

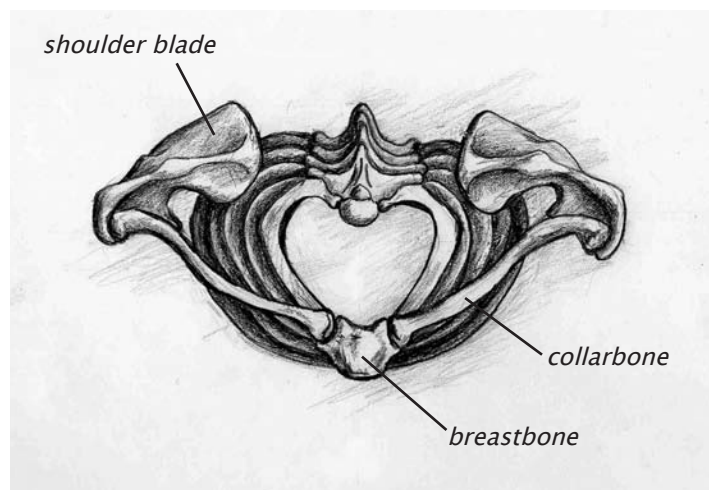
SIXTH STEP...

Allow your Upper Body to Help you Walk

Yes, your upper body can help your walking be more balanced and efficient. It's not just your arm swing that helps power you forward- it's your scapulae (shoulder blades) sliding over your rib basket!

In order for your scapulae to slide, your clavicles (collarbones) and the top of your sternum (breastbone) also need to be free to move, so you definitely need a pliable rib basket.

Allowing yourself to lengthen in relaxed upright posture (from the bottom up pages 3-5) enables all of this to happen.



EXPERIMENT...

Can Your Upper Body Really Power Your Legs?

1. Stand next to a countertop, your body positioned sideways to the countertop so that the leg with which you're going to kick is away from the countertop. Let your hand that is closest to the countertop rest on that surface.
2. Without allowing your upper body or arms to move, kick an imaginary ball.
How much power can you muster when you don't allow your upper body to participate?
3. This time as you kick the imaginary ball, continue to not allow any movement in your upper body — simply pull your arm (on the same side of your body as your kicking leg) back as that leg kicks forward.
How much power does your kick have if you only move the arm, not the shoulder?

4. Now, as you kick forward with that same leg, allow your scapula (“shoulder blade” on the same side of your body as your kicking leg) to simultaneously slide over the back of your rib basket toward your spine — taking the elbow on the same side of your body backward as your leg kicks forward.

How powerful was your kick this time?

5. Alternate between #2, #3, and #4 to confirm for yourself which way gives you the most powerful kick.

Soccer players moving the ball down the field, and the place kicker who powerfully kicks a football through the goal posts for the extra point, wouldn't be playing on the professional level if they kicked while keeping the upper body still.

This absolutely applies to walking. First of all, if you use your shoulders too powerfully you'll end up kicking your legs out ahead.

Since you now know it's in your best interest to have your stride under and behind you instead of kicking out ahead — let your shoulders relax.