

TRAINING TIPS

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Increasing your Fitness:

Don't wait for snow, start to get fit now.

Try to increase the amount you spent on fitness activities by about 10%/ week.

Do cross-training activities when you don't have time to ski.

Try to get some exercise every day for a minimum of 30 minutes.

Maintain a flexibility Program.

Basic Training Plan:

Monday: Easy short ski or alternate aerobic activity (30 minutes), or day off.

Tuesday: Same as Monday, except this should not be a day off, also do some strength work.

Wednesday: Medium Intensity 60 Minutes. This session would hopefully be on skis. Just increase your skiing speed and intensity. See "Increasing Your Speed", for some ideas.

Thursday: Do your second longest ski, from 60-90 minutes.

Friday: Same as Monday or day off, also do some strength work.

Saturday: Same as Monday or Ski in a Loppet.

Sunday: Long easy ski (Start with you longest aerobic session in the last 3 weeks and add 15 to 20 Minutes). You want to increase your long ski so that you will be on skis for as long as 75% of the time it would take you to finish the Birkie. This would be up to 6 hours if you plan to take 8 hours to ski the Birkie. Another approach as the mileage gets longer is to split your long ski into two days. Do a long ski on both Saturday and Sunday to get the time in.

Pace for long skis:

Check your heart rate.

The target zone for your long ski's would be on the low end of your target zone.

Target zone: 70-85% of maximum heart rate. Maximum heart rate(approximate) = (220 minus your age, for men; 226 minus your age, for women)

Age 30: 133-162 beats/min.(men), 137-167 beats/min.(women)

Age 40: 126- 153 beats/min.(men), 130- 158 beats/min. (women)

Age 50: 119-145 beats/min. (men), 123- 150 beats/min. (women)

Age 60: 112- 136 beats/min. (men), 116- 141 beats/min. (women)

Medical Advice:

Talk to your doctor about your goals if this is your first big race.

Check your morning heart rate for the next few weeks. Take a day off if it is elevated by more than 10% (Establish a base line for your morning heart rate by taking your pulse each morning at the same time for a week).

Increasing your speed:

If you want to better last year's performance here are a few tips:

Always maintain your skiing form when doing speed work.

Your heart rate should be on the high end of your target zone.

Your speed work session should be about 15 minutes long (this means 15 minutes in your target heart rate zone).

Some alternatives for speed work:

Fartlek (Speed play)- these are intervals of varying distance or time (30 seconds to 3 minutes in length with varying recovery times).

90 seconds fast followed by 90 seconds easy.

Cruise intervals of 10-30 minutes at about 80% of your maximum heart rate.

Time trials of any specific distance.

Strength Training:

On skis do hill-work intervals for the legs and arms.

Do double poling on flats and uphill for the arms and abdominals.

At home or in the weight room work on pushups, a roller board, exercise bike (alternate standing and sitting positions), stairclimber and rowing machine. (Work on legs, arms, shoulders, back and don't forget the abdominals).

Do your strength training 2 times/week.

Rest: Try to live a consistent lifestyle with full nights of sleep, regular meals, relaxation breaks and naps if possible.

Countdown to the Birkie: The Taper Phase

To get the best results at the Birkie, or any ski race which is your goal for the year, a tapering program should be followed. During this period training quantity drops but we insert some quality and more rest, to prepare our bodies physiologically for a peak performance. Try to conserve energy. Get plenty of rest but not to the point of feeling lethargic. Establish a sensible routine that encourages rest and relaxation. Speed work may cause muscle stiffness and soreness, so flexibility exercises should be done after each ski session. There is a tendency to put on weight during this phase so monitor diet and weight carefully. Psychologically you should be ready, calm, quietly confident and eager for your event. Try to erase negative thoughts about the race. Spend some quiet time mentally preparing.

The following is an example of a taper plan used by our Alberta Team to prepare for major competitions.

<u>Day</u>	<u>Training</u>	<u>Intensity</u>
1(Sat)	Race or time trial	Race Pace
2(Sun)	Long Easy Ski (up to 3 hrs)	Easy
3(Mon)	3 sets 5, 1 x 2's *	Maximum Race Pace
4(Tues)	30 mins to 1 hr or rest	Easy
5(Wed)	30 mins to 1 hr	Easy
6(Thur)	2 sets 5, 1 x 2's	Maximum Race Pace
7(Fri)	Rest Day	
8(Sat)	1 set 5, 1 x 2's -with a 90 min ski	Intervals: race pace, otherwise easy to moderate
9(Sun)	Rest Day	
10(Mon)	30 mins - 1 hr or rest	Easy
11(Tues)	30 mins to 1 hr	Easy
12(Wed)	Time trial 3 - 5 km	Fast Race Pace
13(Thur)	30 mins - 1 hr or rest	Easy
14(Fri)	30 mins easy and sprints **	
15(Sat)	Birkie Day	

* A set of 1x2's is 5 repetitions of skiing at maximum speed for up to 1 minute followed by a very easy recovery ski for 2 minutes. Between each set, ski at an easy pace for 5 minutes.

** Sprint training is 5-10 repetitions at maximum speed for 30 seconds followed by a very easy recovery ski for 1-2 minutes.

By following this taper, you'll hopefully be hitting your peak on race day

REFERENCES

Stewart, Paget - "On Track Off Track" Volume 3 No. 2, 1994-5.

Sasseville, Jack, "Planning for Peak Performance", Coaching Resource Package c.c.c.