



**FIND
YOUR
STRIDE**

A GUIDE TO BUILDING A STRONG FOUNDATION
BY JOHN SMITH

 **NRC**
NIKE+ RUN CLUB

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

THIS GUIDE WILL TEACH YOU TECHNIQUES TO REFINE YOUR RUNNING FORM BY INCREASING BALANCE, ENDURANCE AND MOBILITY. EVERY LEVEL OF RUNNER CAN USE THIS GUIDE IN A VARIETY OF WAYS.



EXERCISE MENU

Select one or two of these drills to incorporate into your current training plan.

STAND-ALONE WORKOUT

Use this guide in its entirety as a training workout, and scale reps according to your fitness level.

DISTANCE TRAINING COMPANION

Pair this guide with one of our Nike Running training plans as warmups or cooldowns during Progression or Recovery days. Plans are available at nike.com/nrctraining.



Whether I'm talking to someone just starting out or coaching elite-level athletes like Carmelita Jeter and English Gardner, I've learned that you don't want to work against what comes naturally. You want to build and enhance it. You want to educate every runner on how to use the tools they already have.

When Michael Johnson was running, everybody wanted to run like him. The thing is, nobody taught Michael to move like that. It was just the way his body worked, and he built on it. We discover running at an early age and as we try to train our bodies to go faster, or further, the most effective way is to refine and build upon our foundation.

This program is designed to do just that—to help runners of all levels improve their capabilities without stepping foot in a weight room. We'll focus on training muscle groups through stretches and exercises that can be added to your existing workout routine, or as light practice by themselves. To demonstrate technique we'll use one of the most naturally gifted athletes on the track today—professional sprinter English Gardner.

See you at the starting line,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Smith". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping "J" and "S".

John Smith

FOUNDATION FROM THE TOP DOWN



Enjoying a long, healthy running career depends as much on education as it does endurance. The purpose of this guide is to teach you how to strengthen the different parts of your body as they relate to your running form.

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UPPER BODY

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LOWER BODY

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PART ONE

UPPER BODY

ARMS, SHOULDERS AND BACK

Even serious runners tend to neglect the upper body. The importance of your strength above the waist only increases as you ramp up mileage and intensity. When workouts get tough and fatigue sets in, a strong upper body will bolster your form, improve your posture and enhance your breathing.

UPPER BODY

FEATURED EXERCISE

Push-Ups are popular for a reason. You only need the ground and your body to do them, and they target every muscle from posture to balance to a strong core.



PUSH-UPS

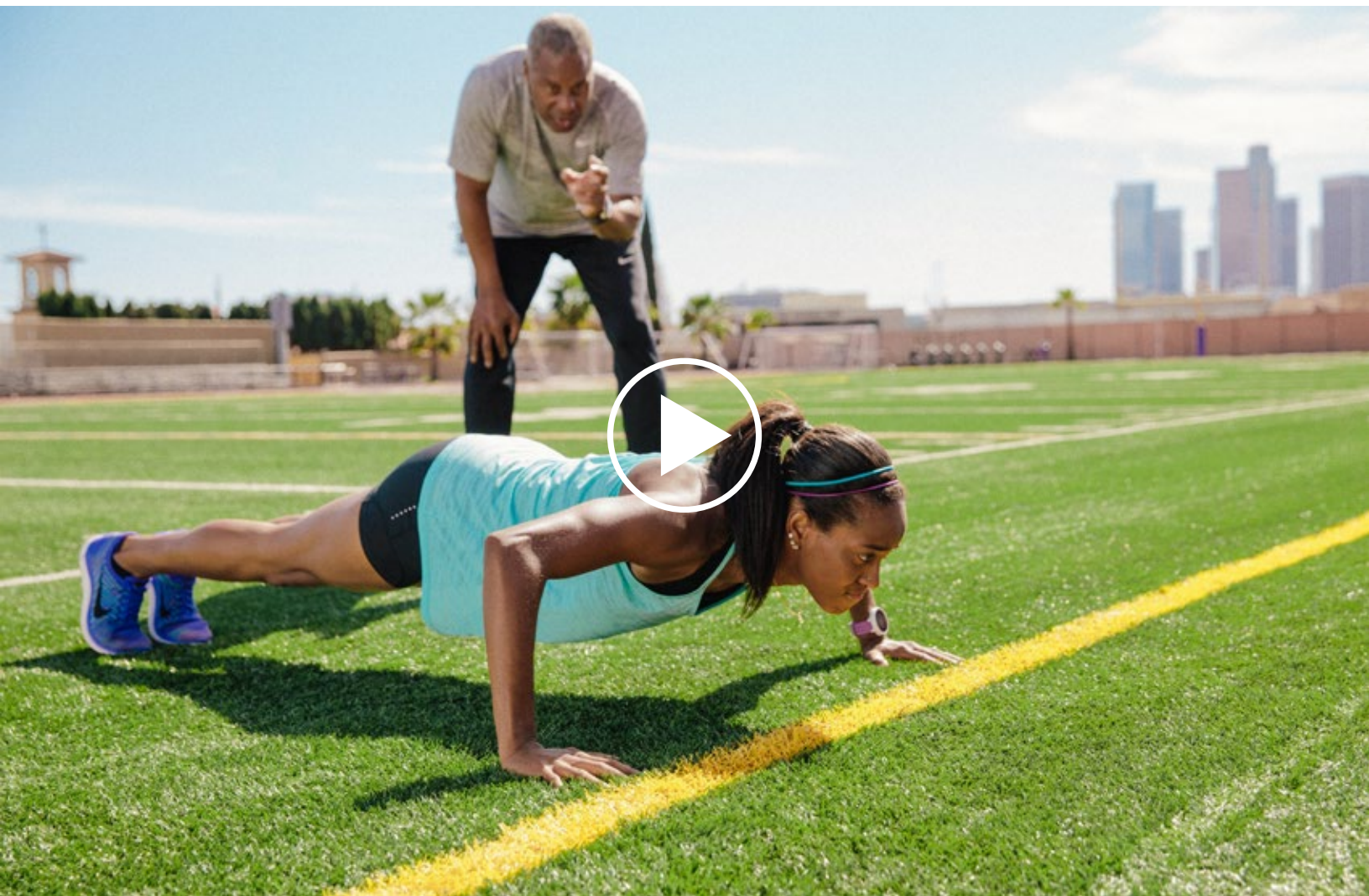
Keep hands no wider than shoulder-width apart.

Lower your body while maintaining a straight plank position.

Pause when your chest hits the ground and come back up in a controlled manner holding form.

TIP: Stay slow and controlled.

[Watch the tutorial video on Push-Ups](#)



UPPER BODY

ADDITIONAL EXERCISES

When a runner is fatigued, one of the first motions to suffer is arm carriage. Arm Swings are a great way to build upper body endurance and maintain form during late race fatigue.



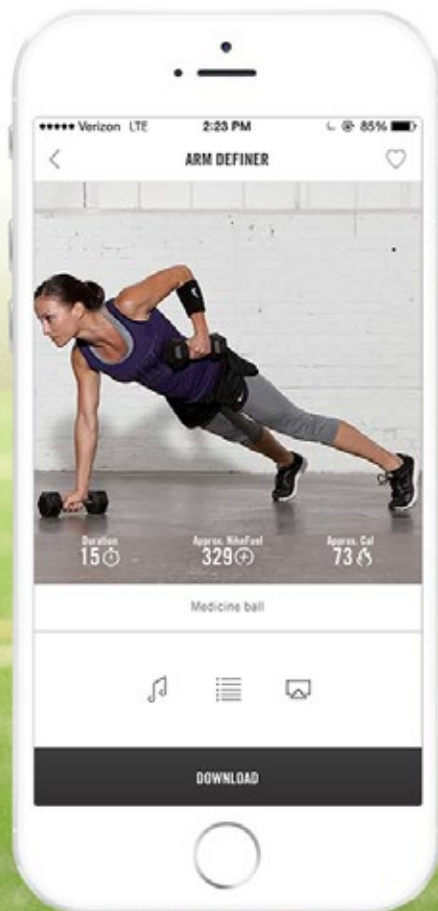
ARM SWINGS

Stand in front of the mirror with one leg in front of the other, both slightly bent.

Holding a weight in each hand, drive your arms with elbows at 90 degrees for 45 seconds.

Switch position and repeat exercise.

TIP: Use 3LB weights or filled water bottles.



N+TC ARM DEFINER

For more upper body development, try the Arm Definer workout under the “Get Focused” section in the N+TC App.

UPPER BODY

APPLY IT TO YOUR RUN

A lot of what you do with your arms while you run affects what you do with your legs.
Here's a handful of tips to take with you on your next run.



RUNNING FORM TIPS

ELBOWS BACK

Keep elbows hammered back to maintain an upright pose.

LOOSEN SHOULDERS

Shoulders should stay relaxed to prevent adding unnecessary tension to your neck and upper core.

DON'T MAKE A FIST

Make sure your hands stay soft and loose throughout your workout.





PART TWO

CORE

ABS, UPPER AND LOWER BACK

Your core controls your form. The abdominal and back muscles are responsible for stability, balance, posture and overall control. A powerful core won't eliminate fatigue, but a weak core will lead to a collapse of form—like a drop in your knee lift and a shortening of your stride.

C O R E

FEATURED EXERCISE

Sit-Ups are the classic all-around core builder. They improve your stability and balance throughout your lower trunk and pelvis, including your hip flexors, abductors and adductors.



SIT-UPS

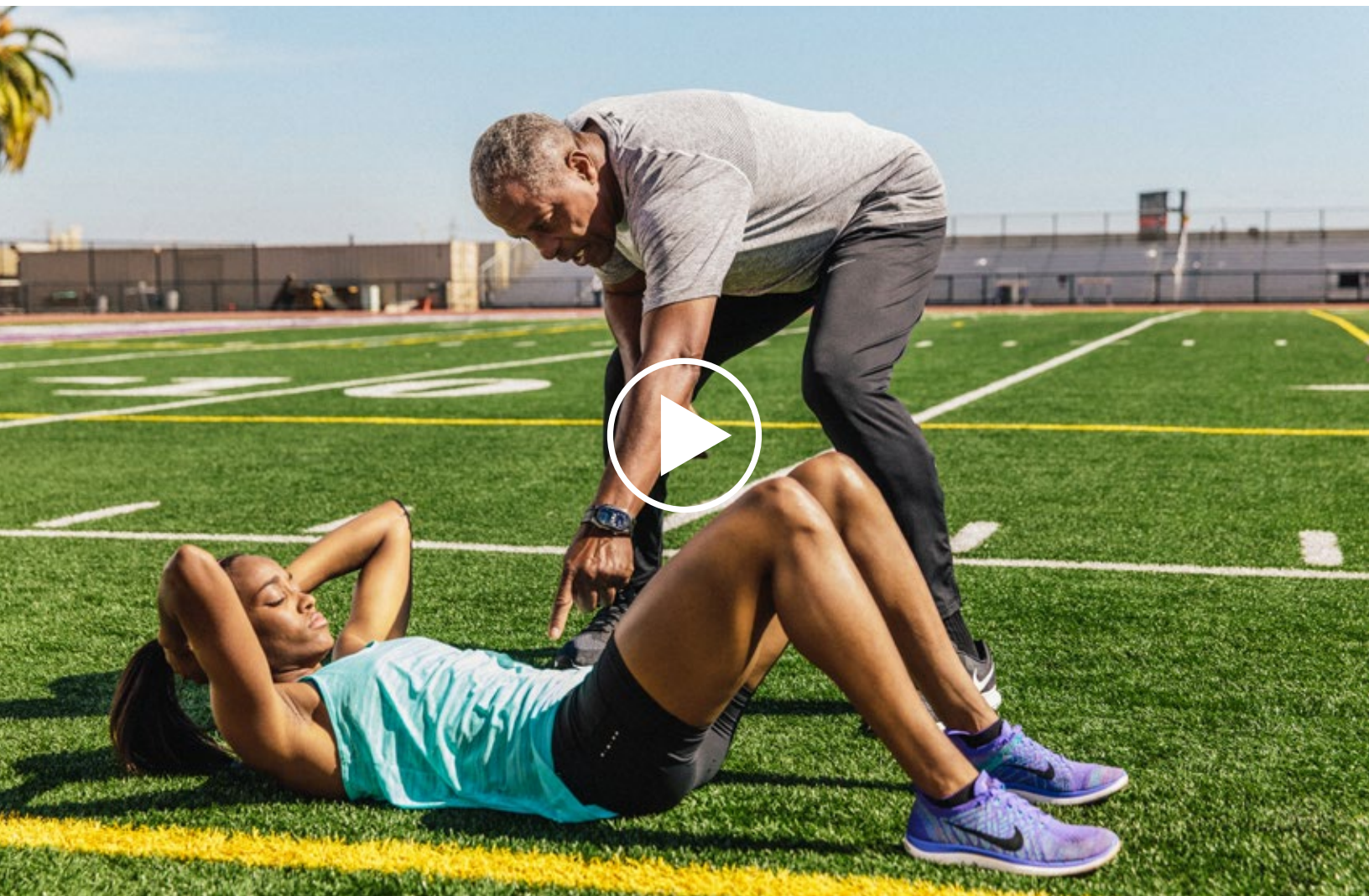
Keep both feet firmly planted on the ground with knees bent and back flat.

Without straining or bending your neck, lift your shoulders to raise your body off the ground.

Once you've reached the apex of your movement, return to the ground in a slow, controlled manner.

TIP: This exercise should be led by abs with your lower back remaining on ground throughout Sit-Up.

[Watch the tutorial video on Sit-Ups](#)



C O R E

ADDITIONAL EXERCISES

Plank Row is one of the best ways to develop strength and endurance in your upper back. It also helps with upper body balance and control.



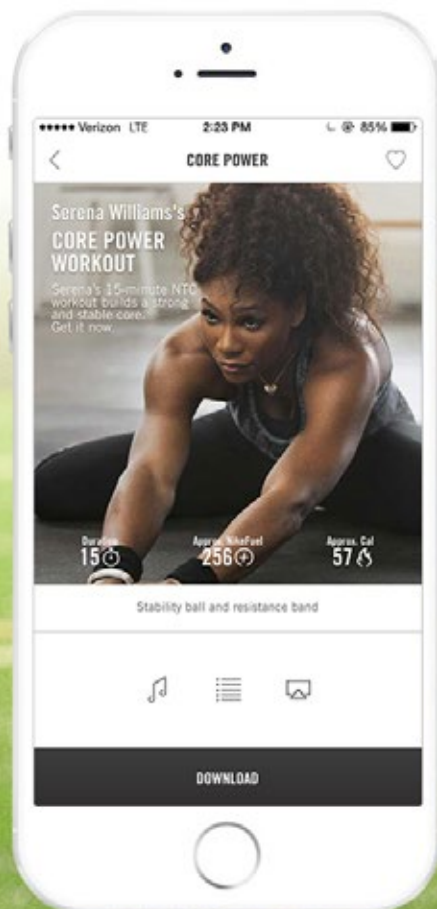
PLANK ROW

Get in straight arm plank position (extended Push-Up).

Using small dumbbells, drive one elbow slowly backwards toward the ceiling in runner's form, while maintaining balance on the other arm.

Return arm slowly and repeat with opposite arm.

TIP: Try to maintain a tight midsection and lower back throughout the exercise.



N+TC CORE POWER

For more core development, try Serena Williams' Core Power workout under the "Get Focused" section in the N+TC App.

C O R E

APPLY IT TO YOUR RUN

Be purposeful about your posture. For better oxygen flow and endurance, remember these tips while running.



RUNNING FORM TIPS

LENGTHEN YOURSELF

Stand your tallest and keep your limbs loose.

BACK IT UP

Tight hips often start with a tense lower back. Make sure your posture is strong yet relaxed when running.

CREATE A RANGE

Explore a better range of motion by activating the natural flexibility in your torso.





PART THREE

LOWER BODY

HIPS AND GLUTES

When you think legs, you probably think quads and hamstrings first. But you shouldn't overlook the other important muscle groups. Strengthening the hips and glutes will improve mobility and flexibility, and help protect you from some of the most common injuries.

LOWER BODY

FEATURED EXERCISE

Knee drive plays a huge role in power creation and stride length when you run. High-Knees help extend your knee drive range and help with arm drive as well.



HIGH-KNEES

Push off and land on the front third of your foot.

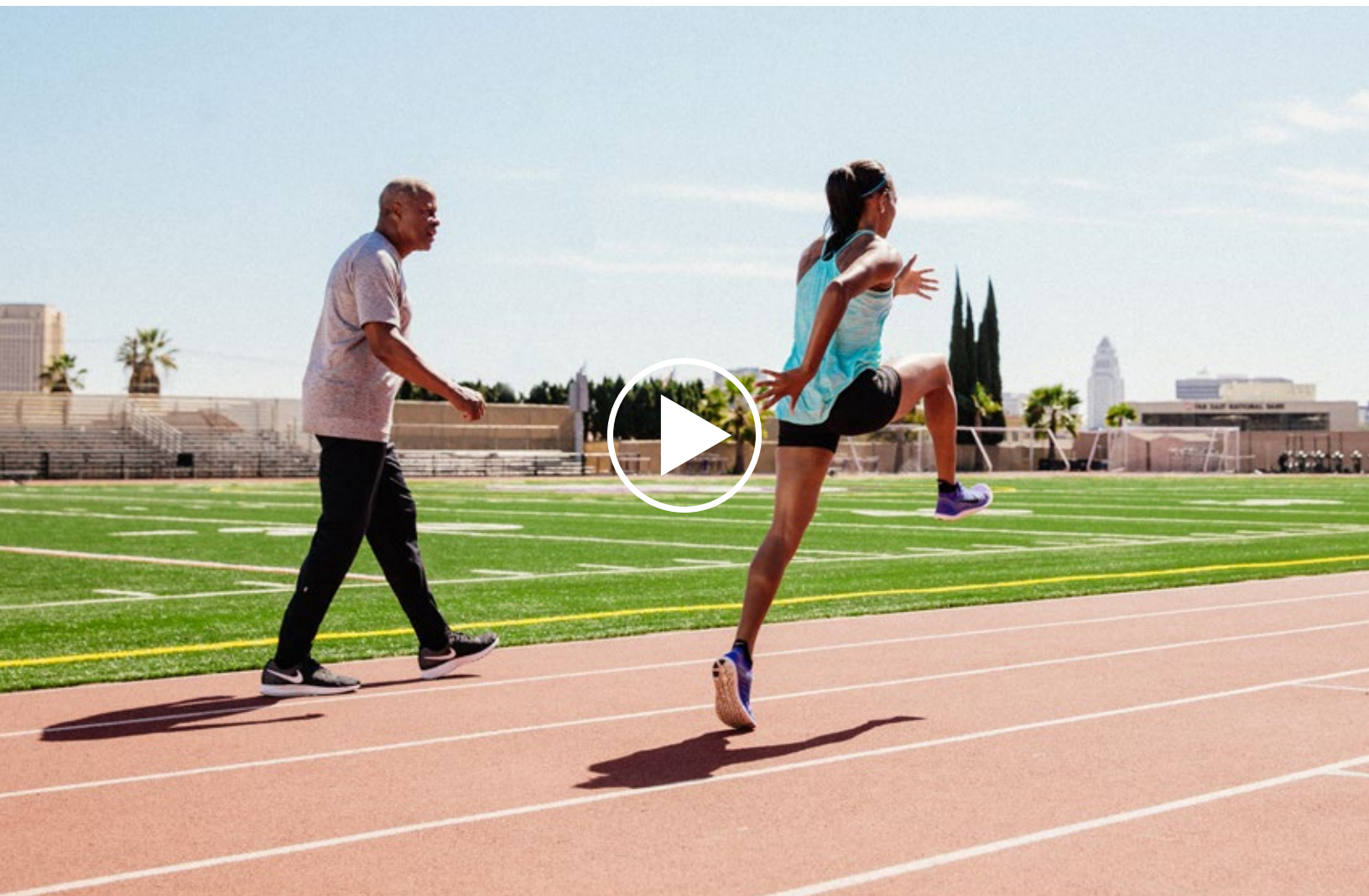
Exaggerate your knees above your waistline with each lift.

Stay off your heels when you drop back down.

Drive your arms for balance and avoid leaning either too far back or forward.

TIP: Even though it's a faster pace drill, take your time and stay focused on your movement.

[Watch the tutorial video for High-Knees](#)



LOWER BODY

ADDITIONAL EXERCISES

Lunges are an effective way to strengthen your glutes and quads as well as protect and stabilize your knee. Lunges also help with lower body balance.



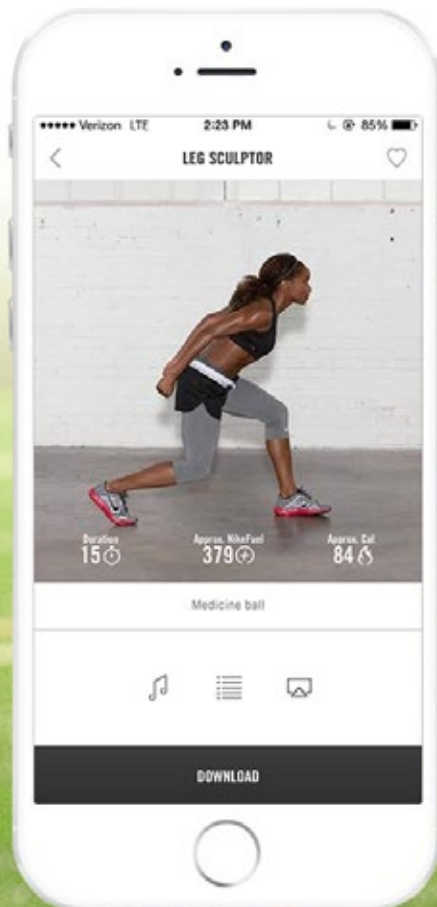
LUNGES

With your knee positioned in line with your ankle, extend one leg in a normal stride and bend at 90 degrees.

Hold this pose with your back knee hovering slightly above the ground. Keep your torso upright and balanced.

Once you can feel the flex in your quad, return to standing and switch legs.

TIP: Slow and steady. This isn't a race.



N+TC LEG SCULPTOR

For more lower body development, try the Leg Sculptor workout under the "Get Focused" section in the N+TC App.

LOWER BODY

APPLY IT TO YOUR RUN

Everyone wants a beautiful stride.
Remember these tips to make your gait more graceful.



RUNNING FORM TIPS

EASE IN

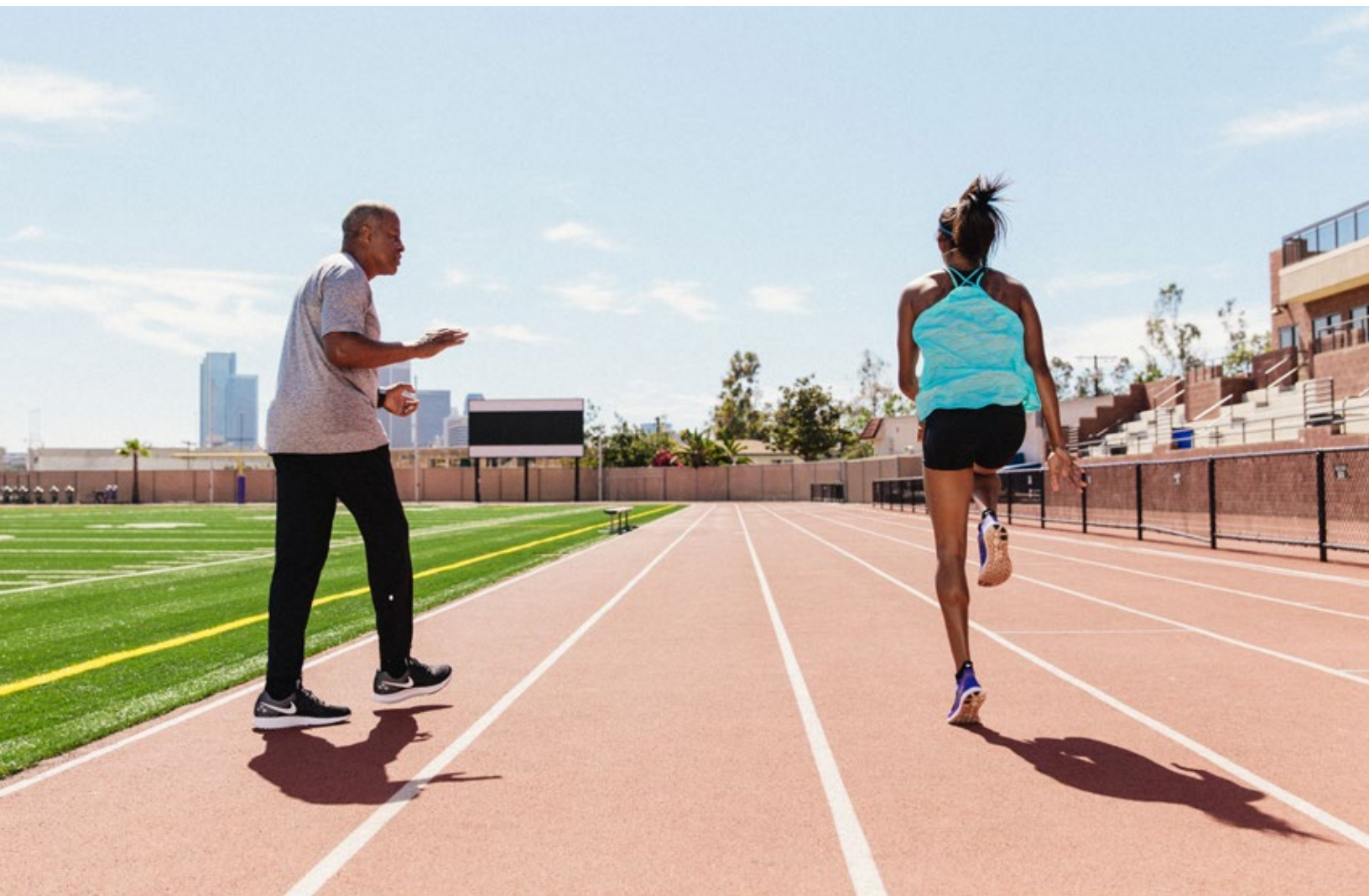
Take the first step in a natural, fluid progression from stillness.

EXAGGERATE

Use big, extended movements to prepare your body for more powerful strides.

STRETCH OUT

Every step should propel you forward rather than upward.





PART FOUR

FEET

FOREFOOT, ARCHES AND ANKLES

Your feet are your foundation. If the foundation is shaky, the repercussions flow right up the body. Every landing and every push-off involves your forefoot, arches and ankles, so it's absolutely essential to prepare your feet to handle that repeated effort through proper agility and balance drills.

F E E T

FEATURED EXERCISE

A-Skips and B-Skips sharpen your overall form by emphasizing foot placement, knee drive and leg extension from the bottom up.



A SKIP / B SKIP

On A Skips, drive your knee up powerfully.

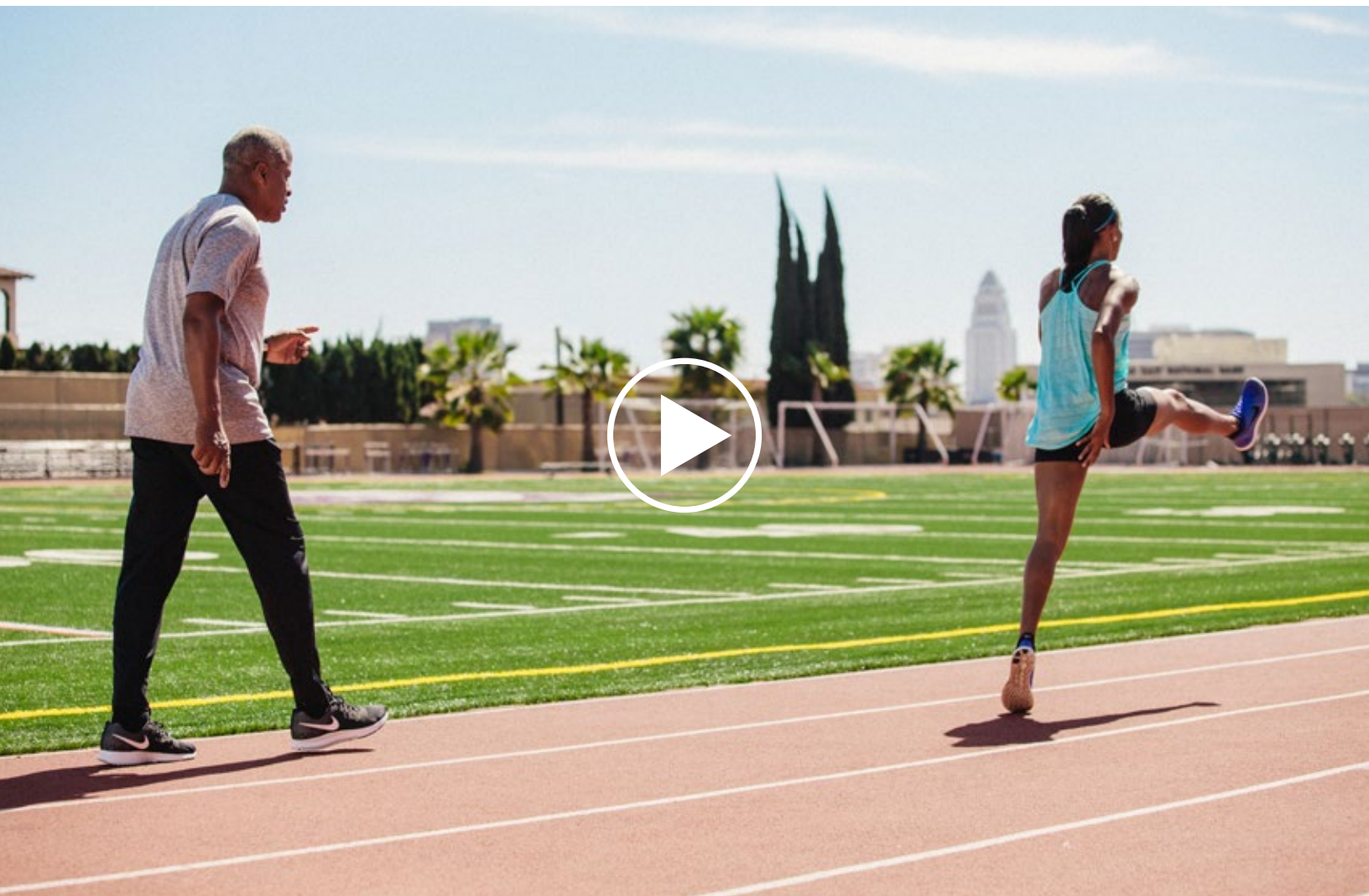
Gently graze the ground with your foot between landing and take-off.

Repeat this action for B Skip, but extend your leg in front of you with foot at dorsiflex.

As you snap your leg back and down, claw the ground with the front third of your foot.

TIP: Your chin should lead your chest to maintain proper upper body position.

[Watch the tutorial video on A Skip / B Skip](#)



F E E T

ADDITIONAL EXERCISES

Heel walks target both your ankles and the connective muscles along your shin to strengthen the leg in unison and prevent shin splints.

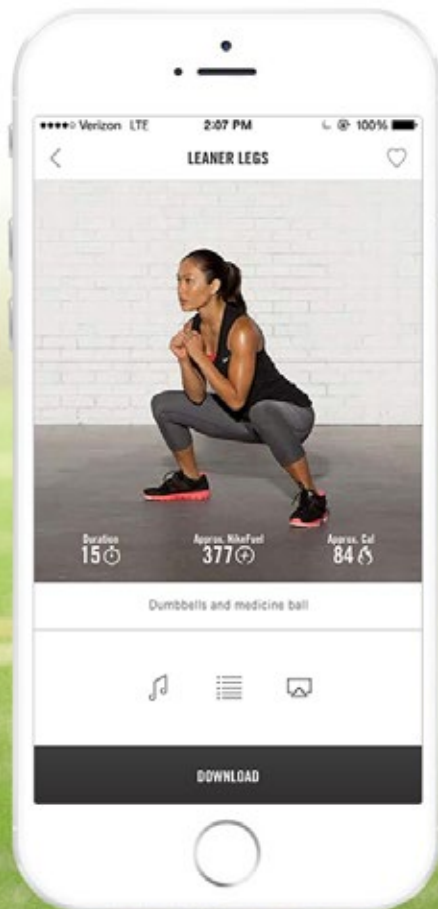


HEEL WALK

Walk on your heels lifting the front of your feet off the ground and extending your toes upwards.

Walk on both heels for 30 steps then relax and walk normally for one minute before repeating.

TIP: Try to maintain balance and proper form from the waist up.



N+TC LEANER LEGS

For a fast toe-off it's important to strengthen and create a lean lower leg. For more foot muscle development, try the Leaner Legs workout under the "Get Focused" section in the N+TC App.

F E E T

APPLY IT TO YOUR RUN

Tread lightly. Recover quickly.
Use these tips to stay light on your feet.



RUNNING FORM TIPS

DORSIFLEX

When your foot is off the ground pull your toe up toward your shin.

FULL TOE-OFF

When pushing off, emphasize power through the ground.

LISTEN TO YOUR STEPS

Your feet should be crisp and light as they lift off the ground with each step.



THE RIGHT SHOE CAN HELP YOU BUILD A STRONG FOUNDATION

Feeling the ground on your run and during training gives you a better understanding of the balance, agility and mobility you are developing with this program. The Nike Free is offered in three ride types, allowing you to run the way you were meant to. Learn more about the Nike Free at nike.com/nikerunning.



NIKE FREE 3.0 FLYKNIT

Our lowest-profile Nike Free running shoe allows your foot to move any way it wants, while still offering the cushioning it needs. Best for those with extensive natural-running experience.



NIKE FREE 4.0 FLYKNIT

More cushioned than the 3.0 and closer to the ground than the 5.0, this shoe is best for runners with some natural-running experience.



NIKE FREE 5.0

Let your feet move the way they're meant to, while maintaining the cushioning and support of a more traditional running shoe. Ideal for runners new to natural running.