

IS IT POSSIBLE TO IMPROVE YOUR RUNNING FORM?

BY CATHERINA MCKIERNAN, Certified Instructor, Chi Running

10 Components of Good Running Form

– and talent is not on the list



WINNING STRIDE: Catherina crosses the line first in the Flora London Marathon, 1998. Pic Sportsfile.

1 FLEXIBILITY: You need to have it, not only in your muscles, but in your tendons, ligaments, and joints. They all work better when they move with flexibility and any restrictions in your muscles, ligaments, or tendons will limit your range of motion, period. As we get older we tend to become less active. A good axiom that best describes this is: "Use it or lose it." If you don't use your muscles and joints they will begin to stiffen and then, if you still don't do anything: atrophy. Flexibility doesn't just happen; you have to work at it. Even stretching a few minutes a day is enough for most people to maintain a good range of motion and decrease their chances of injury due to muscle pulls.

2 GOOD POSTURE: Your form is totally dependent on your posture. The efficiency of your running form is directly proportional to the quality of your posture. What is good posture? According to Yoga teachers along with many other mainstream body movement disciplines, having good posture involves having a reasonably straight spine with not too much straightness and not too much bend. The more you slump, the more your body's muscles need to work to hold you upright. Poor posture not only restricts the circulation of blood to your muscles and organs but also inhibits the oxygen supply to your brain, which is not good, especially when you try to do something like thinking or running.

3 GOOD LEG MOTION: Having too long of a stride, or "over-striding" is a huge cause of both hamstring and knee injuries. This is when you land with your feet in front of you instead of under you. Not bending your knees when you run will create stiffness and