seconds and multiply by 6. If you get 90 then you took 180 total steps!

Anything less than a 180 cadence means that the stride is too long and that the heel of the foot lands too far in front of the body's mass. This causes a braking action in the runner's stride and that slows the runner. Shorten the stride and let the foot meet the ground almost directly under the hip. You may find that you are now landing more on the fore foot and a bit less on the heel. This reduces injuries because the foot is now dealing with less impact and is carrying the body's weight for a shorter period of time. Joints and connective tissue will thank you.

Other key elements to good running are:

- “proud” posture: a fairly erect stance with a slight forward tilt at the waist and ankles.
- an arm swing that moves the hand straight forward and back, not across the body.
- exaggerate the arm swing slightly for hills; look up the hill and keep steps small.

When you run, the goal is not only to run faster over time, but more efficiently and with better economy. Take a look at any track meet on TV and you will see most of the runners have ideal form. They run with great posture, tall with their chests out, head up, and swinging their arms. You may not be that fast, but that's why you should try to imitate their running style. You should improve your running form through your workouts – make it a focus!

The run in triathlon comes at the end of the event. By the time the run comes around many of us are pretty tired and when you're tired technique is the first to go. During every training run keep focused on running technique and “program” your body so that it can fall into the perfect running groove, a groove that you can easily find at the end of the race.

#### Final Coaching Tips:

- **Use your arms to run faster.** Swinging them forward and back will help you tremendously. Don't lock your elbows and run like a robot.
- **Improve your running efficiency by occasionally glancing down at your feet and hands while running to make sure they aren't crossing the mid-line of your body.** Improve both by swinging straightforward and straight back, arm and leg in opposing direction.
- **Make sure you are pointing your toes and feet in the direction you are running,** this includes the turns. This will give you better control/traction on the track.