

HIT THE ROAD



STAFF PHOTO/BILL ROBERTS

Runners leave Boyd's Source for Sports in Stouffville at the start of their weekly group run Saturday. Classes are also offered.

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Staff Writer

With the shortened days, double-digit sub-zero temperatures and snow drifts taller than the average person, our natural instinct is to hibernate for the season.

But as Canadian winters are long, this coping mechanism causes us to reach new heights on the scale, which transforms bikini season into tankini season, which is followed by a fall of ill-fitting clothes and the promise to take a fresh new approach to a healthy lifestyle come the new year.

But when Jan. 1 rolls around, it is once again dark and cold outside. You get the point.

It is much easier to live like a hermit for six months of the year, but you've vowed to buck the trend and no matter the weather, you are going to make the most of the season — outdoors.

Sure, you can partake in the age-old tradition of playing hockey, but the season's already started and it's too stereotypical anyway.

NO COTTON SHIRTS

There's always snowshoeing, skiing or snowboarding to get you through the winter. But getting to the ski hills is half the battle some days.

Why not think out of season for a minute and consider running. You don't have to travel in order to get to your starting point and you can go as far as you want.

The first step to making any outdoor sport tolerable is the wardrobe.

"Throw out the cotton shirt and wear the technical shirt, you'll feel so much better," said Lyndsay Thomp-

son, who runs Boyd's Source for Sports running clinics in Stouffville.

Surviving the winter as a runner is all about layers of technical clothing. Synthetic fabrics keep you warm by pulling the moisture away from your body. And when you wear them in layers, if you happen to overheat, you can take one off and carry on.

Start with a base layer, then add an insulating or middle layer, which is typically a wickaway fleece top.

The man-made fibres are lightweight, wick away perspiration and dry very quickly.

If it is a particularly cold day, put an extra layer of wickaway clothing between your base and insulating layers. The outer layer should again be made of a wickaway fabric, but also be wind and water proof.

By wearing all breathable layers, your body is able to let heat and moisture escape, which prevents both overheating and chilling.

On your legs, once again, wear wickaway layers, and if it is windy or rainy, the top layer should be a wind and waterproof shell.

"The tighter the fit, the lesser the chance the air is going to go up inside," said Aaryn McInnis-Riccadonna, manager of Markham's Running Room.

Other pieces of clothing a runner can't do without during the winter are a tuque, as upwards of 40 per cent of a person's body's heat is lost through the head; and, a neck gaiter, which can provide additional protection on very cold days as it not only protects the face and neck, but it can be pulled over the mouth to warm the air you breathe in.

Mitts are vital, sometimes in layers as well, depending on temperature.

When it comes to runners' feet,

warm non-cotton socks are a must, along with snow grippers you put over your shoes.

For people who want added warmth on their tender tootsies, duct tape the upper and side mesh portions of the shoes, as this will keep the wind and some of the snow out.

Lights, reflectors and/or visibility vests are also required, if you plan on running at night or when the snow lessens visibility.

"It's not always about looking good ... (sometimes) it's about surviving," Mrs. McInnis-Riccadonna said.

Water is also vital. Even though it won't seem like it, you're working up a sweat. Therefore, you need to stay hydrated. On average, a runner needs to drink six to eight ounces of fluid every 20 minutes.

ANOTHER USE FOR DUCT TAPE

Once you're all ready to pound the pavement, stretch your muscles out, and once you step outside, stay out there. The first few minutes will be tough, but stick with it, keep moving, and the body will adjust to the temperatures and you'll get comfortable.

When on the road, sidewalk or trail, to prevent slipping, slow your pace down and shorten your stride.

While running in the winter elements, listen to your body.

"We get lots of aches and pains from stabilizing (our bodies) on the uneven surface," Ms Thompson said. "Listen to your body; take it slower, cut it a bit short."

"Your mind wants to go faster because you're trying to beat boredom," Mrs. McInnis-Riccadonna added, but don't, as injuries are most likely to occur, which can easily derail a new runner.

Stouffville classes, group runs motivate, instruct

A New Year's resolution often made by people is to get in shape and, in particular, learn to run.

We all know how to put one foot in front of the other in quick succession, but do we know how to do it in a manner that will keep us healthy and injury-free, while making it enjoyable and challenging? Likely not.

There are a variety of ways people can learn to run properly. One is by researching various programs online that provide schedules and helpful tips. When choosing an online or book-based guide, ensure the program is safe as you don't want to do too much too soon.

For people who require accountability or want someone to suffer alongside you, there is the buddy system and classes that range from learning to run to learning to run a marathon.

One such place to offer these programs is Boyd's Source for Fitness.

"I try not to make it an out-of-the-box program; everybody gets their own suggestions," said instructor Lyndsay Thompson.

The Boyd's learn-to-run program consists of a mix of walking and running and the goal, at the end of the 10-week course, is to complete a five-km race. Although the goal is to run a

race, class participants don't have to do the race. The important thing is to "pick a goal to strive towards it," Ms Thompson said.

The goal or reward can be as simple as buying a new outfit or going out to a fancy dinner.

Worried about bringing up the rear or being left behind in the class? Don't be.

"We've got every level, every pace. You'll never be alone," Ms Thompson said. "Nobody's as bad as they think they are."

Boyd's currently has four programs on the go, and is accepting new students for a few more days. The learn-to-run and 10-km programs are 10 weeks long. Ms Thompson is also leading a 16-week half and full marathon program.

All classes take place on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 6:15 p.m. and Saturdays at 8:15 a.m. The cost for each program is \$69.99. Local runners are also invited to come out on Saturday mornings to meet and run with other area runners for free. All classes and the Saturday run take place from Boyd's Source for Sports at 21 Ringwood Dr., Stouffville.

For more information, contact Lyndsay Thompson at Boyd's, 905-640-6657.



SOCCER REGISTRATION

SIGN UP FOR THE 2009 SEASON AT THE STOUFFVILLE ARENA
SATURDAY JANUARY 31ST OR SATURDAY FEBRUARY 7TH FROM 8 am - 2 pm



For more information contact the club at 905-640-1800 or www.wssc.info