



Leaving T2

Article by Sonni Dyer

"Your run looks like hard work." Martin said in a thick Czech accent. The words rattled my ego a bit. My training partner and 'best-of-friends' friend had meant no harm in it. Quite the contrary, Martin had, with that single remark, taken my "run" under his guidance on that cold January morning.....much like I'd committed to do for his cycling.

Once I let go of my "What does he mean? I was a high-school All-American cross-country runner!" -attitude and opened up my mind to something new, the lesson began. Martin was referring to the most basic element of anyone's run stride.....**how one's foot touches the ground.**

I chose *this* particular topic after a transition clinic that Coach Randy Bernard and I put on, where, it seemed as though, for a brief moment in the clinic, that we were speaking Greek to the attendees. I'd observed a lot of people running to finish the race that day. **It was time to get this out.**

Premise: How your foot meets the ground is a direct indicator of how efficient the rest of your run-stride will be.....and it seems that running 'off-the-bike' magnifies things. (more on this, later)

What to shoot for: Aim for a fore-foot, "ball-of-the foot" type foot-strike when your foot meets the ground. It will mean shortening the stride a little, concentrating on getting the knees a little higher, and using the hamstrings to "**unweight**" the foot by bringing it closer to the rear-end in the 'recovery' phase of your stride.

What it prevents: • **Gone** is the feeling of "loping" or "falling" from foot to foot.

- It prevents '**heel-striking**'. When your heel strikes the ground first, it generally occurs in **front** of a centerline in your body.....and 9 times out of 10, when you're fatigued, you heel-strike with an extended leg and straightened knee. This is called "**braking**"as in '**putting on the brakes**'!
- Add "loping" and "heel-striking" and you get "**shuffling**".....not good.

Why this is MOST IMPORTANT for Triathletes:

Remember, we run 'off' the bike. A productive pedal-stroke means putting pressure on the pedals at MANY points (& as equally as possible) in a 360degree turn of the cranks.....& doing so @ 80 to 95rpm's.

To achieve this, the heel must actually **DROP**, when pedaling to **PULL** the pedal through the bottom of the pedal stroke. Propelling oneself on a bike like this is **IDEAL** because the workload of the wattage output is spread among MANY muscle groups causing **less fatigue is any ONE**. Got it?

"OK Sonni, why are you suddenly talking about pedal mechanics in an article about RUN-stride efficiency?!"I hear ya. Hang in here to see where I'm going w/ all this.

Above, we just said that "heel-down" is effective in pedaling, **YET**, heel-striking on the run is what we're trying to **AVOID**. Knowing that we run after we ride, do you see the dilemma?

Also, after a race-like bike ride (where the rpm's are a little lower), subconsciously, we tend to get off the bike and **MATCH the cadence w/ our run-stride**. The low, cycling-like, cadence manifest itself in our run-stride by causing us to ultimately slow down the foot-strike "turnover" by **OVER**-striding.....which leads to greater 'heel-striking' and more 'braking'. A downward spiral of events.

What to do: This is where the rubber meets the road. (I detest articles that identify a problem and don't offer a workable solution.)

So, with that in mind: -Know that this will take some time to "get".....maybe weeks, maybe months.

-Know that working on this is **NOT** a function of your "fitness". So it's not how **HARD** you work at this that'll make the difference.....it's how **OFTEN**.



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-Know that, because it's neuro-muscular in nature (like swim-drills), it doesn't matter what training phase of the year that you're in or even what day of the week it is. **You CAN incorporate it into ANY run or bike session.**

-Know that for this to "take hold" in your run stride, you'll need to incorporate the perfect dose of "**speed-specific track work**" with your "strength-specific" track work. Why speed? Well, after your foot plants and pushes you forward, it must then leave the ground, re-accelerate, catch you, pass you, and then extend down for the next step to plant again. If you're running @ 7min/mile pace, this means that for your foot to catch/pass you from behind, it must travel at least **twice as fast as you are traveling.....or 3:30/mile pace!!.....Now that's speed!**

NOW:

1--Run (even if for just 5minutes) **after every bike ride**, concentrating on FORM by first planting the fore-foot, allowing the heel to quickly touch, and then pushing off w/ the fore-foot again.

2--Run **5, 10, and then 20 minute segments** w/ this style in the middle of your long runs. (Expect your calves to go through an "adjustment period".)

3--Run **EVERY hill on the forefoot of your feet.**

4--Incorporate trainer-intervals where you'll **bike for 5 minutes and then run like this for 2-5 minutes** repeating several sets to engrain this into your nervous system.

5--Get a knowledgeable **coach to examine your stride and teach you** which stride-specific run drills you can best add to incorporate into your warm-ups, cool-downs for every track session, run, or bike/run brick.

6--Do "jump-rope" bricks on your ez, active-recovery days where you'll **alternate simple rope skipping w/ high rpm trainer-spinning**. It allows for a low restorative heart-rate to increase blood flow to tired muscles.....and have you ever seen anyone jump rope from their heels??

7--And consciously **THINK about your stride-mechanics and foot-strike as you run out of the bike-to-run transition in a race.....LEAVING T-2.**

See you at the races!!

Coach Sonni Dyer

*****For more information on the [Studio7MultiSport](http://www.Studio7MultiSport.com) training programs, you can visit our website at www.Studio7MultiSport.com or email Sonni at Sonni@Studio7multisport.com .