

# Cycling in a Winter Wonderland



A how-to manual to help you keep riding  
through the worst winter weather

Suggested Donation: \$3

# Ride in the cold? In the snow? Whatever for?

Your bike won't give you engine trouble when it's cold, since you are the engine.

You can ride your bicycle even if the roads aren't cleared of snow.

You keep yourself warm by pedalling, instead of relying on gas to power a heater.

Your bike is ready to go right away--no windshield to scrape.

The multi-use paths (in Boulder at least) usually get cleared before the streets do, and since it's so cold and "miserable" outside, there aren't too many pedestrians.

I've never had to dig my bike out of a snow bank, or prop sticks and boards up under my bicycle wheels

before I can get moving, have you?

When there's a blockage in the road, it's much easier to maneuver past the blocked road on a bicycle than in a car.

Enjoy the beautiful snowy view instead of cursing it.

The snow blankets everything and muffles sounds so that riding in snow can be almost unsettlingly quiet.

When spring rolls around, you won't need to get back in shape! You'll already be there!

Besides all of that, **it's easy**. The weather in Boulder is so finicky that while today may bring a foot of snow, it will be gone by the weekend. A lot of the techniques and advice offered here will translate to other locations, Boulder is very well suited for year round riding, despite an average annual snowfall of 83 inches.



from: [www.yehudamoon.com](http://www.yehudamoon.com)

# The Things We Carry

The following are good things to carry whenever you ride, not just in the winter:

Patch kit, pump or co2 cartridge, and/or spare tube, multitool, \$5 bill (for a tire boot or bus ride home), gloves, helmet, cell phone, ID, insurance card.

Having these things won't help you stay warm, but needing them and not having them can certainly make you colder.

## Specialized Gear for Cold, Wet, and Snowy Conditions

Riding in the wet, cold, winter is not as simple as hopping on your bike in the summer. You're going to need some specialized clothing and gear for this wacky adventure.

Here are the basic items of clothing you'll want to have in order to survive a cold, wet, or snowy ride:

### **Clothing:**

At least one layer (top and bottom) which is windproof and waterproof. Strategically placed zippers allow cool air to circulate to regulate body temperature and avoid overheating or sweating.

Avoid cotton, as it does not wick moisture away from your skin. When it gets wet--from sweat, rain or snow, this can make you colder.

### **Eye protection**

Ski goggles protect from sun, rocks (snowplows deliver these right into the bike lane!) bugs, precipitation, cold and wind.

Snow and rain may make it a little harder to see through your glasses, but it's not that hard to wipe them off every once in a while and *it's a whole lot better than riding with your eyes closed*

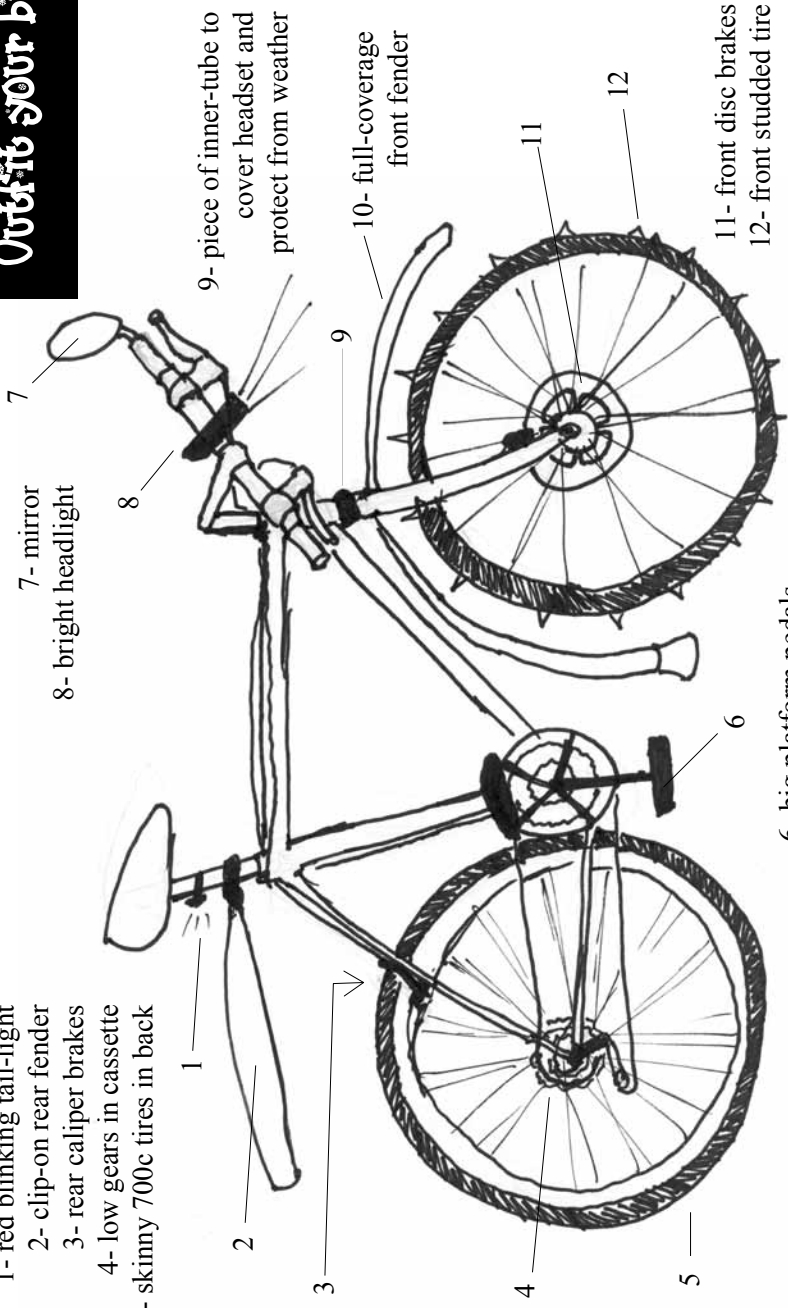
If you're covering your nose, eyeglasses will fog up. Ski goggles are less prone to this and they provide more coverage from wind and cold.

### **Shoes, Socks, Boots**

Using clipless pedals is usually colder because there's a hole in the sole of the shoe that puts a very cold piece of metal very close to your foot so the pedal and crank just sucks the heat out of your foot. Plus cold water comes in that hole!

- 1- red blinking tail-light
- 2- clip-on rear fender
- 3- rear caliper brakes
- 4- low gears in cassette
- 5- skinny 700c tires in back

# Outfit your bike.



- 7- mirror
- 8- bright headlight

9- piece of inner-tube to cover headset and protect from weather

10- full-coverage front fender

6- big platform pedals to ride with boots

11- front disc brakes  
12- front studded tire

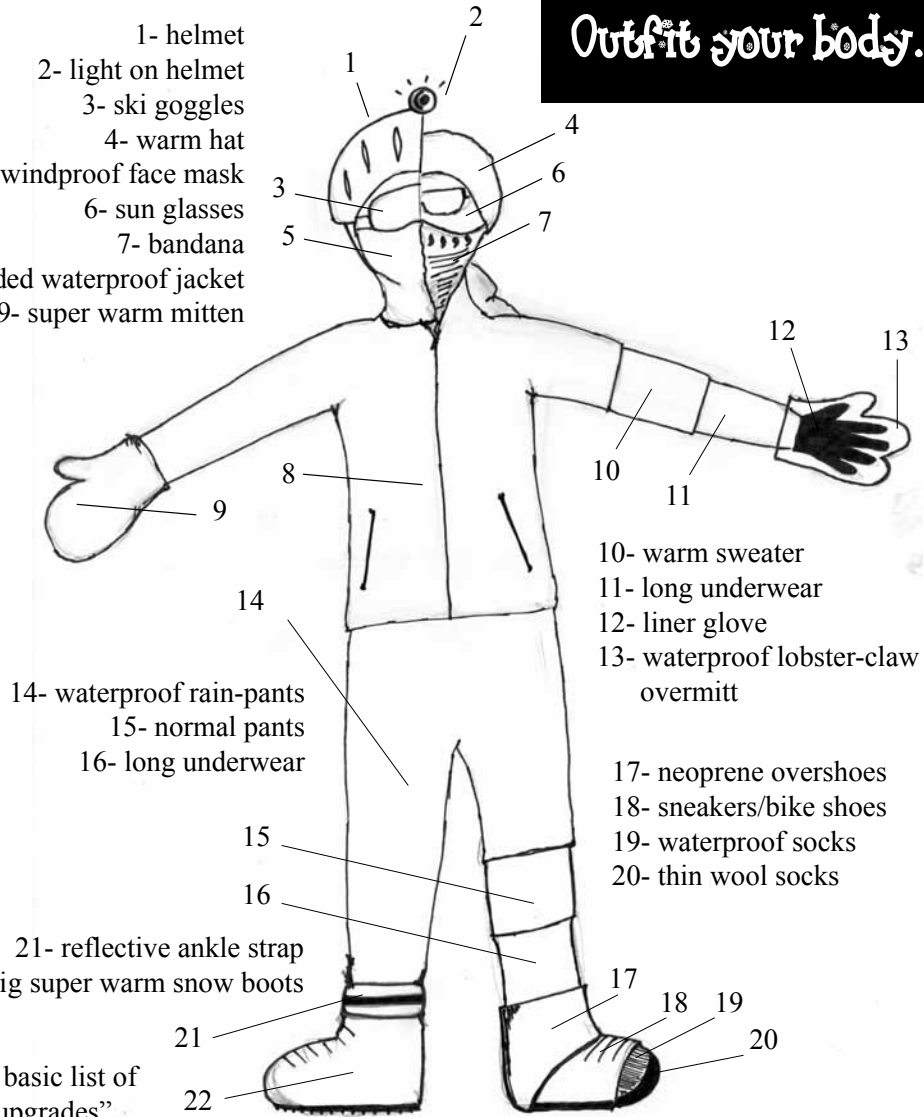
Here's a winter "t" which an to your s without r The cass thing you mechan commu how easy

22- B

8- hood

5-

# Outfit your body.



basic list of  
upgrades”,  
e easy to add  
summer bike  
major mechanical work.  
ette (#4) change is some-  
u’ll need an experienced  
c for, or visit your local  
ity bike project and learn  
y it is to do it yourself!

Dressing in layers is the key to staying warm while exercising in the cold. As your body warms up, you can remove layers and keep from overheating or being too cold. Many thin layers are much much better than one big thick layer.

# How To Make Snow Tires For



Tools needed:  
Drill  
Phillips Screwdriver  
1/16" drill bit  
Materials:  
3/8" Pan-head screw  
1 Mountain Bike Tire

## Step 2:

Determine the pattern of your tire's knobbies. Putting one screw in every knobby will be overkill. Shoot for one every two inches or so. The next hole you drill should also be on the other side of the tire.

knobby on right  
side of tread

## Step 2

Step 3:  
Once  
insert  
finger



# Make Your Own Tire for Your Bicycle

needed:

power screwdriver  
drill bit

head screws  
in Bike Tire

Step 1:

Drill a hole inside one of the knob-  
bies. Drill from the outside to ensure  
proper placement of the hole.



3:

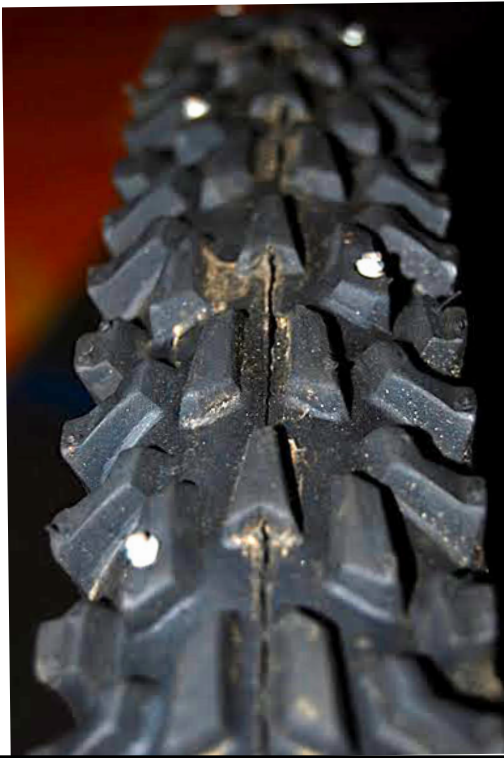
you've drilled holes all the way around the tire, it's time to  
insert the screws. On the inside of your tire, locate a hole. Use your  
fingers to start the screw in the hole. Get it in there two or three turns.





hole from step 1

Repeat steps 3 and 4 until you've seated screws into all the holes you drilled. Congratulations! You now have a snow tire. It should look something like this:



After the s  
use a phi  
d

Until i  
this on

And it  
this on th

You don't  
get away  
most i  
front wh  
wheel s  
using your



### Step 3



Step 4:  
The screw is well started by hand,  
Use a Phillips screwdriver to carefully  
drive the screw all the way in.

It looks like  
this from the inside:



It looks like  
this from the outside:



If you need two snow tires to ride over snow, you can  
ride with just one on the front wheel, as steering is  
important in less than grippy conditions. If your  
front wheel skids, you'll most likely crash. If your back  
wheel skids, you can ride it out and get out of the skid  
with your handlebars and your mad bike handling skills.

No matter how good your fenders are, you will always get some spray up from a wet road, so it's best to have waterproof boots, socks or overshoes. Neoprene socks are available, check the kayaking or canyoneering section of sporting goods stores.

Cycling creates unique pressure points in the foot that make it harder to keep warm even when your core is very warm. If your feet start to fall asleep or freeze up, usually taking a quick minute or two off the bike will help get the circulation back into the toes.

Really bulky boots that are tall can make it difficult to pedal and hard to feel the bike.

Big boots often don't fit into normal pedal cages, but you can take a giant rubber overboot and

cut out the back and mount that to some pedals as a pair of waterproof windproof toe cages.

Keep the base of your shin/top of your ankle warm, and your foot will stay warm.

## Gloves

Again, staying dry is key here. If you can operate your brakes and shifters with mittens, your fingers will be much warmer.

“Moose mitts,” aka “pogies” or “bullwinkles” are for the extreme cold/nasty/long term weather, but are very comfy and warm and dry

Keep the base of the thumb/top of the wrist warm, and the hand will stay warm.

Some gloves have a zipper pocket for chemical hand warmers.

If you use disposable chemical handwarmers, it's easy to extend their life. When you arrive at your destination, place them in a Ziploc bag, empty the bag of air and seal. Keep them in the freezer until just before you're ready to leave. The cold inside of the freezer and the lack of air due to the sealed bag slows the chemical reaction, saving the fuel for when you need it.



*A quality balaclava can be configured several ways for different levels of comfort or protection. In essence, you're getting 5 hats for the price of one.*

# Road Conditions in Boulder

The City of Boulder does a great job of clearing off bike paths before roads, and they're pretty responsive to complaints about specific areas that need snow removal in all but the worst of snowy and icy conditions.



To submit a complaint online, go to [www.bouldercolorado.gov](http://www.bouldercolorado.gov), then click on "Departments", "Transportation", and "Report a maintenance problem", and you'll be taken to a form online you can fill out with the location and details. I've heard of response times of one hour or less. Your mileage may vary, of course.

To call in a dangerous public road or walkway, dial 303-413-7177, and press 4 to report a problem with the multi-use path. Be prepared to give the location as specific as you can.

To report a close call with an aggressive or negligent motorist, dial 303-441-4272.

Please report all car/bike accidents, *as they help city planners and bike advocates work towards figuring out where problem intersections or areas are.*

If an injury takes place, call 9-1-1.

Otherwise call 303-441-3333.

The Colorado State Patrol also has an aggressive driver hotline. From your cell phone, dial "\*CSP" (\*277), or 303-239-4501 from a land line.

When dialing Star CSP bicyclists should be prepared to communicate:

Vehicle license plate number - **this is mandatory**

Location and direction of travel  
Vehicle and driver description, if possible

The aggressive driving behavior being demonstrated.



This zine was written and produced by Josh Brown and Dan Adams, who, in conjunction with Community Cycles put on a winter cycling workshop in November 2009 in Boulder, Colorado. Our hope is that it will inform readers about riding a bike in weather which may have once seemed too extreme or unpleasant.

You can contact the authors at:  
josh@communitycycles.org  
dan@communitycycles.org

Community Cycles is a non-profit organization of bicycle enthusiasts whose mission is to educate and advocate for the safe use of bicycles as an affordable, viable and sustainable means of transportation and personal enjoyment within our community.

Community Cycles provides re-cycled bikes and a welcoming space to learn about bicycle repair, maintenance and operation through outreach and advocacy activities.



For more information about Community Cycles, our programs or to download a pdf version of this zine, please visit [www.communitycycles.org](http://www.communitycycles.org).