

# The Effects of Rolfing on Running Economy and Running Mechanics

## Foreword

by James Oschman, Ph.D.

Jim Walker prepared the following summary for Rolf Lines at the request of Owen Marcus (Scottsdale). The research described was part of Walker's master's thesis at Arizona State University. Currently Walker and the Rolf Institute's Research Committee are continuing to examine the data collected; and this is, therefore, not the final report of the study.

Dr. Christine Wells and Jim Walker have also prepared a formal article for submission to the journal Physician and Sport Medicine.

The research arose from the initiative of Owen Marcus, combined with a desire on the part of the Institute's Research Committee to encourage research on the effects of Rolfing on human performance. As a pilot study, this project gave us valuable information on how to continue this line of investigation. First, we learned that extra subjects must be included to allow for some of the subjects dropping out. We had not anticipated this. Having extra subjects involves more time and expense, yet this is necessary. Secondly, when we asked Jim Walker what he would change if he could do the study again, he replied that he would choose less elite runners who would probably show a larger percentage of change following Rolfing. The performance of world-class runners may change by only 0.5% which is difficult to detect statistically, but makes a huge difference to the runner. All of the top-ranked runners may show only a 2% difference in the whole field. Finally, the project has confirmed the value of using our limited research funds to support pilot projects that are a part of a university thesis project. Jim Walker continues to be very interested in research on Rolfing, and he is considering another study that will be part of his Ph.D. research at the University of Utah. If you wish to communicate directly with Jim Walker, his address is:

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