



## Winter Blues?

### Lizzy Hawker

Short dark days, cold wet weather, grey skies and a heavy heart. Sometimes in the depths of winter it can be hard to find motivation in our running, it can be hard to feel that lightness of heart and foot or to feel the joy of movement. Everything seems harder in the winter - it takes longer to get to work - snowy roads, icy pavements - and sometimes it seems almost too much to go out and run in the dark, and in the cold. It can be too easy to find an excuse.

In some ways this is just natural - we all need a 'down' time - a physical and mental rest - so that we regain energy - for our minds as well as our bodies. But winter need not be an excuse to stop running. At least, not if we are kind to ourselves. We just need to find the way to enjoy the season, to enjoy the contrast with the warmer months.

Winter is a great time to build on our basic endurance to stand us in good stead for the coming season. It is a preparation time - for body and mind. Don't worry if you feel you need a bit of a break, don't worry if you find it hard to train with your normal intensity. But use these winter months to build up your strength and endurance - come the spring you will feel the benefit and be ready to fly.

But how can we overcome our inertia? How can we give ourselves a little helping hand?

Perhaps one way is to embrace the winter - to embrace the cold and the dark - to embrace the contrast to our easier summer running. You like the mountains? Well we can still run in the mountains in the winter snows .... You have not quite the freedom of the summer, but with care there is still so much ground to explore. It gives you a wonderful endurance training - and a boost for the head and the heart.

**Cold?** So go run where it is really cold .... in the mountains the temperatures might easily plummet to below -10°C, but it feels different - it is exhilarating and refreshing rather than a misery. In the mountains the cold doesn't get to your bones in the same way as the damp cold of the lowlands and cities.

**Dark?** Well, have you thought about running as dusk is falling? There is always some beauty to be found - sometimes the colours of the fading sky, or running home in the dark your way might be partly lit by the moon, or the sky be dark enough to see a myriad of stars.

I often feel a strange and beautiful kind of energy at this time of day, it is almost as though as the day is closing it can loan you the energy not quite spent. Or instead make your next training an early run - go and say hello to the day as the earth is just rising. Again watching the sky gain colour or perhaps surprising some wildlife - it gives you a good energy.

**Lacking incentive?** So - give yourself one. As they say 'a change is as good as a rest'. Running in snow can give you a good variety in training without you necessarily realising - helping your co-ordination and strength, as well as your endurance - from hard-packed winter hiking trails to 'freestyle downhill' in fresh powder. In the mountains the path ahead is always different. Maybe you find a small track through the snowy woods with swirling powder soft underfoot, or perhaps a hard-packed trail under a cold, blue sky on the sunny mountain-side. Maybe you see the sparkle of snowflakes in the crisp air, or feel the silence and peace of the snowy landscape, and then treat yourself to a well-deserved drink in the warmth of a cosy mountain restaurant. Escape from the grey - come and feel the snow in your face or the sun on your back. In the mountains you can experience such contrasts; from the quietness of the falling snow - when sounds are deadened and it is as though you are in your own world just for a moment, to the intense beauty of the mountains clear against a blue sky - when everything feels so intense and new it is as though the world has opened up and anything might be possible.

**Eager to try something new?** Running and mountains - for sure we imagine snow free trails in the summer months - but the wintertime mountains are also waiting to welcome us. Little known as yet, but snow running is a sport rapidly gaining in popularity in Alpine countries and in the US. But if it is something we haven't really thought about yet - then sometimes we need a helping hand just to start.

**Alone?** Or would you like to break the monotony of winter training in the company of like-minded friends - learning, discovering and enjoying something special together? In 2010 I am working together with Franzi Gissler in the Laufschule Scuol. We offer a snow running course each month of the winter - January, February and March. Each course has a technical component, but this is complemented with enjoying snowy training runs together in the beauty of the winter mountains. The courses are based in the charming spa village of Scuol in the Lower Engadine valley of the Swiss Alps (close to the Austrian and Italian borders). The Engadine is a region of beautiful and diverse Alpine landscapes, an inspiring place to train with ideal opportunity for working on your endurance. Balancing training and regeneration - here you also have the opportunity to relax and enjoy the natural mineral waters of Scuol. But more than that - you can run with a keen pleasure and feel a new joy running in the sharpness of the winter air. **Come and join us - break up the winter months with a new challenge - be refreshed and find a new excitement.**

## Course Information

**Instructors:** Lizzy Hawker and Franz Gissler

Date	Level	Description	Price
15.01.10 - 17.01.10	F1/F2	Snow Running Course I	CHF 270.-
19.02.10 - 21.02.10	F1/F2	Snow Running Course II	CHF 270.-
19.03.10 - 21.03.10	F1/F2	Snow Running Course III	CHR 270.-

**Join us running in the nature, be inspired by the beauty of the mountains  
challenge yourself and you will find another world!**

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