

# Walking and Bicycling Resources

## HOW TO RACE WALK



### THE HISTORY OF RACEWALKING

Whether you are interested in a new competitive sport or simply to learn how to get a better workout while walking, you may want to learn more about race walking.

Race walking is a competitive and recreational sport practiced at many levels all over the world. Recognized as an Olympic event, race walking in the US is governed nationally by the National Track and Field Association.

Competitive walking is not a new sport. According to the North American Race Walking Foundation (NARF), people have participated in races for nearly 400 years. In the 1870's walking races would cover long distances or long periods of time. One of the famous styles of long distance race involved competitors trying to walk 100 miles in less than 24 hours.

The US Track and Field Association Defines competitive walking as the competitor must "maintain contact with the ground and straighten their front knee when the foot makes contact with the ground, keeping it straightened until the knee passes under the body."

The primary rule of race walking requires that one foot always remains on the ground; this rule makes the motion different from running. In competitive events, judges evaluate walkers and hand out fouls based on movements visible to the naked eye. Key benefits of walking over running include:

- Fewer potential injuries
- Better overall body workout by requiring more strenuous use of body core muscles

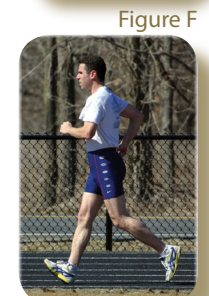
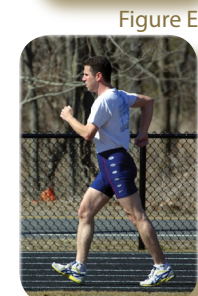
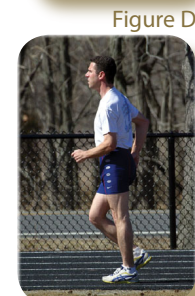
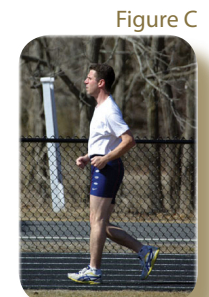
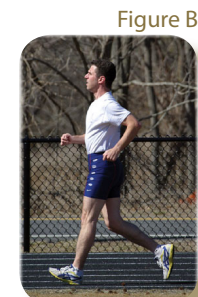
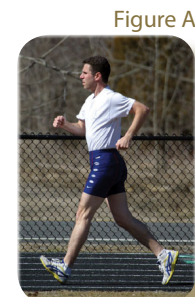
### LEARN HOW TO RACE WALK

Several sites (racewalk.com and NARF) provide excellent tutorials and photo illustrations of proper race walking form and tips on how to improve your speed.

This tutorial, below, comes from racewalk.com

1. Observe Figures A to F. They illustrate the correct positioning of my leg the instant my left leg strikes the ground, as my body passes directly over the leg and beyond, and just as my left foot leaves the ground behind my body.

2. Between Figure A and Figure C, the body moves forward, over the left leg. This is the second point at which walkers tend to violate the rules of race walking. The leg must remain straightened until it is in the vertical position. In Figure C, my leg is almost in the vertical position, while it remains straightened.
3. Once the leg is beyond the vertical position, as in Figure D, you may bend it. However, when it comes time to lift your foot off the ground, if your leg is still straightened, you get an extra thrust forward by pushing off your rear foot (Figure E). Through proper flexibility and strength your leg stays straightened longer and you obtain this advantageous thrust. Ideally, the leg remains straightened until the heel of your rear foot lifts off the ground.



**LOCAL RESOURCES:** If you are interested in race walking events and opportunities in Marin County you should consult the Marin County Race Walkers at [www.marinracewalkers.org](http://www.marinracewalkers.org).