

# **BREEN TRACK CLUB** - Mechanics of Distance Running

## **1. Running Posture**

A middle distance or distance runner should “run tall”- upright with a very slight forward lean - Picture a rope coming up through the body, out the top of the head, pulling you up. Another way to think of it: chest out, shoulders back, chin up. The head should be kept steady with eyes focused ahead.

### Posture Checklist

- Head held straight and steady
- Relaxed face
- Running tall

## **2. Arm-Action**

A runner’s arm-action helps control the cadence for the legs and stride. Arms should be relaxed and swinging freely yet, controlled. Elbows should be kept at a 90-degree angle with all the swing coming from the shoulder joint. Hands are loose, swinging from the hip up to the chest, but not crossing over the middle of the body.

### Arm-Action Checklist

- Hands loose, pretend you’re holding an eggshell or potato chip
- Shoulders relaxed and low
- Arms swinging low, back and forth, not side to side
- Hands swing from hips to chest

## **3. Stride**

A runner should have short, quick, efficient strides. Picture your feet and legs as wheels, not levers. You should take 180-190 steps/minute. You can count these by counting one of your arm swings for a minute and multiplying by two. You should be light on your feet – think about picking your leg up instead of pushing up off the ground...running on egg shells.

### Stride Checklist

- Run light
- Lift legs
- Quick strides

## **4. Foot Strike**

Perfect form results in a midfoot strike. Your feet should land directly under your hips, not in front of your body. Landing on this part of the foot enables more shock absorption and energy transfer. In addition, you shouldn’t hear your foot slamming on the ground – run light.

### Foot Strike Checklist

- Midfoot strike
- Feet landing beneath hips
- Little noise made by foot strike

## **5. Breathing**

As a runner, you are trying to get the most oxygen in your body and to your muscles while not disrupting your running rhythm. Breathe in and exhale through both your mouth and your nose at the same time. Keep your face and jaw relaxed.

### Suggested breathing rhythm

- Breathe in four strides and out four strides at a very easy effort
- Breathe in three and out three for a normal run
- Breathe in two and out two for workouts
- Breathe in one and out one when running at an all-out effort (sprinting)