

The Triathlon Summit - Run Faster With Less Effort Free of Injuries

KERRY: Welcome to tonight's call for the Triathlon Summit. Tonight's speaker is Danny Dryer. Danny Dryer is the creator of Chi Running and Chi Walking, both are revolutionary forms of moving that blends subtle inner focuses of T'ai Chi with running and walking. His work is based on his study of T'ai Chi master Zhu... How do you pronounce that last name?

DANNY: Shoe - just like you wear a shoe.

KERRY: And internationally renowned master speaker Zhu and his 35 years of experience running, racing, ultra marathons and coaching people in intelligent movement. He has taught thousands of people in Chi Running and Chi Walking techniques with profound results. Danny has been a featured speaker at the prestigious Boston, Chicago, San Francisco, Los Angeles and San Diego marathons. I could keep going on and on about all of his accomplishments. He can walk the walk and talk the talk. So with that I'm going to welcome Danny Dryer to the call. Danny, how are you?

DANNY: Good, Kerry. Nice to be on.

KERRY: Good. With that, let's start with the first question and that is, what exactly is Chi Running?

DANNY: Chi Running is basically the combination of what you just listed. It's basically what I've learned, so far, out of my 35 years of running. Ten of that was probably for ultra running, so I brought a lot out of ultra running and how to run efficiently and how to keep from getting hurt. Then I combined all my efficiency stuff with what I've learned from my practice of T'ai Chi. Basically the principles that make T'ai Chi such a great martial art is that it's all based in non-muscle usage. It's all about how to move your body by either directing your energy or aligning your body correctly. It's a very fascinating way to move the body. When you start combining that with running you end up with quite an efficient and good-working way to move your body.

KERRY: Okay, interesting. So how can triathletes benefit from Chi Running?

DANNY: There's a number of ways. A big part of what I'm trying to teach people is how to not use your legs for propulsion. That's kind of a radical idea, for most people. They think that legs are the be-all and end-all in running. Well, they're not. If you can use the pull of gravity. We do a lot of using the lean. So whenever you're running the whole entire body is falling forward. Once you're not vertical then really the pull of gravity starts assisting you in moving your body forward. So the more you can cooperate and balance your body into this pull of gravity the less you have

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to use your legs for propulsion. Then your legs are just used for momentary support between strides. What's moving you down the road is the fact that you're falling forward. That's how all of us ran when we were kids, everybody. You watch any kids run you'll see, they're all falling forward. I ask my running classes all the time, "How many people in this room never fell down when they were running as a kid?" So far I haven't had anybody raise their hand. Everybody ran falling forward.

So for triathletes, when you get off the bike, you can train yourself to use your legs less and less and less. Then when you get off the bike, it's not a big deal to get off and run. You've just spent your legs on the bike leg so you want to have an alternative way to propel your body when you get off the bike, besides using your legs. So it's really efficient for triathletes. A lot of triathletes really love this technique. It's not their most feared leg anymore.

The other thing is is that if you're learning how to run with your body in a highly efficient way, then there's way less recovery time after your workouts because you're not really burning muscle, you're not really breaking down muscle tissue and having to recover again. You're not really using that much muscle to run with. So there's less recovery time. So with triathletes you can do all your bricks and all your training stuff and not have to spend time recovering after long runs. So you don't have to cut back on your bike or your swim because you had a tough run one day because you don't have tough runs. You learn the technique it takes to run efficiently but you don't have to build lots of muscle to do the running.

Another part of that is that you can crank the bike leg a lot harder. I've had a lot of triathletes come to me and say, "You know, with this new running technique I can really fly on the bike now. I used to have to hold back and really be careful about how much I use my legs." It does make the last leg of the triathlon much more fun.

KERRY: Yeah, for sure. A few weeks ago we had Dr. Nicholas Romanoff and he did the POSE Technique. Some of the listeners were asking what the difference is between what you teach and what he teaches. What's your take on that?

DANNY: I caught that interview and it was really nice to listen to him talk and hear how his approach to running is. It's interesting because both the techniques use the lean. He's an engineer and scientist and he understands the physics of if you're falling that's a more efficient way to move your body. That is the only similarity between the two techniques. Many people will say, "They're exactly the same. One is just a knock-off of the other." But it's really not true.

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Basically, Chi Running, being based in T'ai Chi, based in non-muscle usage and the muscles that you do use are all of the core muscles. The nature of T'ai Chi is set up in the body to where you're moving from your center, then the further away you get from your center the less you use that particular part of your body. So as you get further from your core you use the subsequent parts less and less, because obviously they get smaller as you get further from the core.

Where this is different from the pose technique is that he has his runners running on their forefoot, landing with a forefoot strike. Whenever you're on your forefoot you're expending more energy, you're using muscles. There's no way around it. In fact, if you're sitting down right now I'd like to have you and everyone out there in ether land stand up--

KERRY: Okay, I'm standing.

DANNY: Now get up on the balls of your feet.

KERRY: Like my toes?

DANNY: Which muscles are firing right now?

KERRY: Definitely my calves more than anything.

DANNY: Okay. And then also if you look on the front side of your leg, your shins.

KERRY: Right.

DANNY: You can feel them firing. Okay. Stand there for the next three hours, okay?

KERRY: No, I'm all set. [Laughs]

DANNY: That's what you would be doing if you were running a marathon. So it increases the load to your lower leg, running on the forefoot. I based all of my running technique on energy efficiency and injury prevention. Those two big themes run through everything in Chi Running.

The themes that seem to run through the POSE Technique are speed. I don't know if there's any other theme. It's speed. It's not efficiency, it couldn't be. You're spending more energy. You're using less of certain muscle power because gravity is pulling you forward, but if your support stance is always firing those lower leg muscles then you're expending energy. It's costing you fuel.

Chi Running lands with a mid-foot strike. When you're in the support

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phase your structure is what's holding you up. There are very few muscles having to do that job. So that takes all the work away from the lower legs. The lower leg muscles are where most of running injuries happen - shin splints, calf pulls, Achilles tendon pulls, plantar fasciitis. All of those injuries, the major debilitating injuries, happen in the lower legs. The last thing I want to do is have runners up on their forefoot, supporting their entire body weight with the smallest muscle group in their leg. So it just seems inefficient to me.

A lot of the difference between the POSE and the Chi Running technique is that I've based all of what I've learned on pure experience. It doesn't necessarily come from science. I've used scientists to back up what I figured out but it's not based on science and then I go out and see if it works. I'm not just a pure scientific person. The Chi Running is really based on body knowledge. I've been running for so many years. I've tried so many things and run lots of ultras, 100-milers and on down. I know in my body what works efficiently, what I can do for speed, what I can do to rest when I'm running, what I can do in any kind of circumstance that pops up in front of me when I'm running. With the POSE Technique he doesn't go into all of those little variables, the little things that happen. What if you get tired when you're doing the POSE Technique? What if you need to go up a hill? What if you feel some kind of discomfort or pain? How do you manage your fuel?

With Chi Running we've really tried to approach it from such a holistic viewpoint that you're always, whenever you're moving you're trying to take into consideration that anything is possible when you're running. The internal part of your body, you're always sensing your body to see what's going on with it, you're responding to what's going on and you're also feeling how your body responds to environmental challenges. Is there a hill? Well, how do you run differently up a hill? And how do you run differently down a hill? How do you run differently in a crosswind? How do you run differently in the cold? So with Chi Running all of these little focuses happen in the Chi Running technique. They're designed to get people really sensitive to their bodies so they have the correct response in any condition. Then you really learn to master your body.

That's the whole idea with any kind of an athlete, to really have mastery over your body. It's not just mastery over a technique, it's mastery really over your body. You can use that the rest of your life. You don't just use it when you're running. That's the beauty of it. So a lot of the focuses that are in Chi Running you can use all day long. You can use them when you're driving a car. You can use them when you're carrying groceries. They're not all specifically just designed for people to be faster runners. It's how you master your event. So if you run Ironman Honolulu in Hawaii, there's hills in there. How do you train specifically for that? How

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do you change your technique when you do that?

There's a lot of other differences. The biggest difference is that in Chi running you rotate your pelvis. What I mean by that is that as your leg swings your pelvis rotates around a central axis. So if your leg swings to the rear your hip goes back with it, your whole pelvis rotates. That gives you extra stride length. With Chi Running your cadence always stays the same but your stride length is what changes. That kind of gives you like a set of gears, like a bicycle. So you keep your cadence always the same but you just allow your stride to open up or shorten depending on if you need more speed or less speed or if you're going up a hill, you shorten your stride. If you're going down a hill you lengthen it. So there's all these adjustments and variables. The idea is to be able to adjust to all the different variables with the least amount of energy expenditure. So for instance, I'll give you one example, Mr. Romanoff was talking about the three phases of POSE Technique - the pose, fall and pull. Right?

KERRY: Right.

DANNY: So he's got people landing on their forefoot and pulling their foot up as fast as they can to try to keep the least amount of contact with the ground as possible, which works if you want to be a very fast, short-distance runner. It works great for that. But if you want to be an endurance runner where you're using the least amount of energy possible then you don't want to be using a contraction of your muscles to pull that foot up underneath you. You want to really be using the recoil of your tendons. If you allow your leg to swing and lengthen and your pelvis to rotate, you're actually loading a large amount of the myofascial tissue that connects all those muscles and tendons altogether and your legs end up able to be moved by a recoil effect of the tendons and the myofascial tissue. That doesn't cost you fuel. So if I'm allowing my legs to stretch out behind me with my run, it's similar to how the Kenyans run. If my stride opens up way behind me, that's stretching that hip flexor tendon. That's stretching my quadriceps tendon. As soon as I let my leg off the ground all those tendons recoil and pull my leg forward. The tendon recoils and pulls it forward. I don't need to contract that giant quadricep muscle. I don't need to fuel it to get the job done. It's way more efficient.

The idea is you land mid-foot and you don't use any energy in your lower leg because when you land with the mid-foot there's really very little muscle that needs to be supporting body, because it's bones lined up. Then to move my legs I'm using the recoil of my tendons. To move my body I'm falling forward. So I'm trying to really knock out muscle usage as much as possible. That's the whole idea.

KERRY: All right. A lot of people realize that there's a lot of technique within

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swimming and things of that nature, but how is technique important in running?

DANNY: Oh my gosh. You can get faster without more exertion. You could have all the muscles in the world. You could do strength training from now until the cows come home and if you have really strong lengths but you're running is inefficient, if your technique isn't good, your body isn't moving in a nice, relaxed way, you'll never be as fast as somebody that has good technique and can also add on that strength when they need it. You know what I mean? So technique is really the basis of one, not getting injured. If your technique is bad, if you're landing hard... Let's say you're reaching with your legs and over striding and heel-striking, then every time you land the jolt of the road is going to travel up your foot, up your leg, into your knees or your hips or whatever is your weak spot. It's going to start wearing away your body. It might not do it when you're 18 years old. It might not even do it when you're 25. But as you start getting into your 30s, if you're running that way, you're going to start feeling it. So technique has everything to do with saving your body. If you want to be a runner for a lot of years, get your technique really clean, really smooth and have the least amount of impact with the ground.

Now, if you have a really clean technique and you're really relaxed with it, that means that you're not holding any tension in your body and your body can move much more freely. If it can move more freely then there's less resistance to motion and you become a more efficient runner. See what I mean?

KERRY: Yeah, definitely.

DANNY: And if you're more efficient, like I said, you don't need as much recovery time. You don't need as much fuel. You don't need to have a real high VO2 max to like super-oxygenate your muscles so they burn more fuel better. You go a whole different route.

When I talk about Chi Running is similar to the Kenyans, you look at the Kenyans and they've done studies, VO2 max studies of the long-distance Kenyan runners, and they have pretty pedestrian, so to speak, VO2 max numbers. They're not major guys in that area because they're efficient runners. They don't need to be fueling their muscles with a huge oxygen uptake. They're just not exerting that much, even at the speeds they're running.

KERRY: Yeah. I've actually seen the studies on that too. So how much improvement can running technique make in making one faster?

DANNY: It could probably add a double-digit percentage point higher.

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KERRY: Really?

DANNY: As far as making you faster. Oh, yeah. Like I just said, when you work on your technique, the idea, especially with Chi Running, is to really do as much as possible as relaxed as possible. So the idea is to be a relaxed runner, at any speed.

You'll see in the Olympics when the sportscaster is talking about the guy who wins the 100-meter dash he goes, "That guy looks so relaxed." It's the people who are the most relaxed that allow their energy to move through their body in a more unobstructed way. So your technique has everything to do with making you faster because if you can be a much more relaxed runner all of that fluidity in your body, all the motion in your body, has no obstructions. There is no inertia. There's nothing blocking the movement of body mass. So technique has everything to do with how to move freely and smoothly and level along the ground, no wasted motion. That's really the best way to put it. The better your technique the less wasted motion you have. The less wasted motion you have, like I said, the less fuel you need, the less oxygen you need, the less recovery you need, all that.

KERRY: Good deal. We like that. That's good. [Laughter] What are the common mistakes that you see people make when they're running and how can they fix them?

DANNY: Probably one of the biggest mistakes is leading with their legs, overstriding. People start reaching with their legs. That's the biggest problem I see people do. They think in order to run faster you have to swing your leg forward. Well, whenever you swing your leg forward, here's the principles. You want to cooperate with the forces that are acting on your body whenever you're running. In T'ai Chi you're always cooperating with forces, somebody's thrown a punch at you, you go in the direction the punch is coming. You don't go against it.

If you're running down the road that means the road is coming at you, right?

KERRY: Right.

DANNY: Okay, so if you're a six-minute miler, there's a ten mile an hour force coming at you called the road. How do you deal with that force? If you're swinging your leg forward into that force, that's an incredible amount of force coming into your body. If the foot is landing in front of you, like I said, leading with your leg, as soon as your foot lands in front of your center of mass you're putting the brakes on. Why in the world would you

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want to run with the brakes on? I would say 60 percent of the people I see out there are running with the brakes on.

So the idea with Chi Running, whenever you're leaning forward you're leaning with your whole body so that when your foot comes down on the ground it is either under or slightly behind your center of mass so that as your foot hits the ground it's moving in a rearward direction not swinging in a forward direction into that force. See what I mean?

KERRY: Yeah.

DANNY: You're cooperating with that force of the road means that when your foot hits the ground it's got to be going the same direction as the road, which is the other way that you're headed. So that's the biggest one.

The other mistake I see people making is over-reliance on their leg muscles and legs in general. There's another way to get by it without using so much leg muscle.

Another huge mistake, poor pacing. Everybody is so into zipping off at the start. Triathletes are better at it, because you just learn after a while, you just learn. You just don't go out fast, unless you want to die early. But poor pacing is really a big thing. People at the start line just get so caught up with adrenaline. They just want to blast away and it doesn't pay.

Other mistakes, one mistake is increasing your cadence as you increase your speed. That's one thing that a lot of people aren't really that aware of. If you increase your ground speed and your cadence increases as you increase your ground speed, that means you have to turn your legs over faster. That means you have to train your muscles to turn over faster. That also means you have to fuel your muscles to turn over faster. So if you can learn instead how to keep a nice steady cadence, and learn how, if you want to run faster you lean more and let your stride open up behind you more. So your upper body is always going forward. Your legs are always going the other way. That's a much more efficient way to move your body than letting your cadence go faster and faster and faster. It really does consume an incredible amount of fuel if you're doing it that way.

Let me see, any others? Just inefficient uses of the body. Like I said, you can take it all back to technique. If somebody is swinging their arms across their body instead of swinging them forward, that's a waste. Or having your upper body sway side to side as you run. Any direction that your body moves that isn't headed the same direction you are is a waste of energy.

So if everybody out there wants to think about a ruling idea, a theme,

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whenever you're out there running, you always want to have as many body parts as possible heading in the same direction you are. So watch your arms. How do they swing? Are they going forward or are they going crosswise? How's your hips? Are they going side to side or are they moving forward? Do your legs turn out or do your feet point the direction you're headed? Everyone of those little things, adjustments you can make, can trim off that much more seconds off your time.

KERRY: Right.

DANNY: If you want to get fast it's not all about pushing harder. It's about stopping your leaks, what made you inefficient. Not so much how can you build stronger legs and run faster but how can you just get plain more efficient.

KERRY: Sure, sure. Now a lot of runners deal with lots of injuries. A lot just accept that part of running. How can one avoid injuries with Chi Running?

DANNY: One is not requiring more of a muscle than can possibly be done safely. It's like people get so in their heads that they want to just push themselves so hard to just get really fast or whatever. That's mind over body. That's what I call mind over body. That's like no pain, no gain mentality.

If you want to train smarter you want to really learn where the maximum amount of your muscle is that you can call upon and stop there. You don't do super efforts, hardly ever unless you really, really need to get out of a bad situation or something like that. You want to be using your muscles within a safe range of not only their range of motion but their ability to perform. So you wouldn't, like I said, try to run a really long run by always pushing off of your legs or especially pushing off of your toes. That's going to fire calf muscles so much that they're going to run out of electrolytes more quickly, they're going to cramp and then you're not running at all. If you just really let the small parts of your body do the small work and let the larger parts of your body do the larger work, then everybody's happy and everybody's doing the job they should. The way to avoid injuries is to not let one of the little parts do a big job. That's on overuse injury.

Another one is over-training. A lot of people try to train so hard. A big mistake that I see a lot of people doing is doing their long runs at race pace. It doesn't make any sense. You want to do shorter runs at race pace. You can even do runs that are three-quarters the length of your race at race pace. But to all your long training on... Those are there for aerobic capacity, for building your aerobic base. Then you have speed workouts and you have tempo workouts and you have all these workouts that train you how to run faster. But the technique it takes to run faster, not the muscle -- now this is Chi Running technique-talk. It's not muscles that

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will make you faster it's your technique that will make you faster. So if you want to learn to run faster you learn a fast running technique. Then if you want to get even faster you can add muscle on top of that. But not until you get your technique. So if you want to avoid injuries don't over-tax your body. Don't over-train it. Really be smart about doing it.

I would say another thing is rely more on technique than strength. If your technique is clean you can't do anything wrong. You're not moving any part of your body in a way it wasn't designed. That's where injuries come from. I start swinging my hips wider than they need to be. I start putting too much weight on some part of my body that it's not designed to hold. My feet turn out and I'm still running forward, that puts an incredible amount of pressure on your medial ligament and your knee. So you want to really clean up how you move your body. That's what's going to avoid a lot of injuries.

KERRY: Sure, sure. Danny, where can people get a hold of your information, your books, DVDs? Where can people go to get that stuff?

DANNY: Well the books are available in any bookstore, Barnes and Noble. They're on Amazon and all that stuff. The DVD is also on Amazon. You can go to our website. We have a really extensive website. We have a huge library of articles on all aspects of running. We have a whole products page and you can find workshops, DVDS, any information you need to find out about. Then we have a really good forum that's widely used. A lot of people just click on there everyday just to find out the latest thing that's going on. So it's a pretty good interactive website, real informative.

KERRY: What's your web address?

DANNY: The web address is ChiRunning.com. Or ChiWalking.com, for you walkers. Just go straight there. There's lots of information there.

KERRY: Okay. The next question I've got for you is going to deal with the foot. You have some people out there that say you should strike on the heel. You say you should strike on the mid-foot. Then you've got other people saying you should strike on the forefoot or the front of the foot. You kind of described the forefoot a little bit before. Why don't you just say where you stand on that topic.

DANNY: I stand on the mid-foot. No pun intended, right? [Laughter] I'll tell you this, the heel strike is definitely, in anybody's book, is real inefficient and dangerous. If you land with a heel strike that means your foot is out in front of you, you're landing on your heel, you stand to gain plantar fasciitis, shin splints, calf pulls, Achilles tendon tendonitis. You can do ilio tibial band syndrome. It's just not a good way to land. So if you're a

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heel-striker figure out how to change so that you're not.

That being given, then there's the choice between being a mid-foot striker and a forefoot striker. Mostly I would say as league runners and league short to middle distance runners run on their forefoot, people who are just absolutely out for speed. But in order to do that you have to really strengthen an incredible amount of your lower leg muscles to be able to sustain running on your forefoot. So it takes muscle to get that speed. But that's why those distances are shorter, those races are shorter. If you're going to be up on the ball of your feet you don't want to be on there for marathon distances. That would be so hard on your body. You might be able to do it when you're younger but you can't do it when you're old. It wouldn't work.

So the mid-foot, people go, even Romanoff said, "There is no mid-foot. What do you mean? When you land there's not even any foot there." Well, that's not quite correct. The mid-foot is really the mid-section of your foot, where you tie your shoes, the part of the foot that's directly underneath the bow. It's the middle part of your foot. So when you're doing a mid-foot strike you basically land simultaneously on the forefoot and heel so the whole bottom of your foot is landing on the ground, especially with Chi Running. I have people land with a mid-foot stance. I tell people to make sure that your entire lower leg is absolutely as limp as you can make it. So there are no muscles firing in that lower leg during your support phase. That'll guarantee that you're never going to overuse any of those muscles. You can't overuse a muscle you don't use. When you land in a mid-foot strike your whole skeleton lines up above that. Like I said, you can watch kids run, especially watch kids run barefoot, and even adults run barefoot. They all land in a mid-foot strike. It's more of a natural way to run.

When I watch the Kenyans run. I got a hold of a video taken from the press truck in front of the San Diego Marathon, there were a few Kenyans there. I slowed down that video, way slow. These Kenyans are cruising along at a 4:50 per mile pace, for a marathon. They are landing absolutely mid-foot. They're not heel-striking, they're not toe-running. They are landing completely mid-foot. They're the most efficient runners in the world. They're also the fastest runners in the world. They also have the skinniest legs in the world. Go figure. They're not using the legs. They don't need big legs. I'm trying to get that point across. The calves on the Kenyans are non-existent. They have calves but their calves are about as big as my forearm. Right?

KERRY: Yeah.

DANNY: They have very thin legs. Yet they're winning all the races. How do they do that? You look at a cheetah, the fastest land animal, it doesn't have big

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leg muscles like a tiger. It has very skinny legs, a totally skinny body. Yet it moves faster. It's all in other places. It's in the core, not the peripherals.

So the mid-foot strike is more restful on the legs for one thing, especially if you're just using your legs for support and that's it, you're not using them for propulsion. Then they're very relaxed. So that's one way to insure that you won't get any lower-leg injuries, land with a mid-foot strike.

KERRY: Sure. Good deal. Let's talk about shoes. Let's talk about which ones you like the most and why.

DANNY: The ones I like the most, for mid-foot striking, are ones that have less of a heel. Most of the running shoes nowadays just have way too much of a heel. The running shoe companies have been trying to counteract the impact to the heel for most runners. They've done that by building up the heels in the shoes, higher and higher and higher over the years. Some of them are upwards of three-quarters of an inch. Well if you build the heel up that high then you're going to hit the heel sooner than you would have normally if the heel was lower.

So my take on that is that if you're learning to be more efficient with your technique, you're trying to work away from a heel-strike, which I highly suggest everybody does, that you work towards a shoe that is less of a shoe. You don't need that much of a shoe. If you land with a mid-foot you don't need any impact control because you're coming straight down on your foot not coming into a breaking position with your foot. You know what I mean? If your foot is already heading in a rearward direction when you land there's not a lot of impact there. It's just body support. So you don't need a lot of cushioning.

So I run in racing flats. There are also training flats. You work your way down. People who have a lot of structural problems can start out with a structured shoe, but as you clean up your technique you graduate to less and less and less of a shoe. My favorite pair of shoes that I just live in is the New Balance 790s. They have almost no heel at all. They're flat. They're so flexible. They feel like T'ai Chi shoes. They're very lightweight. You can go online and get them for like 47 dollars. It's ridiculous. You're not paying 125 dollars for these big, hot-shot shoes. These are great shoes. Any shoe that is, if you're working on being more efficient and really relying more on the pull of gravity and neutralizing your lower legs and your feet, less shoe is better. I even got sent a pair of shoes that are called Five Fingers. I don't know if you've heard of them.

KERRY: No.

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DANNY: They're made by Vibra, the guys that make shoe soles. Well these are called Five Finger shoes because they've got like five toes in them. You put your feet in them. They invented them for people are in boating and water sports. It's just this kind of gimmicky little thing. Well, these ultra runners heard about this and they started running these ultra-long distances in these shoes that basically give you a rubber bottom on your foot. There is no cushioning. I've heard of people doing 100-milers in these things.

If your technique is good there's no impact so you can run with less of a shoe. Even one of the Olympics, the marathon, was won by a guy barefoot.

KERRY: Yep, yep.

DANNY: So less and less of a shoe is better. If your running form can't support less of a shoe then you need to graduate your way into better technique and as your technique gets better you get less and less of a shoe. See what I mean?

KERRY: Yeah.

DANNY: Also, make sure the shoe fits, so to speak. Make sure there's plenty of room in the toe-box. Make sure it's plenty flexible in the toe-box. You don't want stiff shoes. You don't want huge built-up shoes. Like I said, the less shoe is better.

KERRY: Excellent. Okay, so what's your take on orthotics then?

DANNY: It's one of these things where it's treating a symptom. I have more of a holistic approach to running and fitness and everything else. So if I can correct it from inside the body I'll do that first. If for some reason you've got a major case of plantar fasciitis and you really want to protect that plantar while it's healing, then yeah, get an orthotics. But as soon as you're healed get rid of the thing. What an orthotics does, basically, is it holds your foot in a certain position. They're not flexible. That's unnatural to the foot. So if you're trying to heal your foot, you really want to have more mobility in your foot so say when your plantar tendon needs to repair, you want your foot moving during your healing process so that when your tendon heals it heals in the longest version that you've got, not the shortest. If you immobilize that tendon than you're either stuck wearing orthotics the rest of your life, or as soon as you get rid of the orthotics your plantar tendon has healed in a short version and then as soon as you go out, if you're still running the same way that caused the problem, you're going to re-injure it.

KERRY: Right.

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DANNY: This gets into injuries, whenever you injure yourself you want to figure out how you did it, what you did wrong that made you injure yourself and correct that. Correct the cause. Then you don't have to go through all these strange things, therapies and building up muscles to correct the weak knee and all this other stuff. You just correct what caused it, if you can figure that out. That's what we try to guide people through in the Chi Running material. So orthotics have their place, but don't get hooked on them. Don't get reliant on them.

KERRY: Let's talk about pacing. We were talking a little bit about pacing before. Let's talk about it specifically for a triathlete and with Chi Running and how that all fits together.

DANNY: Well, I kind of mentioned it before but pacing, for triathletes, depending on what distance you're doing, if you're doing Chi Running, you can change your pacing from what you would normally do if you don't do Chi Running, you do what we call Power Running. If you're using strength to get yourself through the run then you need to save some strength for that run leg. Like on that video blog you just had where you're doing these bricks where you get on the bike and then on the run--

KERRY: Right.

DANNY: You build all this strength so that when you get off the bike you can just like hit it right off the bat and crank away. That's strength training.

KERRY: What's your take on that?

DANNY: My take on that is that you can get the job done in two ways. You can either do it through strength training or you can do it through technique and use less strength training. If for instance you're pacing yourself with the bike and you're doing strength training like you do, you're still concerned about, "When I get off the bike I still need to have some of that muscle strength left. I can't totally crank on the bike like I would love to if that was the end of the race, when I get off the bike." You've got to save some.

When you're doing Chi Running, if you're not reliant on your legs for propulsion then you can crank the bike a lot harder. I've had so many triathletes come back to me. In fact, I gave one guy a three-hour seminar to the Golden Gate Triathlon Club and this was right before the Escape From Alcatraz. I ran into him about three weeks later and I said, "How'd you do?" And he says, "Well, I did a new PR on the Escape and I did the fastest run I've ever done. But I was kind of bummed at the end." I said, "What do you got to be bummed about?" He said, "I felt so good at the

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end of the run that I could've cranked the bike a lot more." He just felt like the run was too easy. That's a different take. It's a really different take.

That's a big part of why a lot of triathletes really like the Chi Running technique as applied to a triathlon, because it really does make it easier on your legs when you get off the bike. So that means you can really fly on the bike. When you transition from the bike to the run, that's important.

My take on what that training was that you were doing, the difference I would be to do my transition before I get off the bike, when I'm still coming into T2. I'm going to be pulling up on the pedals. I'm going to be not pushing on the pedals at all. I'm going to be pulling up on the pedals so I can get some blood circulating into those hip flexors. Then you start loosening them up, warming them up. Then when I get off the bike I'm going to number one straightening up my posture. I see a lot of guys get off the bike and they take off running bent over at the waist like they're still on the bike. That is really hard on your quads. That totally makes your quads have to support your body weight when you take off running. If you straighten up your posture your structure is supporting your body. It all of a sudden just takes all that work off the quads. So straighten yourself up when you get off the bike. Do that first. When you're going through the transition area just stand tall.

Then start with just falling into your run, let your legs get used to it for a little. It doesn't take that long. Really let your feet come up off the ground. The beauty of it is you still have a circular stride. You don't want to have a swinging leg. You want to have a circular stride, just like you're pulling up on the pedals. Then as you get further into your run let your lean propel you out of that transition area. Let your lean propel you, not your legs. Then once your legs actually transition into the run, because they won't transition that quickly, once they transition into the run then you can really work on getting your fluidity back into your pelvis, getting your leg swinging into the back, getting yourself falling forward, using a lot more upper body. In fact, in the transition and right out of the transition area, I would use a lot more upper body. Really let your legs have a little bit of space. They just got off the bike. I would go a little easier on the legs and then just really use a lot more upper body - big, full arm swings, a big, full lean. Let the part that's rested for the last hour get some work done. When you're on the bike your arms and upper body don't need to do that much, really. They're not over-working. So when you get off the bike you can really swing your arms. They haven't been moving. Use your arm swing. That's learning how to mix-up your muscle usage so you're not totally dependent on your legs. Pull in other helpers.

KERRY: Sure, sure. Well that's very interesting. Thanks for that insight. Danny, what's your website where people can get your information and your

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DVDs and books and all that?

DANNY: It's ChiRunning.com and ChiWalking.com. Go on the website and we have an 800-number phone line people can call in. It's also a good place to find out where a local Chi Running workshop is going to be held. I'm going to be one of the speakers at the multi-sport convention in Boston.

KERRY: Okay, sure.

DANNY: That's a big event. I'm going to be giving a talk on transition.

KERRY: Good deal. We've got a few minutes left and we've got some people asking some questions on the web cast. Do you want to answer a few questions?

DANNY: No problem.

KERRY: Okay. Speaking of Chi Walking, Todd here from Lake Zurich, is asking, "Is there any advantage of learning Chi Walking for a triathlete?"

DANNY: There is, to tell you the truth. There's a lot of people that do these walk-runs. Or, if you're ever on a run and there's a time when you just want to walk, you've been out there and you just need to take a break, you're just so overexerted you just need to do it, Chi Walking will allow you to keep your momentum but walk. Do you know what I mean? It's very focused walking. It's similar to race-walking but you don't lock the knees. But it is very energetic and you're still using the propulsion of gravity and your core muscles more to propel yourself than your legs. So it is to your advantage, if you do have to end up walking at some point during any event, a long event, and I'm sure there's not just triathletes out there there's probably marathoners, half-marathoners and ultra runners, so if you do have to stop and walk you don't want to just stop and stroll or just kind of give it your best shot with walking. You want to know how to walk well and keep it brisk and not lose any of the momentum. Otherwise if you just slow down to just any kind of a walk and then you have to get back up to a running speed again, that's a lot of inertia. So if you do have to slow to a walk, get into a nice, vigorous, highly efficient walk. So yeah, it is good to know.

Not only that but the walking is a really good way to learn pelvic rotation. You do a lot more pelvic rotation when you're walking than when you're running. It's a great way to learn it while you're walking and then move it into your running because it makes your running so much smoother and easier.

KERRY: Yeah. You definitely see a lot of pelvic rotation and flexing going on

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when you watch the Olympic walkers. Have you seen that?

DANNY: Oh, yeah. Have you ever tried it yourself? The idea is if you really want to learn this while you're running you just start off at a really fast walking pace, really keep your upper body forward and really get yourself walking like really good and then slowly feel what it feels like to have that pelvis rotate and then gradually, gradually just break into a nice, easy jog. But don't stop feeling that pelvic region. You'll feel right into your run. It's a cool feeling.

KERRY: Those guys go pretty fast, too, the top guys.

DANNY: I ran a 10K once and a guy beat me walking. He was doing like a seven and a half minute pace.

KERRY: Yeah, it's unbelievable. They're deceptively fast, for sure. Bob from Miami asks, "What are the top two to three Chi Running principles that will provide the biggest bang for the buck?"

DANNY: Biggest bang for buck? Lean and pelvic rotation. I just said them. Yeah, those are the two biggest ones.

KERRY: All right, good deal. Danny from Acton, California, asks, "For someone practicing Chi Running, do you have any training recommendations or tips for longer distances such as marathon and Ironman?"

DANNY: Marathon and Ironman, what I would say is you want to have one run a week be a really long-distance run. You want to add your mileage on there. But in the rest of your runs during the week, always be working your technique. In fact, even during the long runs do that. Here's how you do it. I set my countdown timer for two minute intervals, it beeps every two minutes. Then I think about one focus or the other. I want to pay attention to my posture and I want to pay attention to, say, pelvic rotation. So I have these two focuses. My beeper goes off every two minutes. At every other interval I'm practicing one of those two focuses for the entire two minutes. So if you're out on a long run for two hours, you know how many times you get to practice that technique? It's all about allowing your body to learn how to run farther but how to master your technique in the process. It's not just strength training. It's always thinking about working yourself with your technique. So whenever you're out on any length of run, especially one of your long runs, you want to practice that technique it takes to get you through that long run.

Now, for instance, on your long runs if you're doing an Ironman or a marathon, you want to do race-specific training. So if you've got an Ironman that's got lots of hills in it, you want to have lots of hills in your

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long run. You don't want to just go out and run flat. If your marathon is on paved roads you don't want to go out and be running trails for your long runs. You want to really do race-specific training. If there's a hill ten miles into your race, you want to put a hill ten miles into your training. You want to do race-specific training so that there's no surprises on race day. Your body is used to having that duress, when it comes and how to adapt to it. You know?

KERRY: Sure. Great, good tips. Danny also says he gives you guys a lot of credit for helping him out, getting him through his first triathlon and everything like that. So he just wanted to say thank you.

David from Dallas, Texas asks, "I'd love some tips or drills to help me lean more forward when running."

DANNY: Oh, okay. Well here's the trick, what you want to do. In order to lean more forward you need to have stronger core muscles. So in order to keep your posture straight when you lean forward you have to be leveling your pelvis. That's what I call a vertical crunch. You want to be picking your pelvis, lifting it up in front. You should be able to feel it in your lower abdominal muscles. So those are the muscles you need to strengthen in order to hold more of a lean for a longer period of time. In order to strengthen those muscles you do abdominal strengthening exercises. But they have to be static. You don't just do sit-ups. You do where you have to hold yourself in that position for a prolonged period of time.

One that I do, that's in the book, is I lean up against the table or a couch or a park bench and have my quads hit up against the bench while I keep my posture really straight but tilted forward. The only muscles I'm using are my lower abs. I just hold that position as long as I can, take a break, hold it again, take a break. The other way to learn more lean is to go out on your runs and go through those two-minute intervals. You can do one-minute intervals, you can do ten-minute intervals, but during an interval workout you hold your lean for the whole interval and then you back off for like a minute and then you hold your lean again for two minutes, then you back off again. That's like lifting weights. But you're doing it in the motion of which those muscles are going to be being used. So it's a highly efficient way to train yourself not only how to lean more but how to strengthen those muscles it takes to hold more of a lean for longer periods of time. Does that make sense?

KERRY: Yeah, it does. We've got Fred in Oakland. He asks, "Danny, I took your seminar several years ago in Berkley. Chi Running has made my running so much easier. I've been running for over 45 years." Nice one.

DANNY: Forty-five, that's a new record.

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KERRY: Yeah, that's good. Ultra marathon guy, right? "What do you think about the Newton line of mid-foot strike shoes? I like them very much but my right calf tightens up within ten minutes of running with them. I have no such issues in my regular running shoes."

DANNY: Right. The Newton shoes are really a forefoot-strike shoe. That's why his calves are tightening up. Those little bars on the bottom throw you onto the front of your foot, the front half of your foot. That's why his calves are firing. They kind of stick out of the shoe. Danny Abshire, the guy that invented those is in Boulder. I've talked to him many times and told him, "Danny, if you could make a real mid-foot strike shoe I could sell these things."

But a lot of triathletes love these, especially the short distance, sprint and Olympic distance. They love the Newton shoes because they get more speed. But you also have to train your leg to be able to stay up on that forefoot. That's why they're doing that.

As far as the other mid-foot strike shoes, New Balance came out with a mid-foot strike shoe. We helped design that shoe. It is a good transitional shoe for somebody who's going from regular running or heel-striking or power running into the mid-foot strike. It's a good transitional shoe but it's not a shoe I would recommend people stay in because it's a lot of shoe. It works for a mid-foot strike shoe but for a lot of people who've worn it for any length of time it gets a little heavy on your foot. Not heavy like literally heavy, it just feels like a lot of shoe. So that's why I say mid-foot strike shoes are really closer to the range of racing flats.

KERRY: Sure.

DANNY: I wanted to bring up a point about this.

KERRY: Sure, go for it.

DANNY: When you're running efficiently and your technique is good, there's less recovery time. Two weeks ago I ran the Goofy Challenge down in Walt Disney World, right?

KERRY: Oh, yeah. Why don't you just describe that to everyone, what that is.

DANNY: The Goofy Challenge. Walt Disney World, down in Orlando, they have a half marathon on Saturday and they have a full marathon on Sunday. I think if you run the half marathon it's the Minnie Challenge. If you run the full it's the Mickey Challenge. If you run both it's the Goofy Challenge. They say you've got to be goofy to do back to back long runs. But believe

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it or not they had 7,000 people register for this race, for the two.

KERRY: Wow.

DANNY: Well, I ran the Goofy Challenge. This was my challenge to myself. I was working the Expo floor for three days. Those were eight or nine hour days on my feet. You can't imagine a worse entry into a long-distance event, standing on concrete floor for three days. Well, I ran the half on Saturday. My goal was to run a 1:40 and I ran a 1:39, which felt fine. I took it easy that day. Then the next day I went out and ran the marathon in 3:36, the next day.

KERRY: Good deal.

DANNY: That qualified me for Boston. [Laughter] Now who in their right mind would want to try to qualify for Boston and run a half marathon the day before?

KERRY: Goofy.

DANNY: A goofy person, yeah. I wouldn't even have attempted that if I wasn't absolutely positive there was no need for recovery. And there wasn't. And I went running the day after the marathon and by Wednesday I felt like I hadn't even done anything.

KERRY: Wow.

DANNY: That's the fascinating thing about it. We have two of our instructors, one guys is 42 years old. He just won his age group in the Marine Corp Marathon. He's 42 and he ran a 2:34.

KERRY: Wow.

DANNY: We have another guy who is 60 years old and he just ran a 3:08 and won his age group in the New York Marathon.

KERRY: Good deal.

DANNY: So these are old guys that are pretty efficient and still staying pretty darn fast. I'm 59. I'm not losing a whole lot of speed and I'm not doing a whole lot of training. That's the beauty of this. I just want people to know that that's in older guys. Can you imagine the possibilities of younger, if you're well within the range of handling a lot more speed and distance?

KERRY: All right. Good deal.

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DANNY: It really opens up possibilities.

KERRY: Sure. Here's a question on kind of the same topic here. Larry from Cedar Creek asks, "Does the energy expended in lifting the heels pay off in energy economy or conservation?"

DANNY: Well, it depends how you lift the heels. When I'm first showing somebody how to pick up their feet when they're running, there is a minimal amount of hamstring firing. The difference is that I don't have people pick their knees up, at all, ever. You never want to lift your knees when you're running. If you do it'll cost you fuel because you're using your hip flexors and your quads. Those are large muscles. You want to stay away from that. So you never lift your knees.

But when you learn how to do the Chi Running you do need to pick your feet up off the ground so when you're first learning it you do that by a small amount of firing to the hamstrings. As you get better at it, like I said, your whole leg is pulled forward by the recoil of your tendons. Well, when your leg is pulled forward by that rubber band effect, your heels float up almost on their own. There's not even any hamstring firing. So I never feel any discomfort or anything like that in the hamstrings.

So it depends how you pick your heels up. You really want to get to the point where you are not picking your heels up, your heels are being picked up by the recoil motion of your leg. But when you're first learning it, everything has to go through a gradual progression. So when you're first learning it you do need to lift your heels up. I use visualizations all the time. I pretend like I've got little hot air balloons tied to my heels. Whatever it takes so that I can totally relax and let my heels just float up. It's not like I'm trying to pull my foot up to keep the least amount of contact with the ground as possible. That's not efficient. It might be faster, but it's not as efficient.

KERRY: Good deal. We'll do one more question here. That is from Harry in Memphis, Tennessee. He wants to know, "What do you suggest for warming up and cooling down? When do you recommend stretching and how?"

DANNY: Okay, for warming up and cooling down, it depends on your distance. When I did that marathon I warmed up for a mile or two. For somebody doing a 5K if you run for a mile or two you're going to be out of gas. It's always based on body sensing. One of the skills we try to get people to learn in Chi Running is to learn to listen to your body. I would say that when you do warm up you really want to just run enough so that your muscles feel loose, your joints feel well lubricated, the blood is flowing into your muscles but they're not over-expended. Then just before you

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start your run, if it's a race, you want to do a few little light pick-ups, light surges. But if it's just a warm-up for a run, I'd just start off in a low gear, what I call first gear. I just start off at a nice, easy jog and then gradually add in more lean, add in more looseness, add in more lean, add in more looseness. So by the end of my run I have the most amount of lean and the most amount of looseness. So there's no stretching involved. The run in itself is the stretch, right? I'm starting off with a smaller range of motion, because when I warm up I have a small range of motion. As I get warmed up my range of motion gets a little bigger, I can lean more, I get my range of motion a little bigger, lean more. Add that up so that at the end of my run the only time there's need for stretching is if your muscles are contracted from firing too much. So if I'm really looking at not firing my muscles then there's not a whole lot of stretching to do.

I do some stretches if I ever feel like I had a little bit of tension held in my body for whatever reason, then I'll do stretches. But I never stretch before I run and if I stretch after I run I do it specific to the part that needs to be stretched. That's not to say that I don't recommend stretching. I think people need to stretch, if you need to stretch. You know what I mean?

KERRY: Yeah.

DANNY: Many just automatically stretch assuming that it's doing something for them. If I feel in my body that I need to stretch something, I have no problem stretching it. But if I don't feel like I need to stretch, if I'm really loose at the end of my run and my body feels great, there's no need to stretch.

KERRY: Good deal. Well Danny, thank you very much for coming on the call. Where can people get a hold of your stuff again? I've got a few people actually asking questions about your clinics, where can they get information on where you have your clinics and all that?

DANNY: Sure. Go on the website, ChiRunning.com and there's a menu bar and you just click on "workshops" and the dropdown menu has a schedule. You just go to the schedule and you can see every workshop that I'll be teaching in the near future and you'll also see every workshop that a lot of our other instructors are teaching. We have over 100 instructors all over the United States, some in other countries. So there's usually a Chi Running Workshop within driving distance. I'm going to be in San Francisco in April, teaching a workshop. I'm going to be in New York City March 28th and 29th, in Central Park. It's a really fun one.

KERRY: Oh, great.

DANNY: Yeah, it's a great place. We're going to have two days there. Then Multi-

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Sport Convention I'll be teaching some classes there in adjunct to being a speaker. So we'll be teaching Chi Running classes there. They're all over. Actually, I live in Ashville and I only teach here once a year. [Laughter]

KERRY: You're a busy guy.

DANNY: It's funny. I'm having a class here in the fall. I'll be around. Just go on the website and look under "workshops" and you'll find out where they are.

KERRY: Good deal. Well, Danny Dryer, thanks so much for coming on the call tonight.

DANNY: It was great to talk with you.

KERRY: Yeah, it was awesome. Great information. Hope everyone else enjoyed it. We'll see you guys next week at the same time, same place. Take it easy Danny. Good night.