

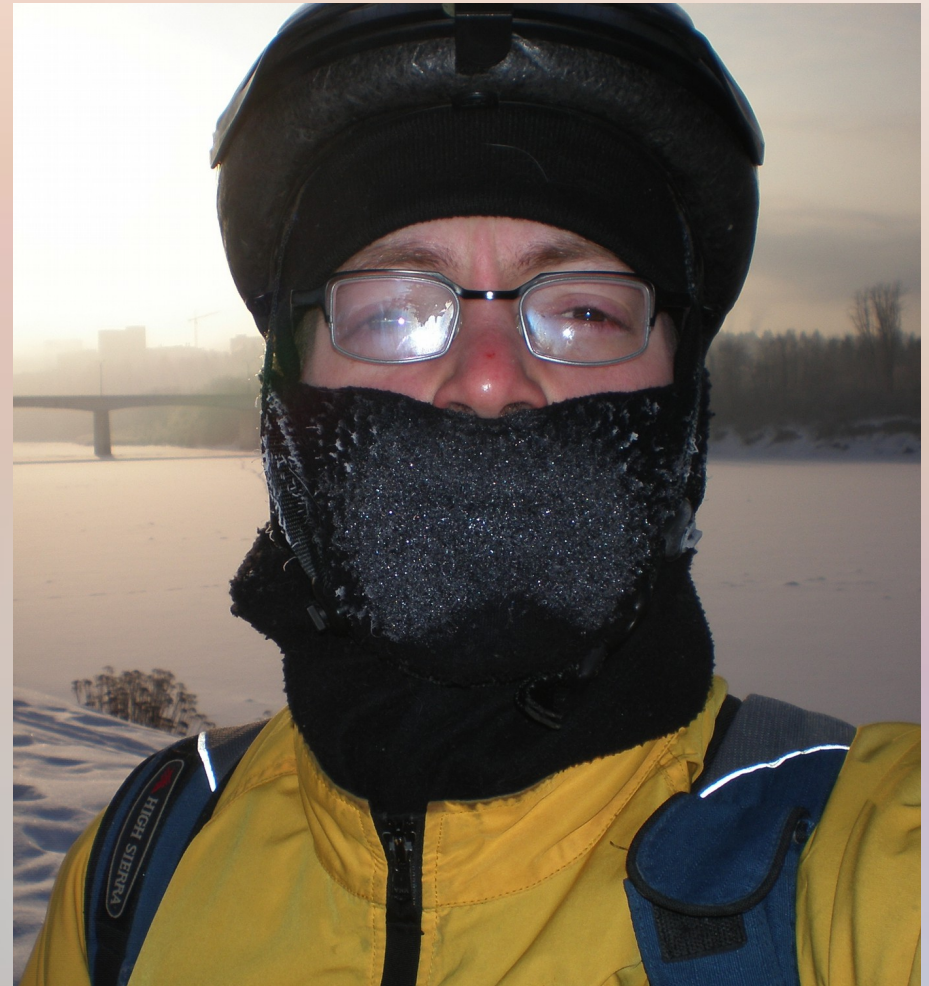
How to Ride Your Bicycle in the Winter



Tom Nowacki

Why Wintercycle?

- Get to keep biking, even though it's cold outside
- Cheaper than skiing, similar experience
- Often faster than driving / bus
- Stylish apparel



Why Wintercycle?



- Get to park even closer to the door than EMS
- Smug sense of superiority over drivers
- Hardest part of day complete on arrival to hospital
- Thighs of steel

Wintercycling Deterrents

- It's cold outside
- It's snowing
- It's not safe
- I don't want to wreck my bike
- I don't know how to start



How to get started...

- The best way is to start biking in the summer, then don't stop
- Try to bike a little later every year
- I didn't ride through the whole winter until my 3rd year of bicycle commuting



But it's cold outside...

- The main problem is over-heating
- Most people over-dress for winter exercise
- You want to start a little bit cold, then warm up as you go



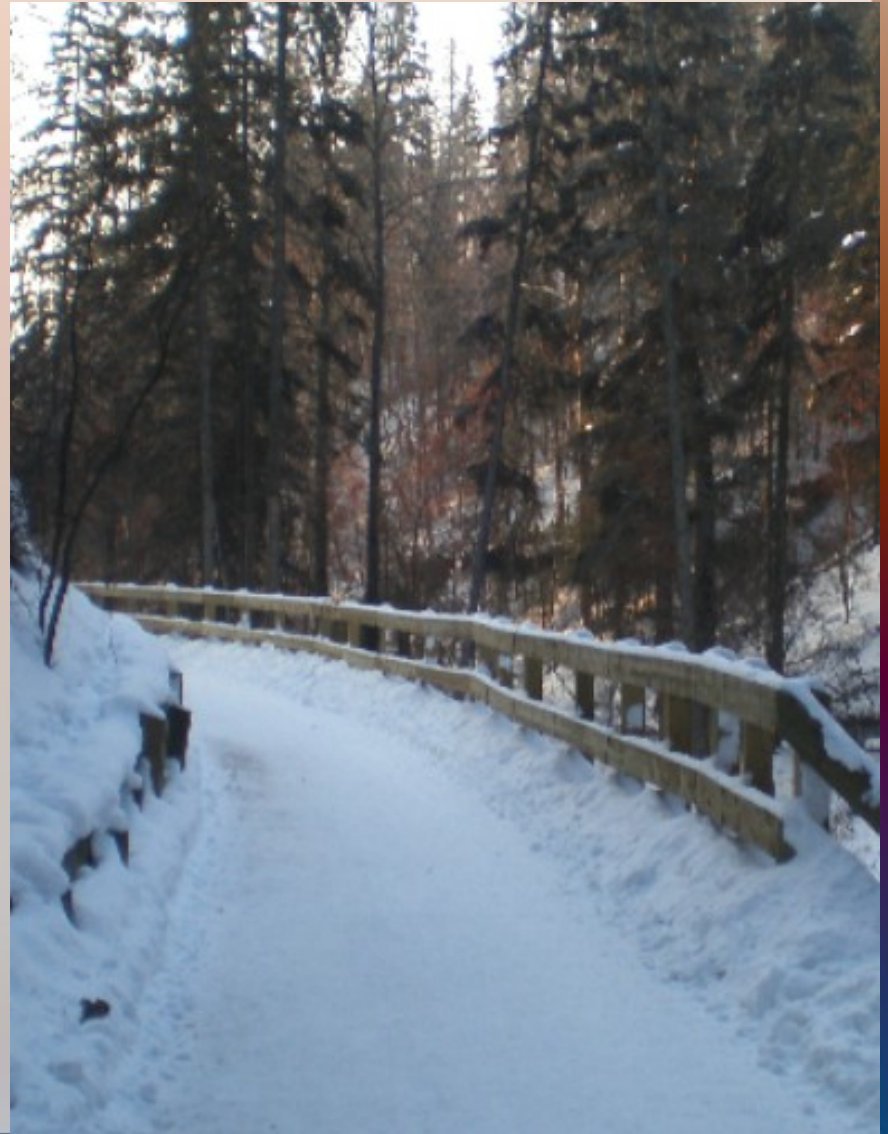
More on clothing



- Dress in layers
- Use a synthetic base layer, never cotton
- Wind protection more important than heavy insulation
- Feet and hands are problem areas

Take it slow

- Expect a 20 min ride in the summer to take 25-30 min in the winter
- Big knobby tires or studded ones help
- You will fall once or twice



Winter is Hard on Bikes

- Consider getting a winter-beater
- Single-speeds are a nice option
 - Easy maintenance
 - Can operate while wearing mittens
 - You won't be going fast, anyway
- Fixed gear?



In summary...

- Winter cycling is an attractive mode of transportation and exercise
- Patience, trial and error needed to find the right mix of gear and parts
- It is possible to cycle year-round in Edmonton
 - It is not necessary to move to Vancouver
- You can do it!

References and Resources

- www.icebike.org
 - The authoritative on-line resource
- Mountain Equipment Co-op (mec.ca)
 - Good, cheap bicycle parts
 - Decent winter gear
 - Staff with winter-biking experience
- www.sheldonbrown.com
 - Bicycle technical information