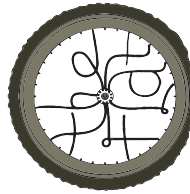


# Winter Riding

Brought to you by: Farid Rener and Graham Bradley,  
The Flat Bike Collective, Le Petit Velo Rouge and Allégo.



<http://theflat.wordpress.com>

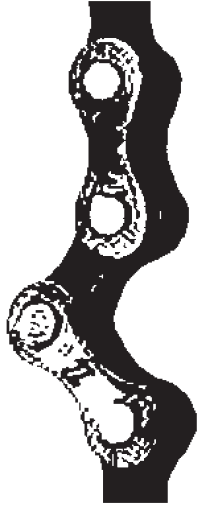


<http://lepetitvelorouge.wordpress.com>

**allégo**  
Concordia

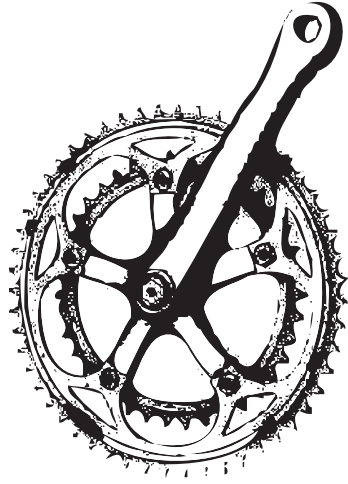
<http://sustainable.concordia.ca/ourinitiatives/allego/>

# Yourself



## About this zine

Riding in winter is fun, but there are a few things to keep in mind to stay safe and warm. Everything we prescribe here is optional, you shouldn't have to spend any money to ride your bike in the winter, and the minute you feel like you aren't having fun anymore you should stop. Stay in touch with how your body is feeling – you are already more badass than everyone else for braving the snow on two wheels – there is no shame in stopping at Tim Hortons to warm up your toes or to pull icicles out of your beard...



## Hats

A headband or a thinner hat will fit easily under your helmet if you loosen the strap. If you still have trouble, consider removing your helmet's interior padding. Facemasks and neck warmers are sometimes necessary on cold and windy days. Balaclavas are also great at keeping the heat in and preventing your face from frost bites. If you're overheating, uncovering your head is usually the simplest way to dump heat. If you get too cold, try taping over the vents of your helmet with stickers or a windproof helmet cover.



## Outer and Inner Layers

Your outer layers should be windproof and waterproof, with options for breathability. Base layers should be synthetic or wool, as cotton can feel wetter and colder when you sweat. Wool stays warm even when it gets wet.



## Feet

Cold feet will make you not want to ride! Wool socks will wick away any sweat and will keep your feet toasty. Don't wear too many layers of socks – you need room for your toes to move around. Waterproof winter boots work well, but if you don't want to wear them, you can often find galoshes/booties which go over your shoes and will keep your feet dry and windproof.



# Winterize!

## Overdressing

One of the biggest mistakes that people make is overdressing. Exercise generates heat (and sweat). If you are slightly cool when you step outside for your ride, you'll likely be comfortable when riding. Dress in layers to regulate temperature throughout the ride. Scarves are easily removable and can be used around your neck, face and ears.



## Sunglasses

Sunglasses are useful when snowy or wet roads become reflective surfaces that blind you on a sunny day. If you are riding in a headwind, falling snow or rain, eye protection is also very helpful. Lab goggles work well at night to protect your eyes from the dirty, slushy and salty city snow. Wrap a scarf around your face or wear ski goggles to protect your face!



## Gloves

Gloves give you more dexterity to use your brakes and gears. However they are colder than *mittens*, which can be hard to use on a bike. You can get 'lobster' gloves which are a compromise between the two. You can put plastic bags over your gloves to protect your hands from the wind.



## Drinking

Winter riding is hard work: you use a lot of energy keeping yourself warm. This makes you susceptible to dehydration. Drink frequently! Exposed skin can freeze in the wind if you are riding for more than an hour. If you start feeling numb spots (especially on your face), stop! Find somewhere warm (café, gas station, supermarket etc.) before you freeze!



## Winter riding tips and trix

Riding your bike in the winter can be one of the most satisfying things you do when everything is covered in snow. Winter riding is all about personal preference -- the only way to find out what works best for you is to try it. This little 'zine will hopefully help you make informed decisions about how to prepare your bike, and how to prepare yourself!

## Why ride in the winter?

Riding in the winter is fun! We see it as the most practical winter sport -- once you get used to how your bike handles in the different types of snow, you will find it is the only comfortable way to get around.

Surprisingly, riding in winter tends to be warmer than walking or taking public transport. Since you are moving your body so much, you end up generating your own heat. Standing around waiting for the bus is a sure-fire way of getting cold and miserable, and stepping off the over-heated metro with your full winter-penguin-outfit is a great way for your sweat to keep you nice and frosty. On your bike, you take advantage of the crisp air that the winter provides -- lungfuls of that will easily lift you out of those winter blues.

The best part of riding in the winter is the way it peaks all of your senses. Riding at night, right after a powdery snowfall when all the cars are safely tucked away in their garages, there is an intense silence. The only thing you hear is the snow getting crushed under your tires, a noise you will come to crave during the muggy summer. This noise vibrates through your whole body, and even though you are almost floating over the road, you feel completely connected to it. You will start learning the different types of snow and ice, and the way they change how your bike feels under you. You will realize how different cars smell in the winter -- their engines straining against the cold (but you only get stronger as the winter gets colder!). You will taste the salt, that awful stuff that will destroy your humble steed if you aren't careful...

Riding your bike is also a great way to get from A to B. There is no shortage of parking spots!

# Winterize Your Bike



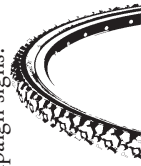
## Handlebars

Low/Drop handlebars are a bad idea, since they shift your weight toward the front of the bike, placing more weight over the front wheel. This reduces traction over the rear wheel, which can destabilize you as you ride. Try raising your stem, and lowering your saddle height to move your centre of gravity lower to the ground, creating more stability. You'll have a less efficient riding position, but hey, it's snowing.



## Fenders / Mudguards

The most important part of your bike! Being wet is the winter rider's worst threat. You should leave some clearance between your fender and your tire so that the snow doesn't get stuck. Periodically knock snow out from your fenders, or your bike might freeze solid! You can make fenders out of old campaign signs.



## Tires

*Wide, knobby tires* (like those on mountain bikes), have good traction in slush, however they can 'swim' over powdery snow. *Wide* tires when on the road can have bad traction when cornering due to the knobs bending under side loads. With a larger surface area, these can have a better purchase on ice. *Skinny tires* cut through slush and powder to contact directly with the road. You don't 'swim', but you might end up hitting hidden patches of ice or compacted snow which can be quite slippery. Cyclo-cross tires are skinny, and have 'knobs', which can be a compromise.

You might find that mixing and matching is a good idea. It is better to have more traction on your front wheel, as this is the one you use for cornering – some people use wider, more 'knobby' tires on the front and something slicker on the back.



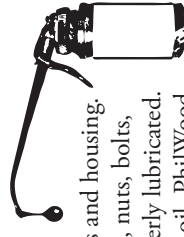
## Lights

Light your bike up like a Christmas tree. Most drivers are paying too much attention to how badly their car is handling on the road to pay attention to you. Don't just rely on a single turtle light, if it starts snowing, these will be completely invisible. Reflective tape everything you own. In the day, wear dark clothes to contrast the white snow, but at night wear things which will make you stand out!



## Cleaning

The best way to keep your bike in good shape during and after winter is to bring it inside and let it dry whenever you can. Prepare a spot in your home where you can store your bike. Use old rugs or towels under your bike to absorb the melting snow. Wipe your bike dry and clean with a rag after every ride. If it doesn't have the time to dry, leave it outside to stop the snow from melting then freezing into solid ice. If road salt starts accumulating on parts, consider rinsing your bike in your bathtub and carefully drying it afterwards. Salt is thy enemy.



## Lubricant and Grease

Lubricant should be placed on all moving parts, including cables and housing. Grease should be applied to ball bearings preferably to all screws, nuts, bolts, seatposts, stems etc. Winter makes things seize if they aren't properly lubricated. High-viscosity lube is best for chains and drivetrains (e.g. motor oil, PhilWood Tenacious). **Don't** use WD-40 on chains, it brakes down lubricant! You can cover spokes/nipples with Vaseline to protect them from salt (they do get kinda gross). Lube breaks down easily in the winter, so regular cleaning and greasing is necessary!