



- A rhythmical run-up allows the bowler to achieve manageable body speed in preparation for the delivery stride. The aim is to generate the optimum forward speed or momentum for the bowler to deliver the desired ball.

The coach should focus on the following components of the run-up:

1 Small steps initially lead to longer strides in the run-up.

By taking small steps initially, the body pitches forward as the centre of gravity moves out in front of the feet. As a result, the body moves forward in a smooth, natural manner. As speed develops, the strides will naturally lengthen to keep the body in rhythm, provided that the hands are held above the waistline. If the arms are straightened and the hands fall below the waist, then the legs will move slowly. The strides will then be slow and the body may begin to lean backwards, thus reducing forward momentum.

2 Body shows total forward body lean in the run-up.

Because the bowler's centre of gravity is well forward, the body will show a total forward lean. This has the advantage of ensuring that the forward momentum continues and the body does not lean back. It also encourages the bowler to run on the balls of their feet and not their heels. As the trail leg leaves the ground, the body should appear to lean forward, forming a straight line from the foot of the trail leg up along the back.

3 Arms move continuously and in a natural manner in the run-up, above the waistline and within the width of the trunk.

The bowler's arms should be folded so the hands are held up around the chest to enable the arms to move in rhythm with the body's running strides. At the same time, the hands should be held close to the body so they do not swing outside the width of the trunk. To do this properly the elbows will also need to swing backwards and forwards alongside the body and not swing away to the sides, causing the hands to swing across the target plane and the upper body to sway from side to side. A tight arm swing is conducive to a free flowing run-up and will ensure the bowler arrives at the crease in a controlled, balanced manner.

4 Normal stride used prior to back foot landing (no skip or hop).

The feet should move forward in a normal, natural manner leading in to the gather. The three common problems at this stage in the run-up are:

- (1) The trail leg crosses behind the front leg just prior to the gather step.
- (2) The back foot simply clicks up to the heel of the front foot.
- (3) The bowler hops on the same foot twice.

It is important that the step prior to back foot impact is natural and the back leg moves to the bowling side of the front leg to give good support in the delivery stride.

5 Bowling hand, ball and arms kept under shoulder level until the delivery arc.

- The bowler should endeavour to run towards the batter like an athlete until the last left foot leaves the ground for the right hand bowler, or right foot for the left hand bowler. The hands should move with an even motion so that they stay above the waist and within the width of the trunk during the run-up.
- The moment the bowler becomes airborne in the gather, the arms may begin the bowling motion and rotate towards the batter. Lifting either arm above the shoulders before this stage puts undue stress on the body to maintain a good rhythmical action.
- Lifting the arms will often mean that they are moved away from the target, with the upper body being forced backwards, thus reducing the body's forward momentum. Often, the bowler extends the bowling arm, moving the bowling hand back well past the line of the head. This inhibits forward momentum and forces the upper body back. Also, when the bowling hand moves straight back, it must then be stopped before moving forward again to commence the downswing. This is less efficient than moving the arms continuously with a forward motion. Also, if the ball is taken too far away from the body, balance and efficiency will be adversely affected.

6 Arms move continuously with a forward motion.

- Once a bowler begins to run, forward momentum is generated and it is the aim of the bowler to convert this momentum into ball speed. It is important therefore, that the body moves in a manner that does not waste the momentum that it is generating.
- The arms should contribute positively to forward momentum. They should swing in a natural manner, folded close to the body and in a high position. To show a continuous action, it is best that the arms move in small forward circles throughout the bowling action. Any stop/start/backwards/forwards movements should be avoided, so that forward momentum is not severely retarded.
- Backward arm movement often occurs with the front arm during the airborne phase of the gather and also immediately prior to back foot contact in the delivery stride, when the ball is cocked in preparation for the delivery arc. Both of these arm movements should be avoided, since they inhibit forward momentum.

7 Arm movement patterns aligned in the target plane, with no sideways movement during the preparation and delivery phases.

- The arms should swing in close to the body and in the direction of the batter. Every effort should be made to prevent the arms from swinging out to the side, as this will cause the upper body to sway. Balance and forward momentum will be compromised.
- Particular attention should be paid to the arm action during the gather phase. Remember that the body is airborne in this phase, so it is very easy for the body to be thrown off balance if the arms are long and are lifted to the side. Keeping the ball and the hand near the chin and moving in a rhythmical pattern will maximize their efficiency in generating speed.

8 Head steady.

The bowler should keep their head as still as possible and focus their eyes on the delivery point. The head is a good indicator of the bowler's balance when it is viewed in relation to the feet. When viewed from side-on, the head should be out in front of the mid point between the feet during the run-up, indicating good forward momentum. The view from behind the bowler, or from the batter's end should see the head positioned mid way between the feet. If the head moves too close to the edge of its base of support, balance and stability are compromised. Any swaying of the head from side to side indicates an unbalanced run-up, which can lead to major technical flaws later in the delivery sequence.

As a guide, the following errors are commonly seen in the run-up:

- Inconsistent starting point
- Too upright
- Arms and elbows swinging across the body
- Ball away from body core
- Shoulders rolling too much
- Stutter, skip or hop
- Zigzag movements
- Lack of vigour
- Running too far
- Too fast too early
- Over-striding
- Leaning back too early
- Side-on too early
- Manufactured, unnatural running style
- Both hands on the ball
- Ball changes hands

