



Racewalking advice Bulletin board

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Drills to help with style.

Contact and Bent Knees

The rule can be divided into two part, 1st, at some stage both feet have to be on the ground, so the front foot has to land before the back foot comes off the ground.



The 2nd part of the rule states that the knee must be straight from the time the foot lands until the leg is under the body.



Drill: To help with bent knees
Bent knees may be due to landing flatfooted.

Solution

When the foot lands, let the heel land first and hold the toes up, straightening the leg.

Drills

1. Walk taking small steps on the heels only with the toes raised off the ground. Do this for 30 seconds, rest then repeat



2. Walk forward slowly, landing on the heel pulling the toes up straighten the contact leg and bracing the muscles to give the appearance of the straighten knee. Do not let the toes relax once the heel strikes the ground, that is hold the toes up even as the leg comes to the vertical upright position.
3. Racewalk landing on the heel and hold the toes up while the foot is in contact with the ground. Keep the knee of the contact leg straighten until the leg passes the upright position under the body.

Over striding

If a walker over strides, he/she may have a problem getting the foot down to the ground with a straight leg. This could lead to problems with both contact, as the front foot does not reach the ground before the rear foot leaves the ground, and knees, as the leg must bend to reach the ground. This also puts excessive stress on the gluteals and hamstrings.

Solution

- Either bring the centre of gravity forwards, creating a stride that is more behind the walker than in front.
- Or let the foot fall naturally and allow the hip drop to bring the foot to the ground with a straighten leg.

Drill

1. The body may be leaning back, causing the walker to over stride, so practice racewalking slowly holding the body upright or with a slight forward lean by tightening the stomach muscles and gluteals.
2. To let the body go back to a natural stride length, go back to walking normally and gradually increase the speed without trying to increase the stride.
3. When racewalking, concentrate on the back foot pushing off the ground, that is, think about the toes on the back foot pushing off the ground rather than the front foot striding out trying to reach the ground.



Figure 1: Coming off the toe of the rear foot



Figure 2: Point 4, increasing hip drop

4. To improve the hip flexibility and hip drop, stand with both legs together but with one foot on a book and the other flat on the ground with a straight knee. Do the same for the other side. As the hip becomes more flexible, increase the book thickness to about 3 centimetres to improve the hip drop further.

5. Repeat point 4 but with the leg straightened and the foot in front of the body ready to stride forward, drop the hip so the foot reaches the ground. In a stationary position, repeat this 4-5 times with each leg.



Figure 3: Point 5, increasing hip drop with the foot forward