Name:

Date:

The Symmetry of Speed

In nature, many plants and animals have what is called “symmetry.” This means that both sides of something are the same. (21), the eyes on the human face are at about the same place on both sides, and the ears appear to be mirror images of each other. However, symmetry in nature is not exact. If you look at a face very carefully, you will notice that one eye is usually slightly higher than the other. Scientists have found that faces that have almost exact symmetry are considered to be more attractive. Now, there is evidence that symmetry may give advantages in sports, too.

One study has found that knee symmetry can (22). In 1996, scientists went to Jamaica to measure the bodies of 270 eight-year-old children. They chose that country because many top runners come from there. The scientists checked for symmetry in areas such as legs, ears, fingers and feet. Later, in 2010, the scientists measured and tested the same people again. They found that those with better knee symmetry when they were children had become faster runners.

The scientists say they are not surprised. After all, symmetry makes movement easier, which would result in faster running. However, the main question is whether this symmetry develops over time because of running, or if some people are born with better symmetry. Based on their research, the scientists believe that it is more likely that people are born with good symmetry. (23), it will be possible to tell who is likely to become a fast runner from an early age just by looking at their knees.

21. a. Despite this
b. For instance
c. Like before
d. What is more

22. a. reduce leg injuries
b. harm children’s health
c. increase the height of people
d. improve athletic performance

23. a. If it is prevented
b. If this is true
c. With better treatment
d. With more exercise