

The Body Shop

HEAD-TO-TOE HELP FROM INJURY-PREVENTION PROS



Straighten Up

Prevent injury with exercises for good posture

AS YOU RUN, it pays to remember your grandmother's advice to straighten up. Good posture—chest upright, head looking forward (not at the ground), relaxed shoulders, arms at a 90-degree angle—plays a key role in performance. Running with your upper body slumped or leaning too far forward throws off your alignment, says Stephanie Weigel, RRCA running coach and co-owner of The Fitness Source in Las Vegas. "You end up putting excess force on your lower body, particularly your knees, with each stride." Your legs can't extend fully and your hip flexors contract, which makes your stride less efficient. Slouching also closes off your diaphragm, which forces you to breathe more shallowly, decreasing oxygen intake and causing side stitches. Counteract poor posture, says Weigel, by improving your core and upper-body strength with these three moves at least twice per week. —Denise Schipani

AVOID MIDRUN SLUMP

Posture fixes from a running and form coach

RUN TALL, RUN PROUD

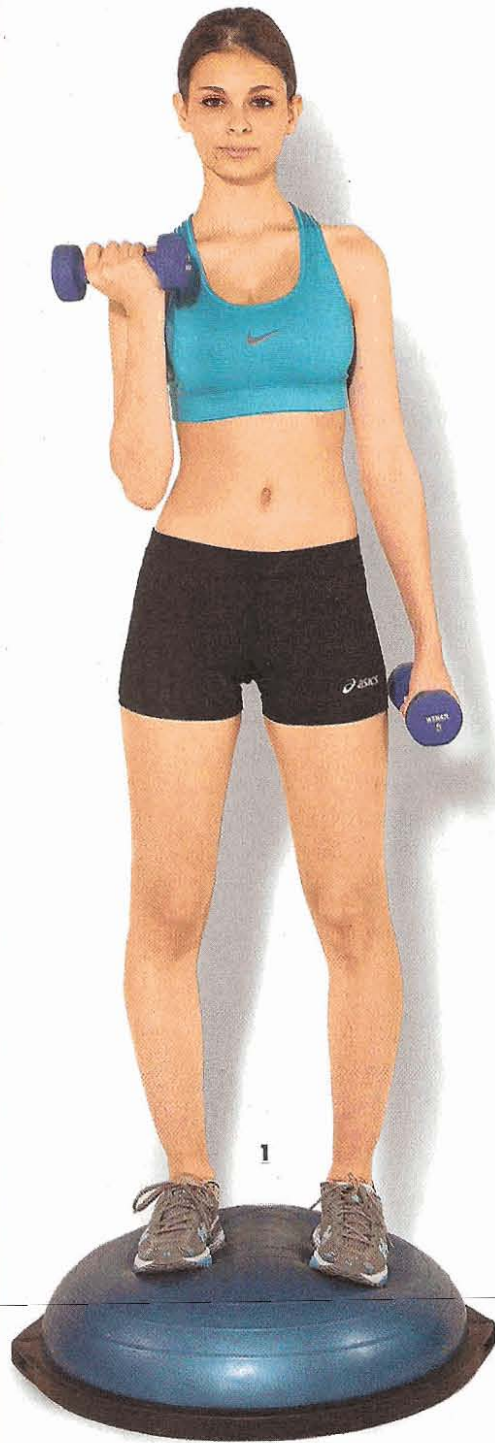
Push your chest out and slightly tip your hips forward, keeping your shoulders back and relaxed. "Sometimes it can be as simple as reminding yourself not to bend at the waist," says Golden Harper, a founder of Altra Footwear who hosts "Learn to Run" clinics.

REACH FOR THE MOON

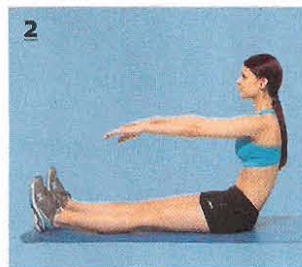
Stretch your arms up and in front of you at a 45-degree angle, as if you were putting a shoebox on the top shelf of your closet. You may feel a little funny doing this while you run, says Harper, but this move automatically pulls your hips and chest forward, "resetting" your posture.

FEEL THE "PULL"

Imagine that you're being pulled up a hill by a rope attached to a belt buckle and your chest. Keep your feet under you.



1



2



3

1. BOSU BALANCE

Improves lower-body stability and strengthens your core
TO DO → Do 10 to 12 reps of biceps curls or triceps extensions while standing on a Bosu ball. The ball's instability compels you to use your legs and core muscles to balance, says Weigel, and the stronger your core is, the straighter you stand naturally.

2. PILATES ROLL-UPS

Promotes core strength and hamstring flexibility
TO DO → Lie on your back, arms behind your head, legs straight, feet flexed. Contracting your abs and keeping your chin tucked and your arms by your ears, curl up slowly, as though "peeling" your spine

off the mat. Once you're upright, stretch your hands toward your feet. Pause, then curl back down. Imagine your spine in a "C" position, keeping your belly button pressed toward your lower back. That's one rep; do 10 to 12.

3. SHOULDER RAISE

Aligns your shoulders and lets you "feel" the shoulder position that helps prevent upper body fatigue
TO DO → Stand with your back against a wall, heels and shoulders touching the wall, arms hanging at your sides. Raise your arms up slowly to a "T" position to a count of 10. Maintain contact with the wall. Lower them back down and repeat 15 to 20 times.



See a video of this routine at runnersworld.com/straightenup. For more moves to improve posture and breathing, go to runnersworld.com/posture.