

Cross country skiing tops for cardiovascular system

CROSS COUNTRY skiing soon may replace downhill skiing as America's favorite winter recreational sport. According to a recent report, there are more cross country skiers in the state than downhillers.

There are many good reasons. It is comparatively inexpensive and places to ski are readily accessible. It requires no great skill and can be enjoyed by people of all ages. And it is one of the best cardiovascular exercises around.

A recent study showed cross country skiing is more effective than running in improving aerobic fitness.

MOST EXERCISES use only the larger muscles of the lower limbs, with little or no emphasis on the upper body. In contrast, cross country skiing employs the arms and legs simultaneously — a "total body workout."

The energy cost of level cross country is considerably greater than walking, jogging or running at a similar speed. This is attributed in part to the weight of ski clothing and equipment, estimated at 20 pounds.

Depending on the skier's efficiency and the snow surface, cross country skiing requires 6-12 times the resting energy expenditure. This is equivalent to the caloric cost of playing singles tennis or running at 7 mph.

For inactive individuals or persons with heart disease, such efforts may require near-maximal or maximal exertion, so caution is advised. Such individuals should consult their physician before skiing.



Barry Franklin



GOLF COURSES in the area that offer cross country skiing include Oakland's Glen Oaks in Farmington Hills, Red Oaks in Madison Heights, Springfield Oaks and White Lake Oaks.

Ski trails also are available at Independence Oaks, Stony Creek Metropark, Kensington Metropark and Maybury State Park. Many of these facilities offer rentals, lessons or both.

Barry Franklin directs cardiac rehabilitation at Beaumont Hospital and teaches at the Wayne State University Medical School.

Staying warm tough for all

By Timothy Nowicki special writer

KEEPING WARM during winter can be a full-time activity.

In our house, we keep the heat turned down and wear sweaters. Outdoors we bundle up in boots and down coats. Quite a contrast to our summer wardrobe.

Animals that remain active during Michigan winters change their wardrobes, too. Birds, for instance, grow extra feathers. Mammals grow thick coats of fine, dense fur.

Some animals, like man, shiver in an effort to warm themselves. Shivering muscles help generate heat in the body. Shivering also uses precious energy that animals must conserve during hard times.

Cold temperatures can be demanding on the energy reserves of an animal. In order to help conserve as much energy as possible, some animals roost together in groups during cold nights.

I remember last winter watching a tufted titmouse, with a very bent tail, at our feeder. This was

nature

a bird that probably spent the night in a small hollow tree cavity, huddled next to two or three other titmice. Small birds like chickadees and creepers lose more heat than larger birds and thus huddle to conserve heat.

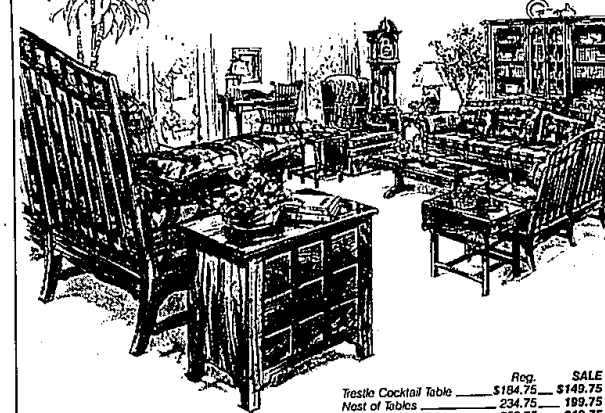
IN DECEMBER, I recall flushing some tree sparrows from their roost in a fallow field. They had been resting under the tufts of grasses and old corn stalks in an effort to protect themselves from bitter winds.

Animals have learned to adapt to their environment. They will take advantage of anything that will help keep them warm.

Mice often enter homes during the winter, and starlings will perch on the edge of a chimney to take advantage of the warm exhaust air.

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