



Running for Nordic by Gear West

Nordic racers should approach running differently than pure runners might.

- **Get on the Trails.** Trail running is great for Nordic skiers because the constant variations in trail surface, and the incline requires that you use your feet, legs and many of your body's smaller stabilizer muscles more than running on a smooth road surface will. This strengthens many of the same muscles you need to activate and control your skis while simultaneously reducing repetitive motion and peak impacts, all of which lower the risk of injury. Trail shoes generally have more traction, a more rugged construction for foot protection and more waterproof than road shoes. **Check out these trail shoes** ([Mens/Womens](#)).
- **Practice Natural Intervals.** Running on a trail's natural terrain more closely matches the cardiovascular challenge of Nordic skiing. Use the natural undulations to run "Natural" intervals by hammering up the hills and floating down the hills.
- **Practice Intervals up Long Hills** (trail or road.) This allows your VO_{max} to be the limiting factor and your heart rate goes up rapidly all the while limiting the impact on your legs because your overall speed is lower. Get a [Heart Rate Monitor from Timex or Garmin](#). Bjorn Daehlie has said he did almost all of his interval training uphill while also trying to "reach a PR in each interval."
- **Alternate Shoes.** Another way to decrease overuse injuries from running is to have two different shoe types that you alternate wearing. Use a trail shoe on trail days and a Road shoe on road days. **Road shoes** ([Mens/Womens](#)) have more cushioning than trail shoes and also are available with a vast array of motion control devices and lasts to match your stride/gait and arch type.
- **Get Lost** on a trail if you want to run for your weekly over-distance workout. Explore new areas, parks, and trails and get lost physically and mentally. Bring lots of hydration and nutrition. Also wearing compression garments from [Skins and 2XU](#) during running, or any activity, can lower recovery time and the risk of injury.
- **Boing! Learn Spenst Training.** Spenst is a Norwegian word that means explosiveness or more literally "Boing!" Spenst training involves ski specific

plyometric exercises that develop power, explosiveness, balance and strength. Often it is the skiers who seem to be skiing with the least effort that have the most explosive movements. Their secret is a quick, dynamic muscle movement, for both skate and classic which is then followed by a relaxation of those muscles. Spent is a great addition to training and it yields noticeable results with a fairly small time investment of 10 to 15 minutes a week. **“Minimalist or Barefoot Shoes”** ([Mens/Womens](#)) are great for this type of activity. This shoe style focuses on the athletes implementing a mid-to-forefoot strike using the arch, achilles and calf to cushion and propel. The shoe feel is super light with little to no padding. Those who stick with the shoes swear by its benefits for running and skiing.

- **Practice Hill Bounding.** Visit your local downhill area for a hill bounding session. Generally it is difficult to stay below L3, so most hill bounding sessions are focused on L4 and L5. [Use your HR Monitor again.](#) The US Biathlon team loves using hill bounding as a V02max boosting workout... 15sec max, 15 sec stopped, 15sec max, 15sec stopped... they do this for 1 hour straight but 15-30minutes would be a challenge for just about anyone.
- **Run with Poles.** Trail running with poles closely simulates Nordic skiing because it engages the arms as well as the core muscle groups. The poles will add extra propulsion so be careful not to over-stride which will cause excessive heel striking. Nordic Poles that are 10-15cm shorter than your classic poles are recommended. Check out these great buys from [Swix](#).
- **Race.** To be good at anything requires practice. The best way to be a better racer is to race. We suggest racing at least one weekend a month. It keeps you motivated to train hard if you know a race is just around the corner. Nothing wrong with getting on the road for a short fast 5km to work on speed. Lacing up a light **Racing flat or Tri shoe** ([Mens/Womens](#)) on the morning of a race makes you feel fast and ready.