

How to be a Good Runner

By Dr. W. C. Lalson

TO be a good runner is a fine thing for a boy. In the first place, it is a great satisfaction to be the best runner, or one of the best runners in the club or the school or "the crowd." Secondly, to be a good runner is a sheer necessity to the outdoor games. Football, baseball, hockey, lacrosse, tennis—in all these games the boy who can run rapidly and long has a good chance to come out a champion; while the boy who is a slow runner has little or no show, no matter how good he may be otherwise. In

little word of four letters—EASE. Ease is not easy to get. But when one begins to acquire it, he notices a gradual but very marked change in his "style." Stiffness and awkwardness become less and less. The movements get more and more flexible and graceful, the stride lengthens and the general "form" shows far more style and power.

Now, I speak from actual experience in dealing with practical runners on tracks, indoors and out, when I say that the average runner uses up at every stride from three to ten times the amount of strength necessary. And just here's the point.

The more strength he uses up, the less strength he has to run with; the more he saves his strength, the less he uses up, the more strength will there be with which to run and to keep on running. That is to say, if he learns to run easily, he will gain immensely, not only in speed but in endurance.

It is pitiful to see some amateurs try to run. Their jaws are set and their foreheads are clinched. The muscles of their chests, arms, and shoulders are firmly contracted, the head is held rigidly up and back, and in their hands they are gripping bits of cork or corn-cobs! All these muscles are set, all are working hard. What for? No one knows. It happens to be the fashion.

Now, if any boy who is really ambitious to run in the hundred-yard dash, or any other distance up to ten miles—if he really wants to be a fine runner, let him spend a few weeks training for ease, ease, ease and nothing else, and let him note the result. I give him my word that, at the end, he will be a firm advocate of the easy method of training.

But how shall one get ease, That is sometimes, I confess, rather hard, main-

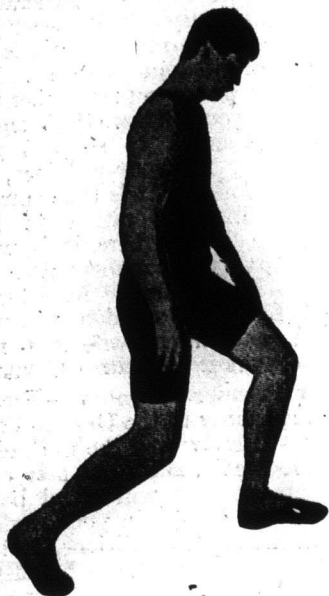


Fig. 1.

many games, like hare and hounds, tag, and so on, the whole secret of winning out in the contest depends upon good running.

Besides this, running is often a very useful accomplishment. To be able to do a half mile or even a few hundred yards in good style and without being "winded" at the finish is a power that may come in good at any time.

And then, running is fine exercise. It makes the muscles, not only of the legs, but of the chest, waist, and shoulders, bigger and stronger. It increases power of all the vital organs—heart, stomach, liver, and so on, and lastly it is a fine thing for the lungs.

Now, running is an art. But it is an art that is not hard to learn. After much experience as a practical athlete, I do not hesitate to say that any boy in fairly good condition can, in a few weeks of practice as directed in this article, just double his speed and more than double his endurance.



Fig. 2.

There's a Secret.

There is a little secret about running which very few people know—not even professional runners. If they did, we would see more really good running.

The secret of speed, endurance, and grace in running may be put into one

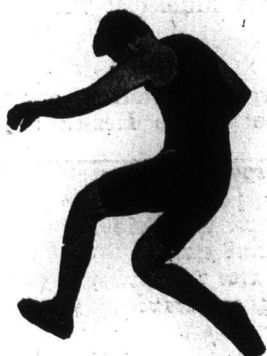


Fig. 3.

ly because we are all of us so accustomed to doing everything with much more force than necessary.

After a good deal of thought and study on this question of running, I have made up the following system of exercises. Let any young fellow (or old fellow, either, for that matter) practice them faithfully fifteen minutes two or three times a day for a few weeks, and he will be quite convinced that he has learned the secret of good running.

Exercise No. 1.

Stand easily, left foot in advance, right foot about eighteen inches behind it. Bend knees slightly and give a little spring upward, at the same time changing the feet so that when you come down the right is in front, left behind.

Repeat this, little spring again and again, doing it as easily as possible, and keeping all the muscles relaxed, as shown in Fig. 1. Be particularly careful not to come down hard on the floor. Try to do the exercise so that a person in the room next you or under you could not hear it.

Exercise No. 2.

Stand easily, with feet somewhat apart. Now give a light, easy spring off the floor, and come down in the position shown in Fig. 2; that is, with the weight upon the right leg, left extended out to that side so that the toe lightly touches the floor.

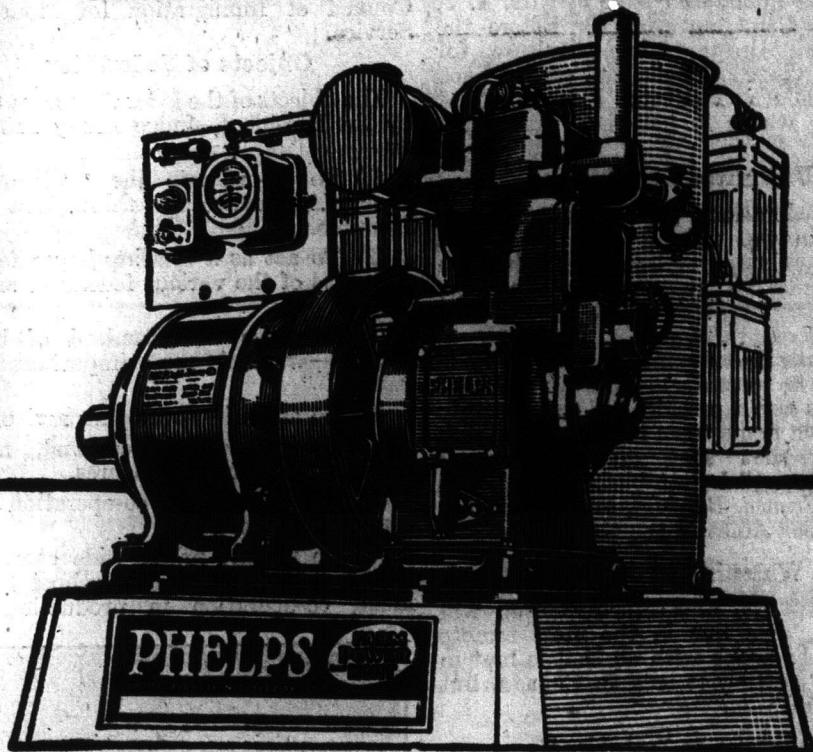
Then give another light spring, at the same time drawing up the left leg and extending the right. This movement should be repeated from side to side hundreds of times, until you can do it



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almost without effort, and without making the slightest noise or jar.

The main object of these two movements is to teach you to sort of "feel the ground." Until you have gained this power you are bound to smash the foot hard upon the ground with each stride, which means not only waste of force, but is most exhausting to the body at every step. You should learn to run so that the feet, as they strike the ground, make not the slightest noise. That's the way an Indian runs.

Exercise No. 3.

Stand easily. Now begin to swing the arms freely back and forth. After a few moments of this, allow the right

leg to swing forward as the arms go in that direction, as shown in Fig. 3.

Now, as the arms and right leg, moving together, swing forward and upward, make a little leap upon the left foot. Then, with the next forward swing, make another leap and so on. In this also make as little jar as possible.

Afterward practice the same movement, swinging the arms and left leg, and making the leap upon the right.

Exercise No. 4.

This exercise is simply to imitate the motions of running in such a way that the feet strike each time in the same place. In other words, it is merely stationary running. A fair idea of this exercise may be gained from Fig. 4.

Now, in the practice of all these exercises, you must remember that the great thing is ease, ease, ease. You must get so that you can actually feel the weight of the body as you raise it from the ground in making the little leap and you swing the limbs to an fro during the stride. If you doubt the effect of these simple exercises you can easily settle the matter. Try them.

WAR-TIME ECONOMY

"Aw'm awa noo, Sandy. Do ye want anything frae the town?" asked the good-wife as she lifted the reins from the horse's back.

"Ma snuff's dune, an' Aw wad like ye tae fetch me half an ounce," replied Sandy.

"Nay, nay! I canna allow sic extravagance!" exclaimed his wife. "Have ye no heard o' the increased price o' snuff, in?" Juist tickle yer nose wi' a straw, instead."



Fig. 4.