



## Jen Segger-Gigg's Take On: Keeping Motivated Through Winter

Convince  
Yourself  
to Love  
the Snow!



**F** Shortened daylight hours, chilly mornings, frozen trails and ice-covered roads, tell me again, what's so great about winter?

I used to dread the onset of Mother Nature's coldest season as I struggled to find the motivation to stick to my regular training regime. Instead of longing for spring and lengthened days to return, I've now learned how to embrace each and every season that we are so lucky to experience. So, let's talk about winter training and how you can use it to your benefit to enter into 2009 feeling fit, strong and ready to hammer. After all, it will be go-time before you know it!

Welcome to the world of snow sports where, for many, playing in a white wonderland can become addictive. In fact, you may be having so much fun and making great strides in your fitness and conditioning that you will feel ALMOST guilty that "training" could be so enjoyable.

Here is what I do to take full advantage of the chilly winter days.

### Hit the Tracks

Easy on the joints, this is the ultimate cross training sport for all you runners and bikers. X-country skiing, whether it be classic or skate, is a killer full body workout and is one of the best cardiovascular activities that you can do. This is a sport that you can pick up relatively quickly and it's your ticket to accessing those trails that have become snow covered. Don't overdress for this one. You will be working up a sweat in no time.

*Why do I love it?* It's a huge calorie burner and improves endurance by working all major muscle groups. It's low impact so your knees get a break from all the running miles you logged during the year! Great for glute and quad development!

### Up, up and up!

Ski Touring - yes that's right, it's now time to work a bit for all those downhill turns and champagne powder runs! Switch up your downhill skis and boots for a touring set-up and head into the backcountry. Escape the crowds and earn your turns! Ski touring has become my bread and butter workout for the winter months!

*Why do I love it?* It's a full day (or multi-day trip) into the mountains where I get a complete body workout from propelling myself up hill and then enjoying every single minute of muscle burning downhill. Pack a lunch, bring your camera and don't forget your avalanche gear!

### Powder Running

Snow shoe running has exploded in popularity over the last decade here in North America. It's a great cross training sport where huge fitness gains can be made. Trade in your old "tennis" wide standard snowshoes for a pair of light weight running ones and join in on one of the many racing circuits around the country. Cut your workout times in half with this sport because snowshoe running in good powder for 30minutes is the equivalent to a 1hr road run!

*Why do I love it?* No equipment needed but my snow shoes and my trail runners. To mix it up, I hit my mountain bike until I reach the snowline and then switch into my snowshoes to reach the peak! Escape the crowds and keep on running!

### Need the Extra Push?

X-country skiing, ski mountaineering events and snow shoe running competitions are on the rise all over the country. Pick a race, even if you are a beginner, and come play with all us other winter crazies! Oh, and if you are inspired to hit the back country this winter, be smart and sign up for an avalanche course to increase your confidence and knowledge in back country travel!

Enjoy the winter - the snow is calling!



*Jen Segger-Gigg is a professional endurance athlete living in Squamish, BC. She has spent the past few years racing with team DART-nuun, one of North America's most elite adventure racing teams. Jen is a running and multi-sport coach, motivational speaker and a race director for the Mind Over Mountain Adventure Racing Series. More information can be found at [www.challengebychoice.ca](http://www.challengebychoice.ca)*

# Absolute Answers Your Adventure and Endurance Health & fitness Q's Answered

**Q** "There are so many electrolyte solutions/tabs on the market - how should I choose what is right for me short of buying them all and doing individual trials?" ■

Electrolytes. Picking the right salt!

Electrolytes are an important part of training and racing for some athletes. Electrolytes help regulate a number of body functions including secretion of hormones, muscle contraction, nerve transmission and the fluid balance throughout the body. The more you sweat, the longer and more intense your activity, the more likely electrolytes become beneficial and even a necessary part of your fuel-hydration plan. Deficits in electrolytes may lead to muscle cramping, loose stools, heat stress and fatigue. Electrolytes are also beneficial for helping to trigger the body's thirst mechanism which can help athletes maintain proper hydration levels. For longer events electrolytes become an essential part of your fuel-hydration strategy to prevent a dangerous condition known as hyponatremia which results from drinking too much water and not enough salt.

Though mostly water, sweat contains a number of electrolytes including sodium, potassium, calcium, and chloride. Salt, consisting of sodium and chloride are the main electrolytes lost through sweat at roughly 500-1800 mg and 700-2100mg respectively per quart (960 ml). Potassium, calcium and magnesium are present at lesser quantities.

As sweat is mostly sodium, heavier sweaters are at risk of depleting sodium stores and slower athletes are at risk of low blood sodium (hyponatremia) if they drink only water for endurance events. Sodium is found in most carbohydrate drinks and energy gels in varying quantities from 40mg up to 240mg. For shorter events these products are likely sufficient if when maintaining proper hydration-fuel guidelines. If cost is an issue, a 1/8 tsp of sea salt has roughly 250mg of sodium. For endurance athletes such as marathon, Ironman or multi-stage events, additional electrolytes are beneficial in amounts of 250mg-600mg of sodium pre hour or more depending on your activity and hydration levels.

If you're prone to gastric upset or muscle