

Core Power Hiking Method: Basic Elements

In this video I'm going to show you the basic elements of power hiking and then how to put them all together so they'll work for you.

You and I learned to walk by trial and error. If you've watched a baby learn to walk, you know it's a lot of falling down and trying again.

Until now, you probably haven't thought about how you walk. Your subconscious mind handles all that for you. You can walk and chew gum, talk on the phone, text on the phone (it's still dangerous).

Most people who try to power hike just do what they normally do when walking . . . just try to go faster . . . longer strides, a little faster cadence.

My method relies on form and technique. It will be different from what you're doing now.

1. So it will feel weird.
2. It will take practice.
3. It takes focus when you use it.

The more you practice, the less focus you'll have to use. It will start to feel smoother and more natural.

Basic elements

1. Posture

Head up

Neck straight

Shoulders neutral

Back straight and relaxed

Hips over feet

Knees slightly bent

Center of balance over balls of feet (60% ball of feet / 40% heel)

2. Lean

Lean forward from ankles.

Do not bend from waist! -- lose power and economy.

3. Stride

Foot lands under chin.

Lift foot without pushing off with your toes. Give your calf muscles a break.

4. Arm swing

90 degree bend at elbows. (Pendulum effect - figure skater example)

Shoulders relaxed.

Swing from wrist to elbow.

Not across body.

Coming to the centerline of your body is OK.

5. Hip swing

Do the twist.

Stride longer by swinging hips more and legs going back. Not by bringing leg and foot farther forward.

6. Cadence

Depending on grade and strategy.

Resting and gradual uphill: 150

More about hills in the next video.

Putting it together

So how do you get started putting this all together?

If you go out and try to remember all six elements and do them all at once is a quick path to frustration.

The best way to learn is to break them into manageable groups and get a feel for them without trying to do everything at once.

First 3 Elements

Start off by standing in one place and feel the center of balance on the balls of your feet.

This is a slight Lean Forward but not off balance.

From this position lean just a little farther forward and take your first step Landing with your foot in a line underneath your chin.

Continue to take small steps and get a feel for the forward lean from your ankles and the stride from near the centerline of your body and back.

When you work on these three elements of posture, forward lean, and stride you still have to swing your arms and hips. But let them move however they move. Pay attention to the first three elements for now. These are the elements that tend to feel awkward at first and take some getting used to.

Add arms and hips

Once you feel comfortable with your posture, your lean forward, and stride, it's time to think about your arm and hip swing.

Swing your arms as straight as possible.

Swing your hips. Pivot from your waist like a washing machine . . . twisting from the center of your body.

Keep them as level as possible.

Thrusting them side to side like a runway model is not good. You could end up injured.

Don't worry about cadence for now. Focus on getting comfortable with the form and technique of the first 5 elements.

Your cadence is going to vary depending on the where, when, and why you choose to power hike. So don't worry about hitting that 150 steps per minute until you've got a good handle on the basic form and technique.

Once you get comfortable using the Core Power Hiking Method, practice your cadence on a level place or slight uphill and focus on getting up to 150 steps per minute. Dirt trails are not ideal for this. Find a place where you don't have to step over rocks and roots.

Some smart watches will track cadence. Or you can install a metronome app and set it to 150. As an alternative, you can set it to 75 and land with either your right or left foot on the beat. I prefer using a slower beat and taking two steps per beat. The fast beat makes me feel more tense when I walk.

PRACTICE!

Are you seeing a theme here? I want you to succeed! I want you to have people say, "You're walking as fast as I run!"

When you feel it all come together for you, you should be able to easily walk a 13 or 14 minute mile pace using the Core Power Hiking Method.

Finally: RELAX and flow w/ rhythm

Trying to “push” creates tension and tension is an energy drain. It’s also easy to get tense when you’re focused on keeping all 6 elements working together.

But the more you practice, the more you can feel a flow and rhythm and relax.

This is important because the purpose for power hiking is to give you a break from running.

If you don’t remember to let go of the tension and relax your body, you won’t get the full benefit from your power hike.

We’ll talk about managing your inner energy in the last video.

Next video - Core Power Hiking strategy for hills.

I’ll end this video with some clips of me demonstrating how the Core Power Hiking Method looks in real life.