Hand-Pacing Methods

Speed reading is not magic, nor is it a big expensive mystery. Professional speed reading classes simply teach a handful of easy techniques that help a person focus better. The eye is drawn to motion. Speed reading techniques put that motion on the page. Your starting position is important. You should sit up straight, hold the book down with your left hand, and use your right hand to do the pacing.

These methods may seem simple and easy, but don't let that fool you! These are very useful ways to read faster and better in very little time. But these techniques will not do you any good unless you PRACTICE them. It usually takes about three or four session before you get accustomed to a particular technique.

**Underlining I**
Using your pen as a guide, run your pen under each line from margin to margin. Your eyes should be focused at the top of the lines you are underlining with your pen. Maintain a steady rhythm and start with a slow pace that feels comfortable. Make sure you run your pen under each line.

**Underlining II**
This pattern is similar to Underlining I. You still run your pen under every line, but now you will underline only the middle half of each line. Your peripheral vision will pick up the rest of the line. Keep your eyes following just above your pen at the top of the line you are underlining. Maintain a steady rhythm.

**The Zig-Zag or Loop (For Previewing/Skimming)**
Begin by underlining only the middle half of the line as in the Underlining II pattern. This time, however, when you reach the end of the line, make a diagonal sweep back to the left, dropping down 2-3 lines in the process. Again, let your peripheral vision “chunk” the material in between. Remember, you are now skimming for gist only and will have less comprehension.

**Curved Z (For Scanning)**
Make one smooth sweep down the center of the page in the shape of a curved Z. Keep your eyes following just above your pen and maintain a fast, steady rhythm (about 10 seconds per page). Remember, you will only pick up a few key words (names, dates, numbers). You can increase your comprehension if you decide before you read what you want to find out.