

Use winter to improve outdoor sport weaknesses

By Tim Burnett
Oregon State University-Cascades

Staying fit and enjoying the outdoors go hand-in-hand. During the warm months, the time we spend outside helps to maintain our fitness and improve our mental state by leaps and bounds. The summer allows for more outdoor activities than other seasons, and, while you may miss snow occasionally, the temperatures are ripe for intense outdoor activity. For those who do love snow, you can flip the seasonal advice below and apply it to your preferred active months.

Problems with inactivity

As we ease into fall like we would the perfect temperature hot tub or get thrust into winter like a newborn on its birthday, we often have an unconscious retraction from uncomfortable activity. Who among us doesn't love the comfy spot on the couch with a warm blanket, a crackling fire and a favorite book or show; glancing outside every once in a while to verify our good decision to stay in?

The primary problem we see is a gentle fade of fitness and physical ability, which typically goes unnoticed until that fateful first excursion outdoors.

Humans were not meant to hibernate. We are generally designed to move and stay moving. A rule in research, specifically with looking at the effectiveness of exercise programs, is to avoid starting a study in the summer and ending in the winter (or vice versa) because we typically see very different behaviors. A study to increase fitness that runs from December to June is going to be successful, of course.

So what are our options? Well, this depends on what you do and what you want. For those of us just trying to keep some semblance of fitness, myself included, our routines don't have much reason to change. It may be more difficult to motivate ourselves in the cold, dark, winter months, but exercise may just be business as usual. For those that change to season-specific sports, and desire a competitive edge (or at least to not be left behind) a specific goal should be the focus of your off-season training.

Finding the focus

So what can we do during these cold, dark times? Some dread the unmotivated parade to the gym where boredom and pain await. While others are glad to get out and let

See **Winter** / Page 23





Combe's Wellness Center

Specializing in Medical - Sports
- Auto Injury - Soft Tissue Care
in Oregon for over 20 years



John Combe LMT, BCTMB
Lic #7492

1002 4th Street
La Grande
(541) 993-9355

- ★ Certified Medical Massage Practitioner
- ★ Certified Kinesio Taping Practitioner™
- ★ Certified Flexibility Coach
- ★ 2014 Oregon LMT of the Year
- ★ 2013 National Meritorious Award Recipient
- ★ 2008, 2012 & 2016 Summer Olympic Trials Medical Team



