



LA84 *Foundation*

Run 4 Fun Program



Coaches Manual

LA84 Foundation

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The LA84 Foundation (formerly the Amateur Athletic Foundation of Los Angeles) is endowed with surplus funds from the 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Games. Our mission is to serve youth through sport and to increase knowledge of sport and its impact on people's lives. The LA84 Foundation supports a wide array of youth sports programming. We award grants to youth sports organizations within the eight southernmost counties of California. We also conduct our own youth sports and coaching education programs, a number of which have become models for similar programs nationwide.

The LA84 Foundation operates the premier sports library in North America. The Foundation also maintains a sizable collection of historic sport art and artifacts much of which was inherited from the former Helms Athletic Foundation.

The LA84 Foundation is a private nonprofit institution. The Foundation has committed more than \$185 million to accomplish its mission since 1985. To date, two million boys and girls, and more than 1,000 youth sports organizations throughout Southern California have benefited from the endowment. They will be joined by many more in the years ahead.

The LA84 Foundation's Run 4 Fun Program introduces middle school youngsters, ages 10 to 14, to the sport of distance running. The program, since its inception in 1987, has introduced thousands of middle and junior high school students to distance running.

The 10-week curriculum, held from September to December, utilizes existing physical education classes and after-school sessions to provide students with an introduction to running for fun, fitness and competition. Youngsters must participate in timed runs of 800-meters, 1000-meters and 1-Mile to qualify for the final 2000-meters event. The culminating event, the annual LA84 Foundation Run 4 Fun Festival, features a 2-kilometer cross country race at Los Angeles' Griffith Park. It has become one of the largest youth races in the nation.

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I. COACHES INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on your decision to coach the Run 4 Fun Program at your school! To be a coach at any level of sports is both a privilege and an honor. To be a youth sport coach is especially meaningful. This role is incredibly important and carries with it significant responsibilities and personal accountability.

You may be the first person to introduce a youngster to sports. You, the coach, are at the very hub of the sport activity. Remember that your student-athletes have joined a team called Run 4 Fun probably for the FUN of it. It is your role to be the architect, the definer, the creator and the provider of each athlete's experience. You can make or break the quality of each athlete's experience.

This may be the first experience your students have in sports and being part of a team. They will learn skills, rules and strategies, and feel excitement, thrills and risks of athletic competition. The quality of these first sport experiences may have a profound influence and significant impact on the young athletes' enjoyment and continued participation in sport, as well as their personal growth and development.

As a coach, you must try to make this experience positive, exciting, enriching, encouraging and enjoyable. It is important for you to be well prepared to provide such an experience by your good intentions, strong commitment and key understanding.

THE 10-14 YEAR-OLD ATHLETE

The major focus for athletes of this age group is participation and skill refinement. These athletes are in the transitional stage of learning (passing from childhood to adulthood) and, true to their nature, love to challenge authority. At the same time, they seem to experience some daily identity crisis on a variety of issues. Life resembles an emotional roller coaster with ups and downs, like a yo-yo. They are the real socializers, which means peer influence, positive and negative, is a major impact.

Athletes of this age are only under your tutelage for a relatively short amount of time in their lifetime. What kind of an influence do you want to impose? Negative influences can contribute to an adolescent dropping out of sports – if and when the peer group decides that fun is somewhere else. This group needs a coach who can tolerate challenges, nonsense and complaining, as well as set the guidelines and limitations for expected behavior. This group needs a very special person who is secure enough to enforce the consequences for violations of established group norms. The person in charge also needs to demonstrate several strong leadership qualities such as fairness and consistency of treatment and follow-through – actions always under scrutiny by this particular age group.

THE ROLE OF THE COACH

Your role as coach is demanding, multi-dimensional, time-consuming and, consequently, very complex. You may at times be called on to fill divergent roles such as:

- Substitute Mother or Father
- Friend – Confidant – Soul Searcher – Miracle Worker
- Guidance Counselor – Therapist – Disciplinarian
- Teacher – Coach – Trainer
- Equipment Manager – Detective
- Leader – Organizer – Manager – Salesperson – Recruiter
- Public Relations Person – Fund Raiser
- Mentor

To fulfill all that is expected of you, consider coach responsibilities for your own self:

- Develop personal coaching competency.
- Develop a coaching philosophy.
- Prepare the coaching program.
- Be able to communicate.
- Demonstrate leadership.
- Evaluate your program.
- Evaluate your coaching staff (if applicable).
- Manage within the coaching context.

Also consider coach responsibilities in regards to your athletes:

- Identify individual differences.
- Develop technical abilities.
- Develop physical and athletic attributes.
- Develop psychological abilities.
- Evaluate and facilitate change.
- Effect and facilitate change.
- Facilitate life-skills learning.

COACHES' CODE OF ETHICAL CONDUCT

- Show respect for athletes, officials, and other coaches.
- Respect the integrity and judgment of your officials.
- Establish standards and be a model for fair play, sportsmanship and proper conduct.
- Provide proper supervision of your athletes at all times.
- Use discretion when providing constructive criticism and when disciplining your athletes.
- Be consistent in requiring your athletes to adhere to the rules and standards of your sport.
- Always instruct your athletes in the safe use of equipment.

(Adapted from the California State Department of Education Coaches' Code of Ethical Conduct).

THE ATHLETES' RIGHTS

Coaches have the "right" to coach within the realm of good ethics and sound morals.

The athletes have rights too.

- A right to play with equal consideration on the team.
- The right to participate with teammates and against opponents at a level equal to his or her maturity and ability.
- Rights as a member of the team and to be dismissed from the team for deviant behavior and violation of accepted group norms.
- The right to due process.
- The right to free speech.
- The right to a safe environment, including the right to safety information and to participation in improving playing conditions.
- The right to as much information as possible about the team, his or her position, playing hazards, possibilities of playing at a higher level and information necessary for educational enrichment and development.
- The right, when appropriate, to participate in the decision-making process due to his or her position on the team or athletic experience as a whole.
- The right to oppose authority when the foregoing principles are not met without verbal, physical, emotional or sexual harassment.

(Based on "Athlete Rights," cited in Stoll, 1993, pp. 85-87).

MOTIVATION

Motivation is all about having needs and striving to fulfill those needs. The three most significant ways that young athletes fulfill their need to feel worthy is by fulfilling three critical sub-needs:

- The need to feel competent.
- The need to feel a sense of achievement.
- The need to feel accepted.

As a coach, it is your responsibility to create, nurture and protect each child's feelings of self-worth! Create an environment that is filled with experiences that will build and enhance self-worth and motivation. Young athletes then will be excited about reaching for their best!

II. WARM-UP AND COOL-DOWN ROUTINES

The importance of warming-up before the start of a running training session or race cannot be overemphasized. Warming-up properly not only reduces the risk of injury, it also enhances performance by improving joint flexibility, range of motion, muscle resiliency and overall strength. The training time allotted to warming-up is small compared to the amount of time which can be lost to an injury.

Every practice session should begin with appropriate warm-up exercises. A complete warm-up for a youth-based distance running program should include a brief, easy-paced warm-up run, stretching exercises and build-up runs or a running game.

THE WARM-UP RUN

Each practice session should begin with an easy warm-up run to loosen the muscles, raise the body's temperature and prepare the runner to stretch thoroughly.

WHY DO A WARM-UP RUN?

An easy run allows the heart rate and body temperature to rise gradually for a safe transition into faster running.

HOW TO ORGANIZE IT

Have your runners do a continuous, easy-paced jog of approximately 400-800 meters (1/4-1/2 Mile) or 3-6 minutes all together, or in several smaller ability-based groupings.

STRETCHING EXERCISES

Muscles which have been gently stretched are less susceptible to tightness and cramping during running activities. Runners need strong, loose muscles to run with rhythm and fluidity. **Ten minutes of stretching should be the next phase of the warm-up.** Each exercise should use slow stretching movements and be held for approximately 10-seconds at the first point of discomfort.

WHY STRETCH?

Running strengthens the muscles of the legs, which also tends to make them less flexible. Special attention should be devoted to stretching the lower back, hamstrings and calf muscles. Stretching relieves soreness, increases muscle resiliency and range of motion and reduces the risk of injury.

HOW TO ORGANIZE IT

Have your runners form a large circle facing inwards toward you. Instruct them in each exercise, call out each set of 10-counts and observe while walking around the inside of the circle. Make individual corrections for proper execution as necessary.

STRETCHING COACHING HINTS

- Stretch on **SOFT SURFACES**, such as grass, whenever possible.
- Emphasize stretching **SLOWLY and GRADUALLY** without forcing the stretch.
- Encourage **PROPER BREATHING** by teaching your runners to inhale.....and exhale slowly as they extend into the stretch.
- In **COLD WEATHER**, allow more time for your warm-up. Instruct your runners to dress in layers and remove them as their body temperature rises.
- In **HOT WEATHER**, runners still need to warm-up, but they can do so in less time.

SAMPLE 10-MINUTE STRETCHING ROUTINE FOR KIDS:

1. SIDE-BENDS....10-counts

Muscles stretched: side, stomach and low back

“Stand with your feet slightly apart. Extend your right arm over your head, arch your back and lean to your left. Then extend your right arm over your head, arch your back and lean to your right.” Repeat 10-times.



2. HANGING STRETCH....5 x 5-counts

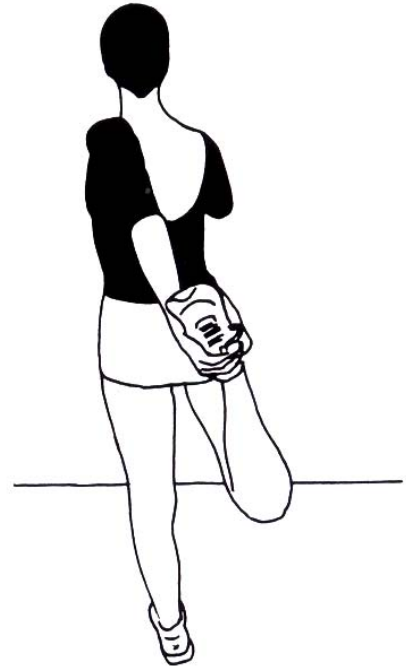
Muscles stretched: low back and hamstrings

*“Stand with your feet at shoulder-width. Extend your arms over your head, then slowly bend-over and hang your hands down toward your toes keeping your legs straight for 5-counts. **DO NOT BOUNCE-DOWN** to touch your toes! Allow the weight of your body hanging forward to stretch the lower back and hamstring muscles.”* Return to a standing position and repeat 4-times.

3. THIGH STRETCH....10-counts each leg

Muscles stretched: thigh

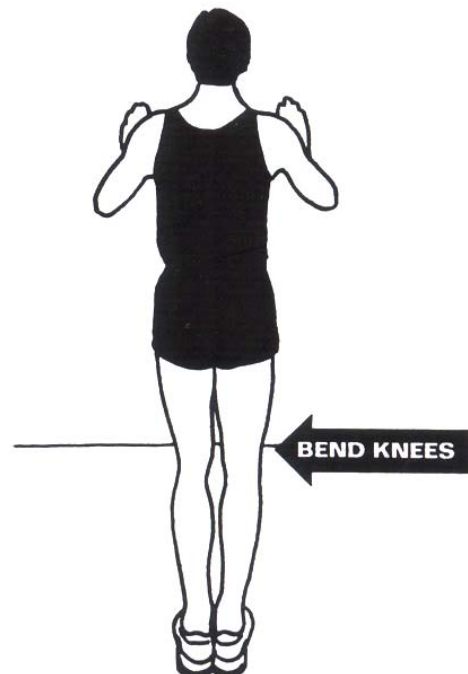
“Hold on to a fixed object (tree, pole, fence, wall or a teammate) to steady yourself. Spread your feet slightly apart, lift your right foot toward your butt and reach down and grab your right ankle with your left hand. Increase the stretch by pulling your foot up towards the low back.” Hold for 10-counts. Change legs and repeat.



4. CALF STRETCH....2 x 10-counts each

Muscles stretched: calf

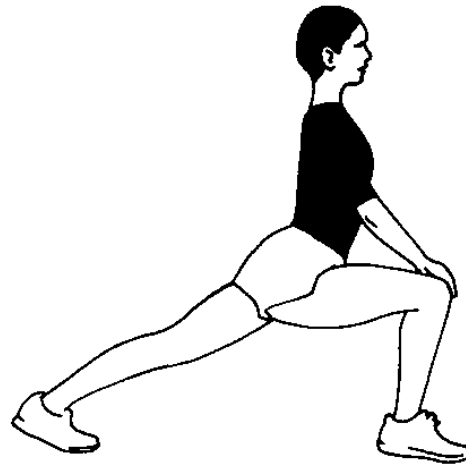
*“Hold on to a fixed object to steady yourself. Facing straight ahead with both legs straight and heels flat on the ground, lean forward until you feel the stretch in your calves (lower leg muscles) for 10-counts. Repeat, but **“bend the knees this time keeping your heels flat on the ground.”**”*



5. LUNGE STRETCH....10-counts each leg

Muscles stretched: hip flexors, calves and abdomen

“Standing with both feet together, step forward with your right foot keeping it directly in front of your left foot. Keep your left leg straight, push your left heel toward the ground and arch your back. Hold for 10-counts.” Change legs and repeat.



6. BUTTERFLY STRETCH....10-counts

Muscles stretched: groin

“Sit on the ground with the soles of your shoes together. Grab the toes of your shoes, pull your heels toward your groin and push your knees down toward the ground for 10-counts.”



7. TOE TOUCH STRETCH....10-counts

Muscles stretched: arches, calves, hamstrings, lower back and shoulders

“Sit on the ground with both legs extended. Pull your toes back and slowly reach both arms forward toward your feet with a sweeping butterfly swim-stroke motion 10-times.”

8. MODIFIED-HURDLER STRETCH....10-counts each leg

Muscles stretched: lower back, hamstrings and groin

“Sit on the ground with both legs extended. Fold your left leg to the inside, so that the sole of your left shoe touches the inside of your right knee. Grab your right ankle with both hands and slowly pull your torso forward for 10-counts.” Change legs and repeat.



9. PRETZEL STRETCH....10-counts each leg

Muscles stretched: buttocks and low back

“Sit on the ground with your legs extended. Place your left foot across your right knee, reach your right elbow across your left knee and look behind you for 10-counts.” Change legs and repeat.



BUILD-UP RUNS

The final phase of the warm-up should be **5-6 short acceleration runs of 50-60 meters**, each slightly faster than the previous one, to prepare the body for faster running. (**NOTE:** A running game such as **shuttle relays** could...and should...occasionally be substituted for build-up runs at the end of the warm-up).

WHY DO BUILD-UP RUNS?

Doing a series of short, progressively faster, acceleration runs prepares the body to run at faster speeds in the training session or race to follow.

HOW TO ORGANIZE IT

Have your team run **4-5 times 50-60 meters** divided into training groups based on their current running ability. Jog back to the start for recovery. Begin at a striding-pace and make each run slightly faster than the last.

THE COOL-DOWN

Every training session and race should be followed by a "*cool-down*" period. The cool-down allows the body to gradually return to its normal temperature and respiration rate, flushes lactates from the muscles, avoids muscle soreness and enhances recovery for the next session of running.

WHY COOL-DOWN?

Doing some easy jogging and stretching after a vigorous training session or race allows the body to flush-out the muscles and gradually return to normal heart and respiration rate and temperature.

HOW TO ORGANIZE IT

Have your runners do an easy jog of approximately 3-5 minutes together in their warm-up groups, as a group, followed by a few easy stretches.

III. TEACHING PROPER RUNNING MECHANICS

The body moves as a system of levers. Each of these levers (the head, torso, arms and legs) obeys the laws of physics and motion. The three primary components of running mechanics are posture, arm-action and foot-strike.

POSTURE

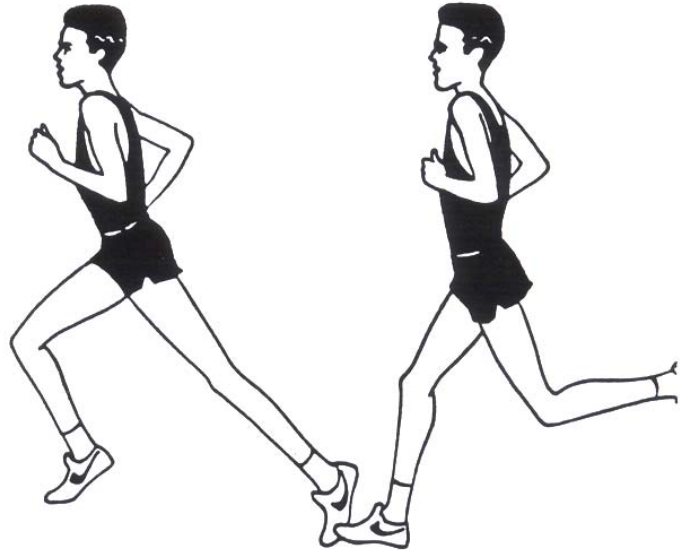
Distance runners should run "tall" with the upper body erect and their weight centered over their hips. You do not need to coach forward lean. Forward lean is a function of *acceleration*. The body leans forward as it accelerates and straightens as acceleration slows. The acceleration occurs in the first several strides of a distance run. After that, the position of the torso should be *erect*, directly above the hips. When running, the legs swing forward-and-back like a double pendulum. The sweep of that pendulum action is the length of the stride and is largely determined by the height to which the knee swings forward. Leaning forward lowers the body's center of mass. The knees cannot swing forward above the center of mass, so leaning forward decreases the length of the stride.

WHAT TO TEACH

Athletes should be taught to run erect with the torso directly above the hips, head up, chin slightly tucked, chest out and shoulders back.

ARM-ACTION

The arms help the runner move in the direction he or she wants to go. Swinging the arms straight forward-and-back or across the mid-line of the body causes the shoulders to rotate, restricting the free swing of the legs at the hip joints. Shrugging the shoulders during the arm swing also creates shoulder rotation. To keep the shoulders "square" while running, the arms should swing forward with the hands moving from a point just behind the hips, slightly across the chest, and up to nearly shoulder level.



The forearm and hand should move forward and back as one piece. Flexing the wrists turns the elbows out, reducing the leverage of the arm-swing. The hands should stay relaxed and cupped because clenching the hands into fists causes the body to tense.

The arms control running. A runner's pace is set by the cadence of the arm-swing. But distance runners cannot run with vigorous arm action without paying a high energy cost, so conserving energy must be a primary objective of the arm-swing.

WHAT TO TEACH

The arms should swing forward and back until the finishing sprint with a constant arm angle of approximately 90-degrees. Running with the hands held *palms down* tends to lock-in the proper arm angle. The forearm and hand should always move *in one piece* without any break in the wrist. The hands should be cupped and relaxed.

FOOT-STRIKE



Shoes can significantly alter our natural foot-strike mechanics. Most of us would not land on our heels, slapping our forefeet to the ground, if running barefoot. Today's super-cushioned shoes allow runners to make those kinds of mechanical mistakes. A heel-first foot-strike extends the foot in front of the center of mass and creates a *braking-action* at each touch down. This is called "over-striding." Force can only be applied efficiently at certain angles. Landing in the mid-stance position, with the weight forward toward the ball of the foot, puts the foot beneath the hips with the leg slightly bent, ready to bear weight. This position allows for a rapid forward weight transfer

as the leg straightens into the next stride with a full extension off the ball of the foot.

Accelerating off the pace requires different mechanics than accelerating from a start. Many distance runners try to run faster in the closing stages of a race by taking longer strides. This results in over-striding and a loss of speed. The key to accelerating off the pace is creating short, quick levers by closing the arm angles, increasing arm cadence and shortening the stride. Running with the hands turned *thumbs up* recruits more arm and shoulder muscles to swing the arm rapidly.

WHAT TO TEACH

The foot should strike flat in a mid-stance position with the heel making contact, putting the weight *forward* toward the ball of the foot.



BREATHING

When running, the rate of respiration increases to meet the body's increased demand for more oxygen. Taking deeper breaths enhances oxygen intake.

WHAT TO TEACH

Keep the thoracic cavity expanded by running erect with the chest out and shoulders back. Relax, take deep abdominal breaths, and breathe through both the nose and mouth.

PRINCIPLES OF LONG DISTANCE AND CROSS-COUNTRY TRAINING

AEROBIC CONDITIONING

The fundamental purpose of cross-country training is to enhance the capacity to utilize oxygen. Since 75-90% of the energy used to run distance races is produced aerobically, it is very hard for athletes to succeed in cross-country without a solid base of aerobic fitness. As aerobic fitness grows, an athlete is able to expend more energy during a race and, thereby, run faster.

The commonly accepted measure of aerobic fitness is the VO₂ max, the limit of the body's ability to consume oxygen. The higher your VO₂ max, the more fit you are. The goal of aerobic training is to increase VO₂ max. In terms of training, this goal is best accomplished through prolonged low-intensity aerobic exercise.

USING HEART RATES TO GUIDE TRAINING

The basis of heart rate-based training is the direct relationship between heart rate and the oxygen demands of exercise. As energy demands increase, the heart rate rises in order to pump more oxygen to the working muscles. Therefore, it is possible to use heart rate as a measure of aerobic performance in training cross-country runners. However, it is not a simple formula and there are several flaws in the use of a general formula.

We are commonly told that in order to develop basic aerobic fitness and increase VO₂ max, you need to exercise 30-45 minutes a day at 60-70% of your maximum heart rate. Unfortunately, one-size does not fit all. Your athletes may find following this formula too easy for some, too hard for others.

One of the primary benefits of heart rate-based training is that it helps athletes and coaches avoid over-training during workouts. On steady-pace runs, make sure that your athletes stay in the suggested range.

Most useful, however, is keeping a record of daily heart rates as a good way to spot over-training and oncoming illness. Usually, athletes' heart rate varies little from day to day, so if one day it is elevated, it may be a sign of not being recovered from the previous workout or it may indicate pending illness.

MEASURING HEART RATE

Teach your athletes how to measure their heart rate. There are several ways, but the simplest is to take the pulse rate at the wrist. Place the middle two fingers of one hand on the inside of the wrist. After locating the pulse, have the athlete count the number of beats for a designated fraction of a minute. Counting for six seconds allows you to catch the pulse at its peak, before it slows down; and it is an easy step to multiply by 10 to measure the beats by the minute. Keep in mind that a short pulse count period is less accurate than a longer one. If you are counting a resting pulse rate, count for the whole minute.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Many young runners do not have a good feel for how their bodies move (kinesthetic sense). Even those who do, often lose that sense once they become fatigued. Practicing proper running technique must be an ongoing process if you want your athletes to acquire efficient, rhythmic, symmetrical running mechanics. You must develop a critical eye for proper mechanics, correct errors and praise progress.

HELPFUL COACHING CUES....

For Correct Posture:

"Sit up"

"Run tall"

"Head up, chin slightly tucked"

"Chest out, shoulders back"

For Correct Arm-Action:

"Let the shoulders hang loose and relaxed"

"Let the arms swing from the shoulder as one piece"
"Hands cupped and relaxed"
"Hands down, palms down"

For Correct Foot-Strike:

"Flat landing--weight forward"
"Stay off your heels"

To Relax:

"Run smooth and loose"
"Loose hands, loose jaw"
"Get comfortable"

To Accelerate and Sprint:

"Quick arm--short strides"
"Hands up--thumbs up"
"Drive off the balls of your feet"

IV. RUNNING DRILLS TO TEACH SKILLS

The following drills are excellent for developing stride mechanics, while building rhythmic skills, ballistic strength and power in the legs and feet of young runners. Ten ground contacts is a good place to start with each drill.

1. WALKING WITH HIGH KNEES

"Pull your knees up towards your chest, and push-up on to the balls of your feet."

2. WALKING WITH A STRAIGHT-LEG KICK UP

"Walking forward with short strides, swing one foot up to shoulder-level and push hard off the ground with the ball of your other foot using a vigorous arm-swing."

3. RUNNING WITH HIGH KNEES

*"Running with short strides, use your thigh muscles to pull your knees up to hip level. Stay erect and **do not lean back** to assist lifting your knees."*

4. RUNNING BUTT-KICKS

"Lean forward slightly and run flipping your heels up to touch your butt."

5. POWER SKIPPING

"Emphasize driving your knee up, extending your lower leg, and driving off the ball of your other foot using a vigorous arm-pump."

Variations...

- . **Skipping with straight arms.**
- . **Skipping with a quick down-stroke.**
- . **Skipping with high knees**, trying to create as much vertical lift as possible.

6. DOUBLE-LEG HOPPING

“Hop forward on both feet at once. **Alternate a short, low hop with a high hop.** For each high hop, use a vigorous double-arm pump at take-off and pull both your heels up to touch your butt. Do not try to go too high, or too far, on each hop.”

7. SINGLE-LEG HOPPING

“Hop forward on one foot. **Alternate a short, low hop with a high hop.** For each high hop, use a vigorous double-arm pump at take-off and pull the heel of your hopping foot up to touch your butt. Do not try to go too high, or too far, on each hop.”

V. SAMPLE 10 WEEK RUN 4 FUN TRAINING PROGRAM FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL BOYS AND GIRLS

The following sample training schedule is offered to help you initiate an *LA84 FOUNDATION RUN 4 FUN* Program at your school. It is based on a schedule of two training sessions per week, for one hour each.

If you are an experienced track or cross-country coach or if your school has participated in *Run 4 Fun* for several years, you probably have your own methods to teach youngsters the fundamentals of running and have developed your own 10 week progression of workouts. We encourage every coach to be creative in designing a *RUN 4 FUN* Program which provides the best results for students in your school's unique environment and circumstance.

If you are a first-time running coach, these training sessions are only suggestions. We hope they will be helpful as a guide to teaching proper running mechanics, how to warm-up and cool-down properly and making each training session **FUN** for your young runners.

Remember that you can always run for *minutes*, rather than *meters*, and approximate the distances you run in training. However, the distances your students run for our LA84 FOUNDATION Postal Competitions during the 10 week training program at **800-meters**, **1000-meters** and **1-Mile** must be accurate for the results to have any validity. If you need help measuring some running areas at your school, please do not hesitate to let us know.

Finally, we want to emphasize that the *LA84 FOUNDATION RUN 4 FUN* Program is not *Students Run LA* and does not attempt to prepare 10-14 year-olds to run a 26-mile marathon. *Run 4 Fun* is designed to be a sports/fitness activity for Los Angeles area middle schools which will accommodate your least physically-fit and athletically-skilled students, as well as your natural runners. We hope that the former will be a focus group for inclusion, encouragement and praise within your program. They are always the last kids to be picked for teams for every school and neighborhood game they play, and the ones who can benefit the most physically and socially from a successful experience participating in an aerobic team sport activity like *Run 4 Fun*.

PLANNING THE PRACTICE

In order to conduct an effective workout in a positive sports environment, you need to plan ahead, be organized, offer meaningful activities and critically reflect on the lesson after each workout. A sample plan includes:

- Facilities and Safety Check - Time to check the facilities for potential safety hazards.
- Introduction - A good time for general announcements, roll call and explanation of the workout.
- Warm-Up - Includes the warm-up run, stretches and build-up runs.
- Main Theme - The focus of the training session.
- Cool-Down - Similar to the warm-up. The finish to the active part of the session.
- Closure - Time to interact with the athletes regarding feedback, praise, encouragement, motivational talks and upcoming information.

MASTER 60-MINUTE TRAINING SCRIPT

<u>MINUTES</u>	<u>ACTIVITY</u>
2	Assemble your team members and make announcements
5	Warm-Up Run (<i>take attendance</i>)
10	Group Stretching Exercises
8	Running Drills (<i>strength & technique training</i>)
5	Build-Up Runs (<i>or Running Game</i>)
20	CORE TRAINING ACTIVITY
5	Cool-Down Run
5	Cool-Down Exercises (<i>make announcements regarding your next training session</i>)
<hr/>	
60	TOTAL MINUTES

WEEK 1

TRAINING SESSION #1

GOAL: To learn a training regimen of warming-up with jogging, stretching, drills and build-up runs, pacing yourself through a running workout and warming-down afterwards.

1- WARM-UP RUN: 200-meters easy jog

2- STRETCHING: (9 suggested exercises)

3- RUNNING DRILLS: 2 x 20-meters each

- . Walking with High Knees
- . Walking with a Straight Leg Kick-Up
- . Running with High Knees
- . Running Butt-Kick

4- BUILD-UP RUNS: 5 x 50-meters

5- CORE TRAINING ACTIVITY:
CONTINUOUS RUNNING

On a 150-meters loop, run 100-meters at a comfortable pace and walk 50-meters for 4 continuous loops.

6- COOL-DOWN: Walk 200-meters followed by 3 suggested stretches

TRAINING SESSION #2

GOAL: To increase self-awareness of how the body moves and what it feels like to run with proper posture.

1- WARM-UP RUN: (300-meters total) 50-meters easy jog followed by 50-meters skipping. Repeat 3-times.

2- STRETCHING:

3- RUNNING DRILLS: 2 x 20-meters each

- . Skipping with Straight-Arms
- . Skipping with High Knees
- . Skipping with a Quick Down-Stroke
- . Power Skipping

4- BUILD-UP RUNS: 5 x 50-meters

5- CORE TRAINING ACTIVITY:
REPETITION RUNNING

3 x 400-meters at a steady pace with a walk 200-meters recovery in-between.

6- COOL-DOWN: Jog 200-meters, stretch

"It's not necessarily the amount of time you spend at practice, it's what you put into the practice." Eric Lindros

WEEK 2

TRAINING SESSION #3

GOAL: To learn to run with proper foot-strike mechanics.

1- WARM-UP RUN: 300-meters easy jog

2- STRETCHING:

3- RUNNING DRILLS: 2 x 20-meters each

- . Walking with High Knees
- . Walking with a Straight Leg Kick-Up
- . Running with High Knees
- . Running Butt-Kick

4- BUILD-UP RUNS: 4 x 60-meters

5- CORE TRAINING ACTIVITY:

REPETITIONS

1 x 300-meters, 1 x 800-meters, 1 x 300-meters at a steady pace. Walk the same distance, run for recovery.

6- COOL-DOWN: Jog 300-meters, stretch

TRAINING SESSION #4

GOAL: To learn to run with proper arm-swing mechanics.

1- WARM-UP RUN: (300-meters total)
100-meters easy jog followed by 50-meters running with high knees...100-meters easy jog...50-meters skipping

2- STRETCHING:

3- RUNNING DRILLS: 2 x 20-meters each

- . Double-Leg Hops (*w/short hop in-between*)
- . Single-Leg Hops (*w/short hop in-between*)

4- BUILD-UP RUNS: 5 x 50-meters

5- CORE TRAINING ACTIVITY:

CLOVER RELAYS (see page 27)

Divide your runners into balanced teams of like numbers. After they have chosen their running order, have each runner go 100-meters out, turn around, run back to the starting line and slap hands with their out-going teammate. Continue until each runner has run out-and-back 3-times and repeat.

6- COOL-DOWN: Jog 300-meters, stretch

“Enthusiasm brushes off upon those with who you came in contact. You must truly enjoy what you’re doing.” John Wooden

WEEK 3

TRAINING SESSION #5

GOAL: To accept the opportunity and challenge to become a better runner.

1- WARM-UP RUN: 400-meters easy jog

2- STRETCHING:

3- RUNNING DRILLS: 2 x 30-meters each

- . Skipping with Straight-Arms
- . Skipping with High Knees
- . Skipping with a Quick Down-Stroke
- . Power Skipping

4- BUILD-UP RUNS: 4 x 60-meters

5- CORE TRAINING ACTIVITY:

800-METERS TIMED RUN

Record each runner's time on the forms provided and submit for the **1ST** of 3 LA84 FOUNDATION postal competitions.

(Remember that runners must participate in **ALL THREE** postal competitions to be eligible to participate in the LA84 FOUNDATION RUN 4 FUN FESTIVAL at the end of the 10 week training program).

6- COOL-DOWN: Jog 300-meters, stretch

TRAINING SESSION #6

GOAL: To run with an awareness of proper posture, arm-swing & foot-strike mechanics.

1- WARM-UP RUN: (500-meters total)

Jog 100-meters...skip 100-meters...jog 100-meters...skip 100-meters...jog 100-meters

2- STRETCHING:

3- RUNNING DRILLS: 2 x 30-meters each

- . Walking with High Knees
- . Walking with a Straight Leg Kick-Up
- . Running with High Knees
- . Running Butt-Kick

4- BUILD-UP RUNS: 5 x 50-meters

5- CORE TRAINING ACTIVITY:

CONTINUOUS RELAYS (see page 27)

Divide your runners into balanced teams of like numbers using your 800-meters timed run results. After they have chosen their running order, have each runner run a 200-meters loop and pass a **BATON** to their outgoing teammate. Continue until each runner has run 4-times.

6- COOL-DOWN: Jog 400-meters, stretch

"Team spirit means you are willing to sacrifice personal considerations for the welfare of all. That defines a team player." John Wooden

WEEK 4

TRAINING SESSION #7

GOAL: To run with awareness of proper mechanics.

- 1- **WARM-UP RUN:** (500-meters total)
300-meters easy jog...100-meters at a steady pace...100-meters at a fast pace
- 2- **STRETCHING:**
- 3- **RUNNING DRILLS:** 2 x 30-meters each
.Double-Leg Hops (*w/short hop in-between*)
.Single-Leg Hops (*w/short hop in-between*)
- 4- **BUILD-UP RUNS:** 5 x 50-meters
- 5- **CORE TRAINING ACTIVITY:**
WHISTLE WORKOUT: 10-min non-stop

Standing within a loop where you have audible and visual contact with your runners, direct a 10-minute continuous walk-jog-run sprint session as follows:

- 1 whistle = WALK
- 2 whistles = JOG
- 3 whistles = RUN at steady pace
- 1 **LONG** whistle = SPRINT

- 6- **COOL-DOWN:** Jog 400-meters, stretch

TRAINING SESSION #8

GOAL: To learn to run continuously at different paces.

- 1- **WARM-UP RUN:** 400-meters easy jog
- 2- **STRETCHING:**
- 3- **RUNNING DRILLS:** 2 x 50-meters
.Easy Skipping
- 4- **BUILD-UP RUNS:** 5 x 50-meters
- 5- **CORE TRAINING ACTIVITY:**
INDIAN FILE RUNNING (see page 28)

Divide your runners into balanced teams of like numbers. After they have chosen their running order, have each team run 3 x 800-meters (or 3-4 minutes) single-file. After the lead runner has gone 100-meters (or 30-seconds), the last runner in line increases his or her pace to run to the front of the line and so on. 4-minutes recovery in-between.

- 6- **COOL-DOWN:** Jog 400-meters, stretch

"You must believe in yourself if you expect others to believe in you." John Wooden

WEEK 5

TRAINING SESSION #9

GOAL: To complete a long run.

1- WARM-UP RUN: (500-meters total)
300-meters easy jog...100-meters at a steady pace...100-meters at a fast pace

2- STRETCHING:

3- RUNNING DRILLS: 2 x 30-meters each

- . Walking with High Knees
- . Walking with a Straight Leg Kick-Up
- . Running with High Knees
- . Running Butt-Kick

4- BUILD-UP RUNS:
Should be done *AFTER* a long run.

5- CORE TRAINING ACTIVITY:
2-MILES CONTINUOUS RUN

Divide your runners into groups by ability. Have them run a measured 2-Miles at an easy pace with the sole objective of completing the distance without stopping.

Finish with 5 x 50-meters build-ups.

6- COOL-DOWN: Jog 400-meters, stretch

TRAINING SESSION #10

GOAL: To learn to pace oneself through a competitive distance run.

1- WARM-UP RUN: 500-meters easy jog

2- STRETCHING:

3- RUNNING DRILLS: 1 x 40-meters each

- . Skipping with Straight-Arms
- . Skipping with High Knees
- . Skipping with a Quick Down-Stroke
- . Power Skipping

4- BUILD-UP RUNS: 4 x 60-meters

5- CORE TRAINING ACTIVITY:
1000-METERS TIMED RUN

Record each runner's time on the forms provided and submit for the 2ND of 3 LA84 FOUNDATION postal competitions.

(Remember that runners must participate in ALL THREE postal competitions to be eligible to participate in the LA84 FOUNDATION RUN 4 FUN FESTIVAL at the end of the 10 week training program).

6- COOL-DOWN: Jog 400-meters, stretch

"The difference between a successful person and others is not a lack of strength, not a lack of knowledge, but rather a lack of will." Vince Lombardi

WEEK 6

TRAINING SESSION #11

GOAL: To learn to run at an even-pace.

1- WARM-UP RUN: 600-meters easy jog

2- STRETCHING:

3- RUNNING DRILLS: 2 x 30-meters each
.Double-Leg Hops (*w/short hop in-between*)
.Single-Leg Hops (*w/short hop in-between*)

4- BUILD-UP RUNS: 4 x 60-meters

5- CORE TRAINING ACTIVITY:

REPETITIONS: 5 x 400-meters at goal pace

Give your runners a goal of running 5 x 400-meters at a pace, 10-seconds faster than their 1000-meters timed run. 3-minutes recovery between repetitions.

6- COOL-DOWN: Jog 400-meters, stretch

TRAINING SESSION #12

GOAL: To learn to adjust pace for running different distances.

1- WARM-UP RUN: 600-meters easy jog

2- STRETCHING:

3- RUNNING DRILLS: 1 x 40-meters each
. Walking with High Knees
. Walking with a Straight Leg Kick-Up
. Running with High Knees
. Running Butt-Kick

4- BUILD-UP RUNS: 5 x 50-meters

5- CORE TRAINING ACTIVITY:

CLOVER RELAYS (see page 27)

Divide your runners into balanced teams of like numbers. After they have chosen their running order, contest 3 separate relays over out-and-back distances of 200-meters, 150-meters and 100-meters. Continue until each runner has run 3-times. 3-4 minutes recovery between each relay.

6- COOL-DOWN: Jog 400-meters, stretch

“Respect your opponents, but never fear them. You have nothing to fear if you’ve prepared to the best of your ability.” John Wooden

WEEK 7

TRAINING SESSION #13

GOAL: To complete your longest continuous distance run.

1- WARM-UP RUN: 600-meters easy jog

2- STRETCHING:

3- RUNNING DRILLS: 1 x 40-meters each

- . Skipping with Straight-Arms
- . Skipping with High Knees
- . Skipping with a Quick Down-Stroke
- . Power Skipping

4- BUILD-UP RUNS: (AFTER the long run)

5- CORE TRAINING ACTIVITY:

2-3 MILES CONTINUOUS RUN

Divide your runners into groups by ability. Have them run a measured 2-3 Miles at an easy pace with the sole objective of completing the distance without stopping.

Finish with 5 x 50-meters build-ups.

6- COOL-DOWN: Jog 400-meters, stretch

TRAINING SESSION #14

GOAL: To use your knowledge of pace in a competitive distance run.

1- WARM-UP RUN: 600-meters easy jog

2- STRETCHING:

3- RUNNING DRILLS: 1 x 40-meters each

- . Walking with High Knees
- . Walking with a Straight Leg Kick-Up
- . Running with High Knees
- . Running Butt-Kick

4- BUILD-UP RUNS: 5 x 50-meters

5- CORE TRAINING ACTIVITY:

1-MILE TIMED RUN

Record each runner's time on the forms provided and submit for the 3RD and final LA84 FOUNDATION postal competition.

(Remember that runners must participate in ALL THREE postal competitions to be eligible to participate in the LA84 FOUNDATION RUN 4 FUN FESTIVAL at the end of the 10 week training program).

6- COOL-DOWN: Jog 400-meters, stretch

On "competitive greatness" –

"Be at your best when your best is needed. It's the enjoyment of a difficult challenge."

John Wooden

WEEK 8

TRAINING SESSION #15

GOAL: To reinforce the importance of running with proper mechanics to increase efficiency.

1- WARM-UP RUN: (600-meters total)
400-meters easy jog...100-meters at a steady pace...100-meters at a fast pace

2- STRETCHING:

3- RUNNING DRILLS: 1 x 40-meters each

- . Walking with High Knees
- . Walking with a Straight Leg Kick-Up
- . Running with High Knees
- . Running Butt-Kick

4- BUILD-UP RUNS: (AFTER the long run)

5- CORE TRAINING ACTIVITY:
WHISTLE WORKOUT: 15-min non-stop

Standing within a loop where you have audible and visual contact with your runners, direct a 15-minute continuous walk-jog-run sprint session as follows:

1 whistle = WALK
2 whistles = JOG
3 whistles = RUN at steady pace
1 LONG whistle = SPRINT

6- COOL-DOWN: Jog 400-meters, stretch

TRAINING SESSION #16

GOAL: To use your knowledge of pace in a competitive distance run.

1- WARM-UP RUN: 800-meters easy jog

2- STRETCHING:

3- RUNNING DRILLS: 2 x 30-meters each

- . Double-Leg Hops (*w/short hop in-between*)
- . Single-Leg Hops (*w/short hop in-between*)

4- BUILD-UP RUNS: 5 x 50-meters

5- CORE TRAINING ACTIVITY:
INDIAN FILE RUNNING (see page 28)

Divide your runners into balanced teams of like numbers. After they have chosen their running order, have each team run 1 x 1200-meters, 1 x 1000-meters, and 1 x 800-meters (or 6-minutes, 5-minutes, 4-minutes) single-file. After the lead runner has gone 100-meters (or 30-seconds), the last runner in line increases his or her pace to run to the front of the line and so on. 3-minutes recovery between runs.

6- COOL-DOWN: Jog 400-meters, stretch

"The tragedy in life is not reaching your goal, but having no goal to reach."

Benjamin Mays

WEEK 9

TRAINING SESSION #17

GOAL: To enjoy the fun of training and racing as part of a TEAM.

1- WARM-UP RUN: (800-meters total)
600-meters easy jog...100-meters walk...100-meters at a fast pace

2- STRETCHING:

3- RUNNING DRILLS: 1 x 40-meters each

- . Skipping with Straight-Arms
- . Skipping with High Knees
- . Skipping with a Quick Down-Stroke
- . Power Skipping

4- BUILD-UP RUNS: 5 x 50-meters

5- CORE TRAINING ACTIVITY:
CLOVER RELAYS (see page 27)

Divide your runners into balanced teams of like numbers. After they have chosen their running order, contest 3 separate relays over out-and-back distances of 300-meters, 200-meters and 100-meters. Continue until each runner has run 3-times. 3-4 minutes recovery between each relay.

6- COOL-DOWN: Jog 400-meters, stretch

TRAINING SESSION #18

GOAL: To enjoy the fun of training and racing as part of a TEAM.

1- WARM-UP RUN: 800-meters easy jog

2- STRETCHING:

3- RUNNING DRILLS: 2 x 30-meters each

- . Walking with High Knees
- . Walking with a Straight Leg Kick-Up
- . Running with High Knees
- . Running Butt-Kick

4- BUILD-UP RUNS: 4 x 60-meters

5- CORE TRAINING ACTIVITY:
CONTINUOUS RELAYS (see page 27)

Divide your runners into balanced teams of like numbers using your 1-Mile timed run results. After they have chosen their running order, have each runner run a 600-meters loop and pass a BATON to their outgoing teammate. Continue until each runner has run 3-times.

6- COOL-DOWN: Jog 400-meters, stretch

"I long to accomplish some great and noble task, but it is my chief duty to accomplish small tasks as if they were great and noble." Helen Keller

WEEK 10

TRAINING SESSION #19

GOAL: To prepare for the LA84 FOUNDATION RUN 4 FUN FESTIVAL 2K cross-country race.

1- WARM-UP RUN: 800-meters easy jog

2- STRETCHING:

3- TEAM MEETING: PACING YOURSELF

Emphasize the importance of using good pace judgment and not letting your excitement on race day trick you into running too fast at the start...and too slow at the finish. Everyone's RACE PLAN should be to 1) find a comfortable early pace, 2) keep a steady pace through the middle of the race and 3) finish strong.

4- BUILD-UP RUNS: (AFTER the long run)

5- CORE TRAINING ACTIVITY:
3-MILES CONTINUOUS RUN

Divide your runners into groups by ability. Have them run a measured 3-Miles at an easy pace with the sole objective of completing the distance without stopping.

Finish with 5 x 50-meters build-ups.

6- COOL-DOWN: Jog 400-meters, stretch

TRAINING SESSION #20

GOAL: To prepare for the LA84 FOUNDATION RUN 4 FUN FESTIVAL 2K cross-country race.

1- WARM-UP RUN: 800-meters easy jog

2- STRETCHING:

3- TEAM MEETING: RACE DAY LOGISTICS

Review bus departure times, race times, warm-up times and leaders for each age-group. Emphasize the importance of preparing for a good race by following their normal warm-up routine and supporting teammates in races before and after yours.

4- BUILD-UP RUNS: 4 x 60-meters

5- CORE TRAINING ACTIVITY:
REPETITIONS: 3 x 800-meters at 2K goal pace

Give your runners a goal of running 3 x 800-meters at their 1-Mile timed run pace. 5-minutes recovery between repetitions.

6- COOL-DOWN: Jog 400-meters, stretch

*"If you set a goal for yourself and are able to achieve it, you have won your race. Your goal can be to come in first, to improve your performance, or just finish – it's up to you."
Dave Scott, Triathlete*

VI. GLOSSARY

EASY PACE

A pace which feels easy. You should be able to carry on a conversation while running an "easy pace."

EASY DISTANCE RUNS

Long runs are more fun to do with others. Warm-up runs should teach athletes how to run together in a group at an easy pace. The first easy, continuous distance run is scheduled for **Week 5** of this training program (*2-Miles*). By then you should have a good idea of the ability and fitness level of each of your runners. Assign them to small groups based on their ability for these longer runs. Emphasize that these are non-competitive runs where the objective is to **run together** at a pace where they can talk to each other the entire distance.

STEADY PACE

A faster pace which feels "*comfortably hard.*"

REPETITION TRAINING

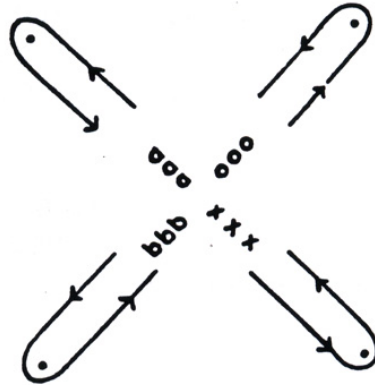
Repetition training involves running repeats of specific distances at a pre-determined pace. These runs are separated by periods of walking or jogging for a specific time or distance. Repetition training enables runners to become accustomed to faster paces, practice proper running mechanics, develop a sense of rhythm (*some coaches call this "tempo"*) and pace judgment. Novice runners must be cautioned not to run the first repetitions too fast! Since this is a virtual impossibility, you must watch your runners carefully to be sure they are sufficiently recovered before they attempt the next repetition.

TIMED RUNS

Caution against starting too fast should also be issued prior to doing your *TIMED RUNS*, the first of which occurs in **Week 3** of the program over 800-meters. Dividing your athletes into several heats for these runs, based on their ability, can create spirited competition in each heat, enable runners to cheer each other on and make it easier for you to time them all. To add to the excitement, enthusiastically call off each runner's time at the finish line and assign your better runners to run in the last heat.

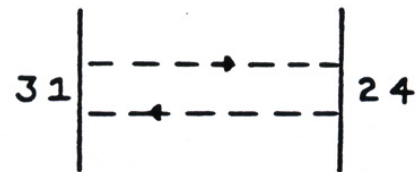
CLOVER RELAYS

The key to making any relay **FUN** for training purposes is dividing your athletes into evenly balanced teams. An advantage to running Clover Relays early in your training program, while you are still getting to know the ability of your athletes, is that each team runs in a **different direction** (see diagram below), so teams run against the clock rather than head-to-head. Use a slap-hands exchange between the incoming and outgoing runners.



SHUTTLE RELAYS (*Back-and-Forth Relays*)

For a shuttle relay, you must form teams of even numbers because each team must divide themselves equally at either end of the distance to be run in order to start and finish at the same point. (See diagram). Distances of **30-150 meters** are appropriate distances for shuttle relays. With younger runners, it is better to run shorter distances with large-numbered teams and do several repetitions. Use a slap-hands exchange between the incoming and outgoing runners.



CONTINUOUS RELAYS (*Paarlauf Relays*)

In a continuous relay, while one team member is running, the other members are resting and recovering waiting for their turn to run again. If you have a large loop to run around, you can divide your athletes into odd-numbered teams of 3-5 and have each runner run to a specified point on the loop, pass to their teammate, stay at that point and wait to take the pass from their next teammate coming back around. (See diagram on next page).

HOW TO EXCHANGE A RELAY BATON (See diagram below)

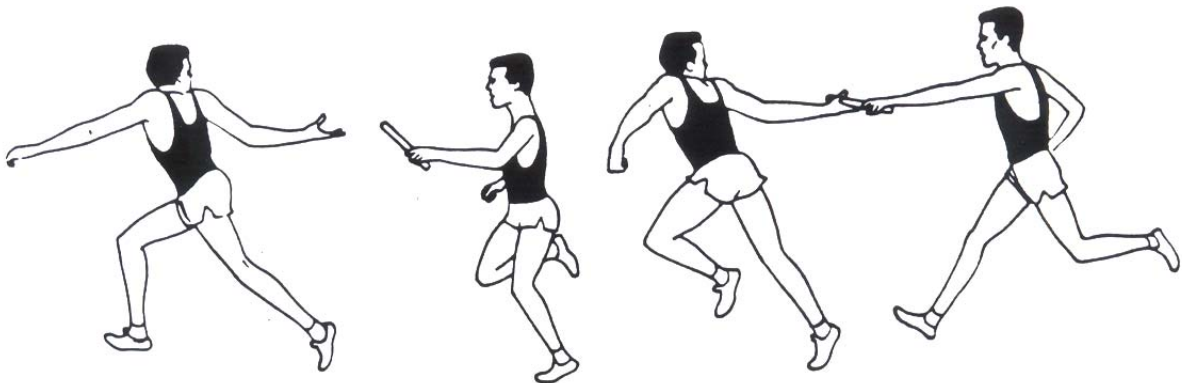
Using paper towel tubes or rolled-up newspapers if you do not have batons, have your runners carry and receive their baton in their natural, dominant hand. (*When the baton is dropped, it is usually while trying to change the baton from one hand to the other*).

INCOMING RUNNER

1. Wait to extend the baton until you are close enough for the outgoing runner to take it from you.
2. Do not slow down as you extend the baton for the exchange.
3. Make the baton a steady target as you extend it for the exchange. Do not try to place the baton in the hand of the outgoing runner. Let him or her take it from you.

OUTGOING RUNNER

1. When the incoming runner is approximately *10-strides away*, take a **running start** of 4-strides looking straight ahead.
2. Look back and extend the hand you want to carry the baton with, thumb up, and grasp the baton.



INDIAN-FILE RUNNING

Separating your team into groups of like-ability is critical to being able to perform Indian-file running. Each group runs together in single-file over a pre-determined course or loop. After the lead runner has covered a measured distance (*50-200 meters*), reaches a specific landmark (*e.g., a traffic cone you've placed on the loop*), or at the sound of your *whistle*, the last runner in line increases his or her pace and runs to the front of the line. At the next distance, landmark or whistle, the last runner moves to the front of the line, and so on, for the duration of the run.

VII. RUNNING EXTRAS

SHOES

A pair of soft-soled shoes is the **only** equipment a youngster needs for running. Shoes with the side of the heels worn down into *wedges* should be replaced. New running shoes should be sized to fit now, not to “grow into” later.

Today's running shoes do not need to be slowly broken-in. All shoes will stretch somewhat when used for running, however, new shoes should fit snug, with the toes **at** the end, but not pushing against the end of the shoe. Blisters and hot spots more often result from the foot moving inside of the shoe than from the shoe fitting too tight.

Athletic shoes have become highly specialized. Basketball shoes, for instance, are not well designed for distance running. Cross-Training shoes, however, work well for both. Even among running shoes, there are *training shoes* and very lightweight *racing shoes* available from more than a dozen different manufacturers, each featuring different sole designs and shock-absorption technology. An inexpensive pair of running shoes is all that is needed for this program.

CLOTHING

Loose, comfortable clothing which allows easy movement through a full range of motion is all that is needed for running. In warm weather, runners prefer to wear T-shirts and shorts. In cooler weather, a pair of sweatpants or tights, and a sweatshirt or sweater, are practical additions to your runner's wardrobe. After running, it is important to replace wet, sweaty T-shirts with a clean, dry top of some kind to avoid catching a chill (*hypo-thermia*) from cooling-off too quickly.

DIET

Children and adolescents have specific nutritional needs because of rapid growth during their developmental years. Proper daily nutrition requires six major nutrients. Each plays a different role in the creation and maintenance of good health.

The six nutrients are carbohydrates, proteins, fats, vitamins, minerals and water. The role of carbohydrates is to supply energy to the brain and nervous system and can be stored in limited quantities in the muscles. They are the principal fuels for anaerobic energy production but can also be used by the aerobic system. The role of proteins is to provide structural material for growth and the repair of muscles, bone and damaged tissues (cuts, bruises, arthritis and tendinitis). They are necessary for a healthy immune system. The role of fats is to be the primary fuel for the aerobic energy system. The body can store unlimited quantities of fat. Small quantities of dietary fat are needed to provide essential fatty acids for the digestion process and to transport certain vitamins.

The other three nutrients, vitamins, minerals and water, do not provide energy (or calories). Vitamins assist in the production of energy from the previous three nutrients and are essential for construction and maintenance of healthy tissues. Minerals assist in the transformation of fuel into energy. They also help maintain healthy tissues and regulate

body fluid. All tissues require water for normal functioning. Water transports nutrients in the digestive tract, bloodstream and cells. It regulates body temperature and transports waste out of the body.

Athletes should be aware that a large amount of water is usually lost through sweating during an intense activity. Adequate fluid intake during exercise is essential and critical. Therefore, athletes must be given time to replenish any fluid loss. Frequent water breaks might slow down your workout, but if the temperature is high, athletes can lose a significant amount of water through sweating. During intense or prolonged workouts, this depletion can become extreme.

A good rule of thumb is that athletes should drink several cups of fluid in the hour before activity, every 20 minutes throughout the activity and afterward until all fluid has been replaced.

Athletes have to take responsibility for the quality of their nutritional intake. In the end, they are the performers and need the proper energy fuel for success. Coaches, on the other hand, should be models of good eating habits in order to be as credible as possible when providing nutritional tips to athletes. A word of caution: Keep your tips simple and general. You are not their doctor. Avoid specific recommendations that may or may not be in their best interest. Remember, “everything in moderation.” What can you tell your athletes?

There is no one correct diet for runners. Every athlete, however, will benefit from eating a well-balanced, low-fat diet of complex carbohydrates, fruit, vegetables, fish, chicken and small amounts of red meat. Runners should be encouraged to drink water often during the day and permitted to drink during your workouts. It is generally best for runners to avoid eating 2-3 hours prior to a workout and 3-4 hours before a race.

INJURIES AND SAFETY

By training your athletes on a regular basis, following all the components of good, sound workout schedules, in a safe environment, you can prevent most injuries. However, the best-laid plans cannot alleviate all circumstances of injury.

Some of the more common injuries your athletes (especially those new to running) may face include **shin splints**, **runner’s knees**, **hamstring pulls**, **strains**, **sprains** and **stress fractures**. Common conditions that occur with runners include **blisters**, **athlete’s foot** and **sunburn**. More serious conditions include **dehydration** and **heat disorders**.

HOW CAN YOU IDENTIFY AND TREAT AN INJURY?

Indications of inflammation of soft-tissue injuries are known as “SHARP”:

- **S**welling
- **H**eat
- **A**ltered function of the injured part (limited movement)
- **R**edness
- **P**ain

“RICE” is the common method of caring for the inflammation of soft-tissue that occurs following injury:

- **R**est – to avoid making the injury worse
- **I**ce – firmly in place for 20 minutes, every 2 hours for the first 48 hours
- **C**ompression – use a stretch elastic bandage
- **E**levation – during and after applying ice, keeping the injured limb elevated above the heart as often as possible

A medical doctor should check out any injury that doesn't subside in a week's time.

Warming up and stretching is good injury prevention. Avoiding downhill running and avoiding running on hard and/or uneven surfaces is good advice, especially while recuperating from injury.

Blisters can easily be avoided by proper shoe fit and by wearing snug-fitting socks. Also applying various lubricants (i.e., Lanacaine or Vaseline) to the feet before competition can also prevent blisters during a race. If all else fails, applying moleskin or other skin-protective materials can help ease the pain of the blister.

Athlete's Foot is a fungus that commonly occurs on the foot, especially between the toes. It can be avoided by keeping the feet dry and clean. Moisture promotes growth of fungus. If drying the feet and using powder to keep them dry doesn't work, there are a variety of creams that can be applied until it subsides.

Sunburn is easily avoided by wearing sunscreen, protective clothing and hats or visors. Applying sunscreen with a SPF 30 or greater, at least 30 minutes before outdoor exposure, reduces risk of skin cancer.

Dehydration is a risk for those who don't drink enough fluids before, during or after a run. Waiting until you are thirsty is waiting too long to take in water. The higher the temperature and the more intense the activity, the greater need for staying hydrated. (See the nutrition section).

Heat disorders are potential problems for the athlete running in hot and humid conditions. Safety measures to take:

- Wear loose-fitting clothing and don't overdress.
- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Get accustomed to the temperatures that are likely to occur on race day.
- Always supervise your athletes.

KNOW THE SYMPTOMS TO WATCH FOR:

Heat Cramps

- Increased body temperature
- Heavy sweating
- Muscle spasm
- Fatigue

Heat Exhaustion

- Normal body temperature, elevated pulse rate
- Cool skin
- Extreme weakness
- Nausea
- Dizziness

Heat Stroke

- Elevated body temperature
- Hot and dry skin
- Disorientation
- Headache
- Nausea

Heat stroke is a serious medical emergency, so rest your athlete and seek medical help immediately.

THE EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN

The purpose of an emergency action plan is to get expert care to the injured athlete as quickly as possible. Only professionals who have specialized training should deal with injured athletes. Coaches should be trained in First Aid to take care of minor injuries.

Develop a plan, inform all participants and practice the plan. Have designated volunteers to help you in an emergency situation. You, the coach, cannot leave your team during practice or competition. Your volunteer who makes the telephone call for help must be prepared to give the exact location of the injured person, the type of injury and should report back to you. Keep a medical first-aid kit with you at all practices and competitions. Keep a checklist and keep it updated. Include the checklist in your kit:

- Athletes' emergency medical release forms.
- Pre-existing medical/physical problems of your athletes.
- Emergency numbers.
- Location of telephones (in relation to your practice location).
- Coins for use of telephone (kept in medical kit).

FREQUENT QUESTIONS YOU MAY BE ASKED

WHAT SHOULD I EAT BEFORE A RACE?

The pre-competition meal should:

- Consist of foods the athlete likes and tolerates easily.
- Consist of foods the athlete usually eats.
- Contain carbohydrates.

The day of competition is not the day to experiment with new food!

I CAN'T BREATHE. CAN I STOP RUNNING?

Resting and patience are the best cures. Relax, rest a bit, and it will usually go away. Make sure that you investigate and find what caused the problem and/or how it might be prevented. Be sure you are aware of any extenuating circumstances (i.e., asthma) and how to deal with an emergency.

WHAT SHOULD I DO FOR A SIDE ACHE?

This is the million-dollar question! Often times, a side ache is an “air pocket” that can be rubbed, massaged or stretched out. Having strong abdominal muscles can contribute to strong “breathing muscles,” so incorporating sit-ups in your workout is a good idea.

Some believe that eating dairy products prior to running can cause gas pains, contributing to side aches, so advise your athletes not to drink milk, for example, before running.

“Physical fitness is not only one of the most important keys to a healthy body, it is the basis of dynamic and creative intellectual activity. The relationship between the soundness of the body and the activities of the mind is subtle and complex. Much is not yet understood. But we do know what the Greeks knew - that intelligence and skill can only function at the peak of their capacity when the body is healthy and strong; that hardy spirits and tough minds usually inhabit sound bodies.”

John F. Kennedy