Snowshoeing

Snowshoeing is often referred to as running on snow. It is a sport very similar to running that shares with it most technical and training elements. Although snowshoes can be used in deep snow, most SO snowshoeing events take place on hard packed snow and on flat surfaces. SO athletes use small, lightweight shoes in these conditions.

Most SO competitors are also track and field athletes during the summer season. Snowshoe competitions have sprint events starting with 25m, and middle and long distances up to five km. Snowshoeing is different than track and field mainly because athletes have to lift their snowshoes off the snow during each stride and wear warm clothing to protect against cold conditions. This extra weight and difficult strides increase demands on the aerobic and anaerobic system, and as a result, many SO athletes have difficulty “running” for the duration of events.

Snowshoeing is generally an easy sport to acquire for SO athletes. Once snowshoes are attached, training can take place immediately anywhere on snow and can also be practiced on grass and sand. Many SO athletes come to competitions unprepared and can’t run longer distances, this is mainly due to low training levels rather than disability related. Aerobic capacity requirements are very high for events such as 800m, 1600m, 5km and 10km and at least 3 training sessions per week are needed to develop endurance required to compete at a basic snowshoeing level. This is why so many SO athletes choose the shorter sprint events.

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Sprinting progress will be achieved by technical, speed and strength development, while longer distance results will rely on development of aerobic and anaerobic capacities.

These skills are listed in the snowshoeing basic skill section (next page). These sheets can be used as a guide, and when all skills are marked “yes”, the athlete can participate in all events and are ready for more advanced intermediate skills.

Guidelines for using the skill sheets for snowshoeing distance racing (800m-10k)

1. Athletes must acquire endurance necessary to compete in these distances. Follow the basic sheet so that athletes run the distances starting with 800m.

2. When this is achieved (based on individual progress), it is then time to start on the 2.5km.

3. Follow each step of the skill sheet (one at a time) until all basic skills are acquired. Progress will be not be possible unless athletes train 3 times per week.

Snowshoeing Distance (800m-10km) Basic Skills

On snow or sand

Basic Skill: Aerobic capacity	**YES**	**NO**	**Comments**
Sub Skills			
Running 800	☐	☐	
Running 2.5 km	☐	☐	
Running 5km	☐	☐	

Basic Skill: Training	**YES**	**NO**	**Comments**
Sub Skills			
Interval training times 5 times 400m at same speed Athletes must run all 400m With 3 to 5 minutes rest in between	☐	☐	

Snowshoeing Sprint (25m-400m) Basic Skills

On snow or sand

Basic Skill: Starts (first 3 steps)	**YES**	**NO**	**Comments**
Sub Skills			
Arm lift up/leg trust forward	☐	☐	
Knee height (90°)	☐	☐	
Reaction speed is < .3 sec.	☐	☐	

Basic Skill: Top Speed	**YES**	**NO**	**Comments**
Sub Skills			
Can do A-B-C running drills	☐	☐	
Arms shoulder height/knees 90°	☐	☐	
Speed (20m in 4 sec. or less)	☐	☐	

When athletes achieve all "YES", they have acquired basic skills.
Expectations are critical to skill acquisition.

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20-hour acquisition

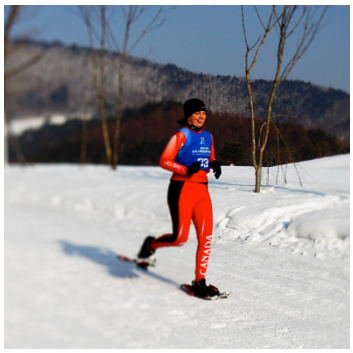
Skill Breakdown: Examples of priority elements to focus on during practice

Spend time on each one until acquired

1. Aerobic/Anaerobic Done at practice and at home
2. Start: Body position – Three steps start – Arm motion/position – Leg pushes and knee action
3. Sprint Technique: Arm action – Body Position – knees – Head -
4. Pacing: Done with interval training
5. Speed/Strength: Done at Club Fit and at home

Aerobic and anaerobic capacities can be well developed in a six weeks program. However, SO athletes must train at least three times per week (60 min. duration) in order to develop their aerobic and anaerobic capacities.

Basic sprint technique (with starts) can be acquired easily within the 20-hour program. Speed and strength take much longer to develop and will be part of a long-term program.



Home snowshoe training:

Unless aerobic and anaerobic capacities are practiced at least 2 times at home and one time at SO training every week, athletes **will not** be prepared for longer races at SO competitions.

Home Training Sprint Example: (45 minutes)
(15' = 15 minutes)

15' Warm up and stretching (with A-B-C track drills)

5' Running warm up

- With accelerations

15’ Wall and ABC run drill

50 on each leg

and ABC run drill

10’ easy run cool down

Field Sprint Training Example: (1 hour)

Practice only one skill at a time and don’t worry about perfect technique, bowl as much as possible.

15’ Warm up and stretching (with A-B-C track drills)

5’ Running warm up
- With accelerations

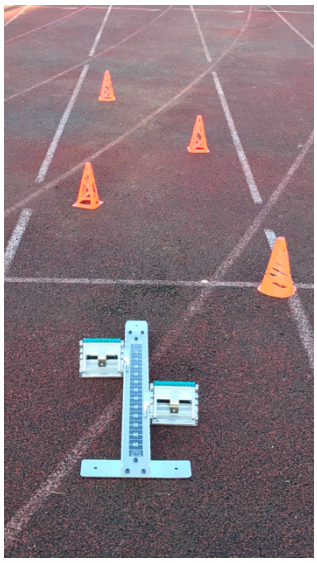
30’ Block starts

(With video and correct examples, slow down the demonstration when introducing a new skill, use hands to guide movements when necessary and color markers)

1. Get block ready to athletes’ specifications (blocks must be installed under 2’). Repeat

2. Horizontal starts from the ground (3 repetitions of 10 m) stay low – arms up.

3. Use hand and colored cones to adjust starting positions



4. 5 Block starts 20m – slow deceleration – focus on technique

10’ easy run cool down

Aerobic Examples: Snowshoeing (1.0h)
(15’ = 15 minutes)

15’ Warm up and stretching (before putting on snowshoes)
5’ Running warm up

- With progressive accelerations on 20 meters

Training: short intervals

8 sets of 1’ snowshoeing with rest of 1’ (repeat 2 to 3 times after 5’ rest in between each set)

10’ easy run cool down

Try to keep the same distance for each interval

Example 2

15’ Warm up and stretching (before putting on snowshoes)
5’ Running warm up

- With progressive accelerations on 20 meters

Training: Tabata

20 seconds run then take 10 seconds walk repeat for 4 minutes (8 runs). Take 2' rest and repeat again for a total of 3 intervals of 4 minutes.

10' easy run/walk cool down

Try to keep the same distance for each interval

Example 3

15' Warm up and stretching (before putting on snowshoes)
5' Running warm up

- With progressive accelerations on 20 meters

Training: 30" Hills

30" fast run uphill then take 1 minute and 30 seconds rest (repeat 6-8 runs)

10' easy run/walk cool down

Try to keep the same distance for each interval

Conclusion:

Snowshoeing looks like an easy sport for SO athletes because it is very similar to running, however the additional weight and different strides used in snowshoeing demand a different preparation. Using the skill sheet is an excellent way to learn basic skills and encourage athletes to practice. Three aerobic/anaerobic trainings per week are the minimum required to perform 400m to 5km races. Shorter distances do not require as much training, but improvement will depend on increased technical and strength levels.

Lesson Plan
Basic Skill Acquisition Program
(weekly or monthly)

Sport _____ Athlete Name:_____

Program Expectations

1- Weekly Practice (attend all practices)

Day (S) _____ Time _____

Location _____

"What the group is working on":

2- Club Fit 100% attendance (Including Functional Testing exercises)

Day _____Time _____

Location _____

"What you need to concentrate on":

3- Basic Skill Development Homework (4 times per week - 1 hour per day)

Skill _____

"Individual Home Practice Objectives"