

## Training Tip #8 Walking Technique

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I know what you're thinking. How hard can this be? Everyone knows how to walk. But when you are walking 20, 40 or 60 miles, technique can be the key to preventing injury and increasing your walking speed.

Four common walking errors:

- **Staring at the ground:** Keeping your head down and shoulders slouched can lead to tightness and fatigue in the upper back, neck and shoulders. Focus your gaze off at the horizon and not down at your feet or the ground just in front of you. This will tend to pull your whole body more upright. Pull your shoulders back and chest forward.
- **Taking an extra-long stride:** This can lead to sore shins, tightness in the back of the thighs (hamstrings) and a jarring thud with every step. Try rolling, not bouncing, from one stride to the next. Try to put your foot down as fast as you can. Don't reach for the longest possible stride. Feel your body glide along the ground and try not to let your heels slam into the ground on each step.
- **Chicken wings:** Elbows flailing out to the sides with each arm swing can cause neck, shoulder and upper back pain. Feel your thumb rub the waistband of your pants as your hand swings back and then stop it there. Don't let it swing any further back. Imagine trying to elbow the walker directly behind you. Don't let your hips have an exaggerated side-to-side sway.
- **Hyperextending your back:** Excessive arch in the low back can cause tightness in the lower back and upper gluteal (buttock) muscles. Keep your rear end tucked underneath you by gently pulling your navel into your spine and flattening your stomach.