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SHOWSHOEING YOUR WAY TO FITNESS

FIVE FAVE WINTER WORKOUTS ACROSS SNOW

by Kate Pocock

What's the best thing about the increasingly popular sport of snowshoeing? If you can walk, you can snowshoe! And as more Canadian trails are groomed for snowshoers, it's getting even easier to enjoy this exhilarating winter workout. Though snowshoeing is not yet an official Olympic sport, it definitely offers gold-medal fitness benefits.

Unlike the gym, your workout is outdoors, immersed in beautiful nature. Exercising in cold weather increases

your metabolism, so you'll burn off more calories than walking or running at the same speed. Add the weight of snowshoes on your feet, increasing the resistance factor as you travel through a snowy wonderland, and you've got the perfect winter workout. So don your boots, grab some poles, strap on the snowshoes – and get moving!

Here are five terrific Canadian snowshoeing adventures ripe for winter picking.



Tubbs offers us these tips on choosing the right snowshoes

What is the primary intended use?

Snowshoe design varies for different conditions. Trail walking on flat terrain calls for a different build than climbing steep ascents. Consider flotation, traction, maneuverability, comfort and fit. Choose a snowshoe with features that best fit your intended use.

What is your gender?

Men and women differ physiologically. A woman-specific snowshoe should include a narrower frame shape to accommodate a woman's narrow stance, as well as a binding that is molded to a woman's foot shape. While a men's snowshoe will permit a wider stride, in addition to bindings that fit men's boots.

What is your total weight with gear?

You want to choose a shoe that balances the benefits of maneuverability and flotation. A smaller shoe provides more maneuverability, while a larger shoe provides greater flotation. Most snowshoes provide a chart to specify which size is best for your total weight with gear.

For more on snowshoeing visit tubbsnowshoes.com

“Lose yourself in nature and find peace.”

~ Ralph Waldo Emerson



Photo: Matthew Trail, Whistler

1 ROMANTIC ECO-ADVENTURE, ALGONQUIN PROVINCIAL PARK, ONTARIO

Step off the electronic grid for a weekend and into a winter wonderland in Algonquin Park's northwestern corner (three hours north of Toronto). Choose between their traditional and modern snowshoes and select your level of expertise - from beginners' fun to challenging hilly terrain.

As your guide leads you through ancient pine forests or onto snowy ridges, stop to see wolf tracks or just listen to the awesome sounds of silence. "The snow is so spectacular here," says Voyageur Quest's John Langford, "that just stepping out the door is exciting."

For a real snow treat, head into the backcountry. Adds Langford, "People can't really believe how beautiful it is."

FITNESS BONUS

Skating on the lake (weather permitting) or testing those leg muscles driving a dogsled along the trails.

SPA-AAH RELIEF

Chalets come with wood-fired saunas but

we bet you can't resist the floating sauna encrusted in lake ice!

OVERNIGHT

After a hearty chef-made meal, cozy down in front of a flickering fire in your private chalet suite.

CONTACT

Voyageur Quest, 1-800-794-0660
voyageurquest.com

MORE ONTARIO WINTERTIME ADVENTURES
ontariotravel.net

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WALKING THE MEDICINE TRAIL, WHISTLER, BRITISH COLUMBIA

Set a brisk pace through a forest canopy of ancient fir, cedar and hemlock trees as you travel through the breathtaking Callaghan Valley.

With your knowledgeable biologist guide, learn the healing customs of indigenous peoples who settled here, admire Coast Salish totems, examine fungi, moss and other medicinal plants, sample

healthful herbal teas by the campfire, or simply breathe in the crisp mountain air as you absorb the winter landscape.

FITNESS BONUS

Sign up for a three-hour moonlight trek to watch your headlamp chase moon shadows along the snow. A Snowshoe Cookout tour ends with hot chili and cocoa under the stars.

SPA-AAH RELIEF

In a nearby forest, soothe muscles in the plunge pools, steam baths and Finnish saunas at the Scandinavian Spa. scandinava.com/en/whistler/

OVERNIGHT

At the elegantly rustic Nita Lake Lodge, set out with complimentary snowshoes, try a healing Ili Kundalini massage in The Spa or savour the delights of local boar or bison in the lodge's Aura Restaurant. nitalakelodge.com

CONTACT

Canadian Wilderness Adventures, 604-938-1616 or 1-888-403-4727
whistlerblackcomb.com

MORE B.C. WINTERTIME ADVENTURES
hellobc.com

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EXPLORING THE MYSTERIOUS MALIGNE VALLEY, JASPER NATIONAL PARK, ALBERTA

As former Parks Canada interpreter Paula Beauchamp introduces you to her 'Rocky Mountain High' home of magnificent waterfalls, glacier-fed lakes and jagged snow-capped peaks, you're impressed. In fact, so much extreme scenery exists here that it's difficult to look down on your snowshoes.

But downwards you peer as Beauchamp leads you onto the shimmering, frozen Maligne Lake and points out fresh wolf tracks in the snow—huge ones—and recent signs of bear. Snowshoers have even experienced glimpses of timber wolves and Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep.

"I live a vacation," Beauchamp says excitedly, as she relates more lore about the mysterious 'spirits' on the lake or wildlife sightings she's experienced, be it elk or

cougar high up the mountain. Again, you just have to look up to appreciate her everyday surroundings.

FITNESS BONUS

Walks and Talks offers customized cross-country ski outings along groomed trails.

SPA-AAH RELIEF

At the Spa at Fairmont Jasper Park Lodge, soak in more of nature's bounty with a lavender-infused stone massage, maple-butter body wrap or rosemary and cypress infusion.

OVERNIGHT

Settle into a cozy room or suite, or, like the British Royals do, reserve a Signature Cabin at Fairmont Jasper Park Lodge. fairmont.com/jasper

CONTACT

Walks & Talks Jasper, 780-852-4994 or 1-888-242-3345 walkstalks.com

MORE ALBERTA WINTERTIME ADVENTURES

travelalberta.com

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HIGH ADVENTURE IN DEEP SNOW, HUMBER VALLEY, NEWFOUNDLAND

"Buried in 16 feet of snow, Newfoundland is a 45,000-square-mile island playground," says Ed English, founder of Linkum Tours.

Indeed, as soon as winter lands on the province's west coast near Corner Brook, English is ready to lead his informative and fun snowshoe tours, whether it's up to the Tablelands mountain in Gros Morne National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, or down below ground into the twists and turns of the Corner Brook Caves.

Another feature? You'll enjoy mostly balmy temperatures, up to 15 Celsius come spring. Add animal sightings of moose and caribou. "Yes, we do see caribou," English assures. Add his abundant stories of people and places, and you've got an adventure to remember. English also arranges lunches—if you're lucky, a Newfoundland seasonal "boil-up" served with homemade bread over a campfire.

Geneviève Hamel, kinesiologist at Spa Eastman in Quebec's Eastern Townships tells us that snow-shoeing is a great fitness activity for a number of reasons:

There is very little impact on the joints. It stimulates your cardio vascular system. It burns calories.

The number of calories burned during the activity, will, of course, vary depending on the physical condition, age, sex and weight of the person.

Snowshoeing using poles is a workout for the quadriceps, glutes, calves, hamstring, as well as upper body muscles such as the triceps and pectorals, while the torso muscles work to keep the body stabilized.

Hamel offers these tips to maximize your snowshoeing workout:

1. To improve your cardio, interval cardio training such as working out on an elliptical machine or even simply walking will allow you to prepare your body for snowshoeing.
2. Don't bend your back while climbing hills. Instead, take smaller steps and imagine a small rope pulling your head upwards. Take time to look at the surrounding landscape and try not to look down at your feet.
3. Even in winter it's very important to stay hydrated so carry at least 500 ml of water and take small sips often.

Spa Eastman offers 15 km of trails for snow shoeing. For more information visit spa-eastman.com



FITNESS BONUS

Try downhill runs at nearby Marble Mountain ski resort or world-class cross-country ski trails at nearby Blow Me Down Trails.

SPA-AAH RELIEF

Enjoy after-snowshoe warm massages at Humber Valley Resort's Elements Wellness Spa. humbervalley.com

OVERNIGHT

Gaze onto pure mounds of snow from the romantic Inn at Humber Valley. (innathumbervalley.com) or, if there's a gang, from a roomy condo at the Marble Inn Resort. marbleinn.com

CONTACT

Linkum Tours, 1-877-254-6586 or 709-654-2245 linkumtours.com

MORE NEWFOUNDLAND WINTERTIME ADVENTURES

newfoundlandlabrador.com

5 TIME TRAVEL WITH A UNIQUELY MODERN TWIST, WENDAKE, QUÉBEC

Just 15 minutes north of Québec City is Wendake: the Huron-Wendat village of Onhöta Chetekse. This peaceful settlement surrounded by woods of birch, cedar and maple, and infused with aboriginal lore, offers an ideal place to time travel back to 1850—on snowshoes! Join a role-play 'expedition' as a troop of 'hunters' arrives in the village to hire an aboriginal guide. The snowshoe trek through the beautiful grounds of this reserve will lead you past an interesting museum (with a small snowshoe

exhibit), an impressive hotel imbued with native design, and the newly completed Tsawenhohi House longhouse. When your snowshoe walk ends around a campfire, sample native teas used by aboriginal ancestors for thousands of years. This truly unique Canadian adventure is a chance to explore new territory, learn about native traditions, and say a heartfelt "TiawenhK" (Thank you), for the experience. Reservations are recommended.

FITNESS BONUS

A walk along the beautiful Akiawenrahk River followed by healthful Labrador tea in the hotel lobby.

SPA-AAH RELIEF

Immerse yourself in the Nordic Baths on property or experience the unique multisensory aboriginal-inspired massage experience in the spa. hotelpremieresnations.ca/spa.php

OVERNIGHT

Savour unique aboriginal and northern-inspired cuisine at the La Traite restaurant followed by deep sleep in the ultra-modern, riverside hotel.

CONTACT

L'Hôtel-Musée Premières Nations
1-866-551-9222
hotelpremieresnations.ca

MORE QUÉBEC WINTERTIME ADVENTURES

bonjourquebec.com

For trail snacks, check out our granola bar recipe on page 40

Enter to WIN Tubbs Xplore Snowshoe Kit!

The all-inclusive kit contains one pair of gender-specific Xplore snowshoes, one pair of 2-part adjustable poles and one pair of gender-specific gaiters, valued at over \$185 Canadian.

TO ENTER GO TO:
traveltowellness.com/Tubbs-snowshoe-kit

