

What kind of runner are you? What I mean is, how do you run? Are you a pronator or a supinator? Do you have high arches, or no arch? Are you pigeon-toed, or are you a duck walker? How is your posture? How is your arm swing? Well, let's see what kind of runner you are.

Go out to Memorial Park, Rice University, or Allen Parkway and you will see thousands of runners on any given day. And you will see thousands of different running styles too. Of course, every person is made different, but you want to try to achieve the perfect running style to be the most efficient runner you can. You want to move everything going forward and fast with the least amount of energy. Let's see how this is done.

First, let's begin with the feet. You need to know what kind of feet you have and what type of arch you have. The easiest and least expensive way to determine this is to go outside on a flat surface. Walk barefoot through a puddle of water and keep walking about 6 to 10 steps past the puddle. Now, look at your footprints. You can determine what kind of foot you have with no arch to a high arch or somewhere in between. This will help you pick out the type of running shoe made for your type of foot. Now, have someone videotape you running on a treadmill from the back and focus on your footstrike. If your foot rolls inward, you are a pronator. If it rolls outward, then you are a supinator. If there is no inward or outward roll, then you are a neutral foot striker. Then pan out a little and see how your feet strike the ground from the back. Do your feet turn inward? If so, you are pigeon-toed. If the feet go slightly out, then you are a "duck walker". Most people who run pigeon-toed are supinators. Most duck walkers are pronators. Neither is good or bad, it's just what you are born with and have to deal with. Videotaping will also help you determine your type of shoe. Also have the video person videotape you from the side and focus in on your foot strike and then upper body. Do you strike with the heel first or more toward the middle or forefoot? Ideally, you want to strike with the outside of the heel and roll your foot forward and push off with the big toe. All these things will help you decide which running shoe is best for your type of running.

Now let's move up and look at your upper body. On the video, do you slightly lean forward, or are you vertical? If you lean forward, then you may need some ab work to get a good core and move those shoulders back and over the hips. You want to run tall with that center of gravity right over the hips. How do your arms move? Are they bent more than 90 degrees? If so, then slightly bring them down to where you are imagining putting your thumbs through belt loops your shorts. This is the most efficient way to carry the arms. Also, your arms should not go higher than your chest on the upswing. Keep them low and efficient.

Now to the head. Your head should be up looking straight ahead. Keep the head centered. It should be aligned vertically right above the shoulders, not tilted down or to the side and you looking at the ground. Usually, the first sign of a tired runner is that their head tilts forward looking at the ground.

So there you have it, the perfect running style. Just remember to tell yourself to run tall, shoulders back, arms down through belt loops. Run relaxed and go. Also tell yourself to be "smooth" and to run effortlessly. It WILL work. Just keep those positive thoughts in your brain and you'll be gliding over the terrain in no time.