

# Period 3 & 4: Specific Training

(Nov. 22<sup>th</sup> – Jan. 16<sup>th</sup>)

**In an effort to maximize efficiency, I've decided to combine the write ups for periods three and four. The principal reason behind this being that they combine much of the same message: "It's time to start skiing and to gradually increase the volume over the holiday season and into the New Year."**

*Before continuing, however, I want to emphasize that it is NOT TOO LATE to start training for the Canadian Ski Marathon (CSM). I've received several questions from nervous people wondering if they can still complete the CSM even if they haven't started training. In short, yes. However, know that the more you train now the better you're chances of success will be later!*

**Specific Training:** The best and most enjoyable way to train for cross country skiing is by actually skiing. With snow tentatively on the ground and more expected it's time to dig out the ski equipment. I'll typically use this time of year to ease back into skiing. This means skiing once or twice a week depending on snow conditions. [In my case this means weekends as I live in the city and skiable conditions are still a distant thought.] Starting slowly is the key to avoiding injuries. Too much too soon will result in sore muscles and in the worst scenario possible injuries. To complement ski training it is best to continue some of the activities you've done up until now such as jogging, walking and even cycling (likely indoors). If the weather does not allow us to ski then it is best to try and simulate skiing once to twice a week with exercises such as ski striding or hiking with poles, as described in my earlier write ups.

**Training Format:** We want to keep the same training format that we've been using since the start of the program, but with a few modifications. Firstly, the strength training portion of the season should now be slowed down and replaced with more specific exercises, such as skiing. In order to maintain strength, however, designate 5-10 min of your total weekly skiing to double poling uphill. This can be done during any normal ski workout at a frequency of once a week. Secondly, it's time to designate your longest workouts during the week to specific training. Gradually over the period we will want to increase the volume of our skiing so that we can easily maintain a constant effort for as long as we'll be skiing during the CSM. If you're attempting to complete all the sections of the CSM you will want to build up the ability to ski continuously for at least 4-6 hours. This should not be done more than once a week. During the CSM you can count on skiing anywhere from 6-10 hours a day to complete all the sections.

**Refueling:** Just as a car needs fuel to run, so do our bodies when we exercise. Most importantly we need water to stay hydrated and carbohydrates to give us energy. As a general rule our bodies need to be refueled at regular intervals if the length of our workout exceeds 2hrs. In the case of everyone doing the CSM this will be the case. This will also be the case when training long distances prior to the event. As a rule of thumb I will attempt to drink every 20-30 min and eat every hour when exercising for long periods of time. My preferred drink is

water, but for those that want a bit more taste and energy, sports drinks or water mixed with sugars (such as honey) are a great alternative. As for food, I'll use sports bars (i.e. Power Bars) and in the case of really long workouts easily packable real foods such as raisins, peanuts, peanut butter and jam sandwiches. . . etc. Another tip is to start eating and drinking early in a workout, if you begin to feel like you're lacking energy you've already waited too long to start refueling. The CSM is extremely well organized in this regard and there will be food and drinks at all checkpoints. Take your time to eat and drink at all sections. It could make the difference between finishing and not finishing.

**Equipment:** We covered appropriate clothing in the previous write-ups and although I won't expand on this further, I also can't stress its importance. Dress appropriately. Other equipment that we now need to consider is ski gear. Equipment has changed dramatically in the last several years. It is remarkably more comfortable and efficient than what were available 15-20 years ago. Just because Jackrabbit used wooden skis, leather boots and



cable bindings does not mean that we have to do likewise. If you think your equipment is outdated, it probably is. Check out new gear reviews, talk with store representatives and if you're hesitant, rent new gear to see just how much a difference it can make. Quick tips: Make sure your feet are comfortable. Buy your

boots first and then worry about skis and poles. Blisters and cold feet will make anyone's day miserable. Don't ever compromise when it comes to boots, go for comfort. All binding systems (there are only two) are excellent and will be determined by the boot you purchase. Skis and poles are also all comparable. My only tip here is to make sure your skis are not too stiff for you. If a ski store doesn't ask your weight and doesn't select a ski based precisely on your ability, style and weight. . . go somewhere else. This part of the process is critical and you'll need to find someone who's experienced and willing to find the right ski for you.

**Last piece of advice:** Now it's up to you. It's time to get your winter gear in order and to start chasing snow when it arrives. The more you get out the better prepared you'll be for the CSM. At the same time, however, remember why we're chasing snow and training. . . because we're supposed to enjoy the process. Stay balanced, don't freak out if the weather doesn't co-operate and don't ever lose perspective over why we're doing this in the first place. Have fun and enjoy!

## Sample week:

<b>Monday:</b>	Rest
<b>Tuesday:</b>	General activity
<b>Wednesday:</b>	Easy workout (specific)
<b>Thursday:</b>	General activity
<b>Friday:</b>	Rest
<b>Saturday:</b>	Easy workout or Intensity (once every 2 weeks) (specific)
<b>Sunday:</b>	Long distance workout (specific)