

The Importance of Running Lighter

I have always enjoyed running! I remember playing a variety of sports as a child; baseball, football, basketball, tag, kick-the-can, etc. It was so much fun and involved a tremendous amount of running. I often ran barefoot and never experienced muscle pain or injuries. I would tire, of course, but then recover and go sprinting off again. It felt natural. Somehow, I lost that feeling and recently made a promise to myself that I'd regain it.

I've been a competitive runner for over twenty-three years. I believe that, without my knowledge, I have periodically been applying the Pose Method. For several years I kept my range of motion compact and low to the ground, intuiting this was the most energy-efficient way to run.

When I first discovered Pose Tech I read the information on the web site (www.posetech.com) and decided that it was too much to swallow all at once. So, I made it easier for myself by choosing the two most noteworthy points on their website and applied them whenever I ran. The first was to land on the balls of the foot, at all times. The second was to lift my foot straight up, at all times. Just two points changed my running dramatically! After I was appointed triathlon coaching director with Total Immersion, I had less time to train, forcing me to make the fullest use of my time. I was only running 12 miles a week when I decided to enter a local 5k race. I knew this would be a good opportunity to put the Pose method to the test. The race began and I settled in at a comfortable pace. I kept repeating my mantras...balls of the feet...lift, lift, and lift. It worked wonderfully! I ran 18:38 and took third place overall. I had enough at the end to pass one more person approximately 200 yards from the finish, too. It felt great! I did have some tenderness in my calves the next morning, but no quad pain.

Okay, "I did alright," I thought, but the real test was about to present itself. The next week I was to run the Mystic (Conn.) Marathon with a triathlon client. He had confessed to me several weeks earlier that he'd been neglecting his workouts but he didn't want to drop out. We agreed to run at a slower pace and have a good time, regardless of our lack of training. (Ironman triathletes tend to do this kind of thing.) Now, I don't recommend this to anyone, by the way, it's just that this was the way everything worked out. With a 7-miler as the longest run I had done in the past two months I was scared, to say the least. However, I was committed to my plan to Pose and walk for 1 minute at every mile (a la Jeff Galloway). It worked perfectly! We finished in 4:08:45 and I have to honestly say that I have never, ever, felt so good following a marathon; slow or fast. In fact, over the next few days, no one even knew I had done a marathon due to the absence of limping, moaning or painful stairway descents. My quads were in excellent condition! Again, my calves were sore and tired, but not shredded. I just ran (and walked) 26.2 miles! Shouldn't I be in pain? Bottom line, I simply ran properly.

In mid-November, I advanced from unguided practice to learning from the master, attending a Coaching Certification Clinic in Miami. Dr. Romanov is an intense, intelligent and extremely passionate teacher. He demands complete focus of his students and insists on one's success. To learn from him is an utter joy! He strives to share his knowledge of the body and its vast potential. He's open to criticism and accepts challenges, but my advice is just keep your mind open and let him teach you what he knows; it's endless. I have been applying his lessons to my athletes with great success in very little time. As he says, "It's very simple." And once experienced, you may wonder why everyone hasn't been running this way in the first place.

While I was at the training course, we did only a sampling of Dr. Romanov's drills and strength exercises. It was exhausting, but only because my hamstrings are not used to such an active role. Trust me, I'm not complaining! It's just that my quadriceps have been doing most of the work for every foot-strike since I began running competitively almost a quarter-century ago. My advice to anyone thinking of attending a clinic is to get the DVD/Video and practice-up in order to be somewhat prepared for the new muscle use and receive maximum benefit from each session with Dr. Romanov.

The main thing I learned at the Pose Tech clinic was that I actually had no concept of what running was. I am familiar with many types of run training, but no concept of running. Now, I do. Movement, or running, is the transfer of energy through space and time. So, how does that transfer occur? Through the change of support from leg to leg, directly under the general center of mass (GCM) while applying the interaction of common forces; gravity, ground reaction and muscle elasticity. Of course, like anything that one wants to master, it takes time and correct repetition. The muscle memory that's been built over many years is usually pretty stubborn, not to mention psychological barriers. The wise student understands, however, that mastery is a never-ending process that lasts a

lifetime.

The Pose Method strikes me as the Total Immersion of running. Simple, yet very profound in its application. My goal is to introduce the Pose Method to as many athletes as possible so that they may experience and enjoy running as Dr. Romanov has for years. Who knows, maybe we will break the 2-hour barrier in the marathon after all. Thank you, Dr. Romanov.

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