

## Winter Triathlon Training 101

The following article is courtesy of our friends at Team Z: [www.triteamz.com](http://www.triteamz.com)

The winter season is a great time to get in some quality outdoor training but the inevitable cold temperatures and snow discourages many athletes from going outdoors. In fact, many cyclists and runners blame cold weather for their lack of motivation to train. They either train indoors spending hours swimming laps, running on a treadmill, or spinning on a bike trainer day after day until they get bored and quit, or they skip workouts all together. That's too bad. Because most folks avoid training outdoors during the winter, the running trails and roads that are usually packed with runners and cyclists during the summer are now dramatically less crowded. The good news is that with some preparation and proper gear, outdoor winter training is totally doable, and even enjoyable. Here are some basic winter training tips on how to take advantage of the awesomeness of winter training.

- 1. Have a goal:** Pick a late winter or early spring race as a goal. If you have a goal, the odds increase that you'll find a way to train and prepare.
- 2. Run or cycle with a group:** If motivation is what you need, a group training program is just the ticket. It's one of the best ways to help get you pumped and out the door. It's also a great way to make new friends and meet people with the same interests and goals. It will make the long miles of winter training go by so much quicker!
- 3. Intelligent layering:** The basic principles of layering are essentially the same for both running and cycling:

A) When the body is cold, it will first protect the vital organs at the expense of the extremities meaning your hands and feet and head. This is the reason these areas can get cold so quickly. Your brain is obviously a vital organ. Because it is more exposed up to 20-30% of your body's energy is used to keep the head warm. Whoa!

B) Moisture is your enemy. If sweat is not allowed to evaporate or your skin gets wet, this will force your body to expend lots of calories just to stay warm.

C) To stay warm, you need to keep your core temperature up and your trunk and extremities warm.

**Base layer:** Winter base layers are designed to be next-to-skin garments that go under your mid and outer layers. The base layer's primary purpose is to hold in the heated air while pulling moisture away from the skin and moving it to the mid layer where it can evaporate

more effectively. This serves two purposes: 1) it keeps your clothing from becoming wet and cold; and 2) helps to regulate your body temperature to keep you from getting too cold or too hot. Base layers are typically made from polypropylene, fleece or a thin wool blend. They allow moisture to escape while retaining heat.

**Mid layer:** The mid layer primarily acts as an insulating layer between the base and the outer garment. By creating two pockets of warm air (one between the base and mid, and the mid and outer layers), the mid layer makes it easier to more effectively regulate your body temperature and comfort level during cold weather riding. The mid layer also makes your base layer more effective by helping to move moisture even further away from your body.

**Outer layer shell:** This layer is for wind chill and rain protection. While the thermometer may read 40 degrees due to wind chill factor it's going to feel a lot colder. If you include a sudden rainstorm it will get cold very quickly. Ideally, the layer you choose is breathable so that moisture is not trapped and evaporates. An outer layer that has a waterproof membrane like Gore-Tex will allow moisture to escape while keeping the body dry.

**Extremities:** These are your hands, feet, and head. If left unprotected, these areas will freeze very quickly. Cold weather gloves, hand warmers for your hands, and a beanie or balaclava for your head and neck will do the trick. For cycling, a thin wool blend sock and toe warmers will do the trick. If you need more protection, booties are designed to go over bike shoes and give even more protection for the elements. For cold weather running, one of the biggest fears is the risk of slipping on ice or snow. Trail running shoes with an aggressive tread or snow traction accessories that attach to the sole of the shoes like [Yaktrax](#) can help you avoid a spill. Remember that everyone is different, so you may need to experiment with the layers to find the combination that works best for you.

Check out these websites for great deals on running and cycling gear that won't cost you an arm and a leg:

Performance Bike:

[http://www.performancebike.com/bikes/TopCategories\\_10052\\_10551\\_-1](http://www.performancebike.com/bikes/TopCategories_10052_10551_-1)

Sierra Trading Post: <http://www.sierratradingpost.com/>

Steep&Cheap :

[http://www.steepandcheap.com/?CMP\\_ID=PD\\_GOc005TM&mkwid=Exact:Steep\\_and\\_cheap](http://www.steepandcheap.com/?CMP_ID=PD_GOc005TM&mkwid=Exact:Steep_and_cheap)

Chainlove:

[http://www.chainlove.com/?CMP\\_ID=PD\\_GOc007TM&mkwid=Broad:Chainlove](http://www.chainlove.com/?CMP_ID=PD_GOc007TM&mkwid=Broad:Chainlove)



[www.vtsmts.com](http://www.vtsmts.com)

Campmor.com: <http://www.campmor.com/>

**4. Dynamic warmup before /stretching after is even more important during the winter:**

Your body will warm up more slowly in cold weather. Take at least five minutes to do dynamic stretching before a run or a ride. It may take 10 to 15 minutes of running before you are completely warmed up. Remember to leave ample time for stretching. Cold weather can cause muscle spasms if you don't take care of your joints and connective tissues.

**5. Hydrate and replace the calories:** Although it may not feel like it in the cold, you're burning a ton of calories and sweating like crazy. It is just as important to drink fluids and replace those calories in your winter workouts as it is in the summer. Make sure to hydrate before, during, and after your runs to avoid dehydration. Use warm fluids in your water bottle or tuck it under your jacket to avoid freezing.

Happy Winter Training!

Team Z