



## Natural Fitness Lab

A Centre-of-Excellence for Outdoor Sport and Adventure

~ 30 years ~



# Natural Fitness Lab

“Living and coaching natural fitness through clean oxygen fed sport.”



## ABOUT

Natural Fitness Lab is a centre-of-excellence for outdoor athletes and adventure built around core technical competencies of: trail running, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing, and venturing into winter triathlon, sky running, mountain running, adventure racing, cycling, ski mountaineering, obstacle racing, and ultra distance running.

With over two thousand members, the adult program is the largest and most comprehensive of its kind in Canada. Producing athletes for 30 years...

We champion equality, diversity and inclusivity.

Provide a safe environment and positive experience.

Promote health, fitness and high performance.

It is the most fun you will have in the snow and mud this year.









## ESSENCE OF THE PROGRAM

1. Group Practices
2. Special Clinics
3. Semi-Private Lessons
4. Private Lessons
5. Personal Coaching
6. Individualized Training Programs



## SPRING – SUMMER - FALL

Group Practices - \$FREE

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
					 	
	Trail Running Training 6:25pm 1.5hrs	Rollerskiing P8 6pm 1hr	Track Practice With Cirrus 6pm P2 1.5hrs		Rollerskiing 9am P8 2hrs  Virtual Trail Running Course	Trail running Distance 9am 2hrs

### Semi-Private Lessons

- Learn2Trail Run

### Group Clinics

- Learn2trail run
- Dryland Ski

### Group Training Camps

- Trail Running MSM
- Mountain Running, Tremblant
- Mountain Running, Lake Placid
- Mountain Running, Mount Washington, BC

### Private

- Eight Week Program - \$100
- Personal Coaching/Consultation/Lessons- \$40/hr



## WINTER

Group Practices - \$100/yr

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
					 	
	XC Ski Training 6:25pm 1.5hrs	Snowshoeing 6:25pm 1hr	Skimo Training 6:25pm 1hrs		XC Ski Training 9am 2hr  Virtual Course Snowshoeing	Distance Ski 9am 3hr

### Semi- Private Lessons

- Cross Country Basic Classic
- Cross Country Basic Skating
- Cross Country Skiing Intermediate+ Classic
- Cross Country Skiing Intermediate+ Skating
- Skimo/Downhill

### Group Technique Clinics

- xc ski Beginner-Novice
- xc ski Intermediate+
- xc ski Downhill
- Snowshoeing racing basics

### Group Training Camps

- xc ski Racing Prep, Camp Fortune
- CSM Prep
- Loppet Prep
- xc ski & Snowshoe, Lake Placid
- Winter triathlon Prep
- Early xc ski/skimo/Snowshoe, Mount Washington, BC
- Multisport xcski/Snowshoe/skimo/Run/Bike, Mount Washington, BC

### Private

- Eight Week Program - \$100
- Personal Coaching/Consultation/Lessons- \$40/hr





We have assembled top-talent that would make a national team envious. It is certainly the strongest support team for any ski or running program in North America. • Olympic Coaches and Athletes • World Cup Medalists • National Champions • World record holders • Physiotherapists • Sports Psychologists • Kinesiologists • Podiatrists • Strength Trainers • Nutritionists • Medical Doctors • Wax and equipment technicians.







## MOTO

Living and coaching natural fitness through clean oxygen fed sport.

## MISSION

To develop outdoor athletes.

## VISION



We offer the perfect combination of outdoor sports to build applied core strength, cardiovascular endurance, aerobic power, agility, balance, and confidence in a pragmatic and natural environment.







## OUR MOTIVATION AND ETHOS



We are dedicated to creating significant opportunities for healthy outdoor lifestyle, promoting natural fitness, physical literacy and inspiring long-term athlete development through direct grass-roots community involvement and global campaigns for gender and age equality in sport, multilingual, multiculturalism, accessibility, science education, leadership and coaching.





## VALUES

- Physical and mental health;
- Promote and practice inclusivity for all fitness levels and abilities;
- Ensure equality in gender, age and accessibility;
- Generate positive group dynamics;
- Provide a safe and secure exercise environment and program;
- Create opportunities in fitness and sport;
- Encourage personal growth and creative freedom;
- Engagement;
- Advocating gender equality through sport
- Inspire, challenge and foster a sense of wonder;
- Individual agency;
- Nurture the individual and team play;
- Ensure a sense of belonging and encouragement;
- Cultivate Supportive relationships;
- Philanthropic;
- Knowledge transfer;
- Innovation in training; and
- Create pathways to excellence.

## OBJECTIVES

1. Support personal goals in health and fitness;
2. Foster long-term athlete development in the context of sport-for-life through participative coaching, imprinting and mentorship.
3. Attract, develop and retain top-talent in high-performance sport; and
4. Kickass.





## Attributes of Distinction

- Centre-of-Excellence (CoE) in: Cross-Country Skiing, Trail Running, Snowshoeing, Biathlon, Winter Triathlon/Pentathlon, Obstacle Racing, Ski Mountaineering and Adventure Racing.
- Cross-over sports: Cycling, Mountain Biking, Orienteering. et.al.
- Brilliant X-training opportunities for what ever sport you are in.
- Expert network of technicians, suppliers, safety teams, medical staff.
- High-dynamic range training, natural fitness, and expert mentorship.
- All-Season. All-Terrain. Multi-Sport Capabilities.

## Competitive Differentiator

- Largest inclusive adult trail running, snowshoeing and skiing club in the Country.
- Most comprehensive high-performance program of its kind from entry level to the Olympics.
- Sophisticated technical Instruction in Cross-Country Skiing, Trail Running, Ultra Running, Snowshoeing, Biathlon, and Winter Triathlon.
- Mentoring by Top Talent (Olympians, World Champions, National Team, Pro-racers)



- The dominant team in trail running, snowshoeing, winter triathlon, obstacle racing and long course XC skiing on national and world level.
- Spectacularly awesome Individual and team performances
- Top Team Results: National Long Course Cross Country Skiing Championship, Winter Triathlon World Championship, World Snowshoe Championship, World Obstacle Training, Premiere Road Races, National Mountain Running Championships and National Trail Running Series.
- Impressively rapid improvement in fitness and skills.

## Unique Value Proposition

- Centre-of-Excellence for Outdoor Sports
- Team of high-performance athletes;
- Extensive network of professionals; and
- Coaching expertise.



## Natural Fitness System

*High-Performance Training System - High Dynamic Range (HDR) & Complexity Training & Active Coaching & Technical Simplicity*

The broad objectives of natural fitness system are to:

- Support personal goals in health and fitness;
- Foster long-term athlete development in the context of sport-for-life through participative coaching, imprinting and mentorship;
- Attract, develop and retain top-talent in high-performance sport; and
- Kickass.





Key Performance Indicators and Objectives for natural fitness are specific measurable, achievable, relevant and trackable:

Objective	Measurement
Physical and mental health	Reduce injury rate, response times and improve recovery speed. Monitor and assess status of participants. Feedback and counseling during training and races. Intervention. Promote recovery methods.
Promote and practice inclusivity	Demographics include all fitness levels and abilities. Beginners and elite athletes train together while offering different workout options for participants. Deliberate planning of workouts.
Ensure equality age, accessibility and diversity	The system is applicable for ages 17-75. Program actively supports paralympians, students, multiculturalism, languages, low income, and those with special needs. Affirmative action recruiting and marketing.
Generate positive group dynamics	Collective enjoyment impressions, daily feedback, survey, testimonials. Random acts of kindness. Construction of teams. Persistent motivational messaging.
Provide a safe and secure exercise environment and program.	Enforced code-of-ethics. Medical, search and rescue teams. Workout options for each level and chart safe progressions. Pre-planning and contingency planning for workouts. Buddy system.
Create opportunities in fitness and sport	Time trials, race series, training camps, cross-training, accelerated learning, training partners.
Encourage personal growth and creative freedom	Adjust to multi-sporting goals and aspirations of the individual.
Inspire engagement	Pairing athletes in practice, change leads in warm-ups and cool-downs.



Advocating gender equality through sport	Equal representation of gender. Integrated workouts and time trials of same distance and difficulty.
Inspire, challenge and foster a sense of wonder	Feedback on published favorite workouts and routes.
Facilitate Individual agency	Encourage and note spin-off training groups and events
Nurture the individual and team play	Individual and team results in training and racing. Team uniforms
Ensure a sense of belonging and encouragement	Participation and membership retention
Cultivate Supportive relationships	Social network analysis and discussion threads.
Knowledge transfer	Feedback from blogs, DVDs, TV Channel (Likes, Shares, Views) Video Library, Books, Lectures, Mentorship and Coaching.
Innovation in training	Natural Fitness System.
Create pathways to excellence	Programming, logs. Realizing individual goals Achieving Personal Bests
Athletic Improvement and Excellence	Telemetry and time-trials Quantitative performance measurement (Strava) Fitness Measurements (Power, $VO^{2MAX}$ ) Podium finishes Personal Best (PB) Course Records (CR)





## Natural Fitness High-Performance Training System

Natural Fitness High-Performance Training System – is an open system based upon the fundamentals of: exercise science and innovations of High Dynamic Range (HDR)<sup>™</sup> & Complexity Training<sup>™</sup> & Active Coaching<sup>™</sup> & Technical Simplicity & Applied Cross Training & Personality Tailored Plans.

Exercise Science Fundamentals. We subscribe to training the fundamentals. Starting with *consistency*, the most important factor for establishing an active lifestyle is a principle upon which one can apply *volume and intensity* of exercise in the right measure. *Progressive loading* gradually increases the difficulty of workouts over time. Thus, challenging the body to improve and adapt to the load in hours or intensity. *Periodicity* in the workouts provides the necessary variance in volume, intensity and recovery to take optimal advantage of the principal overcompensation. Balancing *specificity and diversity* provides the purposeful training required for high-performance sport while expanding the dynamic range and capability of overall fitness. Cross-training has the added benefit of preventing injuries.

High Dynamic Range Training<sup>™</sup> incorporates speeds & distances ranging from sprints to ultras, develops the full-spectrum of cardiovascular zones (1-5) and exploits structured cross-training in multiple modes (sports), including variations of the same sport. The trademark methodology trains the aptitude to perform across a wide variance of pacing, zones, cadence and terrain. This system takes advantage of bridging sports to facilitate the transference of skills and physical attributes, whilst reducing the risk of injury. Thus, developing a broad range of physical literacy, resiliency and super-powers.

Complexity Training<sup>™</sup> makes an athlete street-smart and competition-ready. It deals with multiple external variables (terrain, conditions, adversarial dynamics) and internal factors (mind, body, spirit) through integrated training sessions. These are workouts that combine and synergize neuro-muscular (strength, power, power-endurance, speed), with cardiovascular, agility, balance, coordination core, mental toughness, personality profiles and race strategy in real environments. *Necessity is reductive. Desire is complex.*



Active Coaching™ and Motivation is the most effect means of adaptive learning. The method applies sports psychology and exercise physiology into hyper-realistic training scenarios. Active-participative coaching and instruction accelerates learning and programming by neuroplasticity, imprinting, mimicry and mentoring: physical, psychological, technical dimensions to athlete development and personal empowerment. Coaching is provided in realistic situations and at race speeds. *Instead of taking people into becoming athletes, we prefer to show them.*

Technical Simplicity and Efficacy. The two aspects of simplicity are often referred to as elegance and parsimony. There are a few fundamental technical positions/movements in every sport that are absolutely necessary for a foundation of success. Many of these are centred around the core and work in all situations. This technical methodology is elegant in that it simple but profound in its implications. The athlete that can master simple basics well will consistently out-perform someone who is trying to apply more complex constructs to real-life. So there are must-know techniques, high-percentage techniques, and then all the rest. Ninety per cent 90% of the time should be spent perfecting the critical simple techniques. Chaining and bridging™ methods are used to tune skills.

Applied Cross-Training for Natural Fitness™. Our system advocates for total (holistic) health and fitness. The program addresses technical, physical, mental dimensions of the athlete. We think the ABCs of athletic development begin with agility, balance and coordination, and an emphasis on core-strength and power-endurance gained through complex movement. Speed and power are built on a base of endurance and full-body strength - engineering the optimum power-to-weight ratio for a well-rebounded athlete. The conditioning program targets all the energy systems: anaerobic alactic, lactic, threshold, sub-threshold and aerobic zones. Thus expanding the athlete's performance envelop from seconds to hours (10sec sprints, 10hr ultras and 10day multi-day stage races). We appreciate that fitness is not just about the heart lungs and muscles, but the whole body. Athletic performance is dependent upon how the well body can sense the environment, drive electrical current into the muscles, coordinate movement, process food, oxygenate blood, or metabolize waste products are important attributes that can determine performance. Hence, the program focuses performance improvement across all the anatomical systems (cardiovascular circulatory, respiratory, muscular skeletal, nervous, lymphatic immune, digestive excretory,





endocrine, integumentary exocrine, and renal systems). Similarly, applied cross-training nurtures poly-discipline skills, flexibility, nutrition, recovery strategies.

Personality Tailored Plans.<sup>™</sup> Our training philosophy adapts sport physiology and psychology to the athlete's personality profile. An athlete's technique style and physicality is highly influenced by their personality type. It follows that there is no one program fits all for skill development, conditioning pathways or interacting with a group. The system integrates personality profiles within mental, physical and technical training planning.

Health and Fitness. We recognize that fitness is based upon a foundation of good health and conversely fitness is core to leading a healthy lifestyle. More nuanced is defining the right level of exercise, which promotes recovery and renewed health while pursuing high-performance goals.

## DEFINING SUCCESS



We define success as:

- Collective Enjoyment;
- Realizing Individual Goals;
- Achieving Personal Bests;
- Attending Podium finishes; and
- Overall Team Participation and Results.



## DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAM



The program is perfect for athletes who want superior total-body conditioning and functional power-endurance with one training system.

Looking for adventure, lifestyle, or performance fitness?

Safety – Understanding proper technique and training methodology will make you far more efficient within your sport. You will avoid injury and equipment damage.

Health and Fitness – First we need to be healthy before we can become fit. Then, there is a clear path towards enhanced fitness. You will lose weight and tone muscles along the way. There are no secrets or fads.

Motivation – Let's face it. We all need motivation from time to time. Watch one of our videos, films and visualize success, or join us for group training session.

Performance – Become a student of your sport. Listening to, watching, following and imprinting from experts is the best way to fast track your results. We address training and technique for all levels and abilities; from beginners to Olympians.

Natural Fitness Lab provides expert-lead coaching for: fitness, cross-training and high-performance streams. The programs are supported by:





Best-selling instructional and motivational video products for fitness training, technique and sports psychology. Personal training programs are: Intelligent, sophisticated, comprehensive, pragmatic and successful. Technical instruction is always: leading-edge, progressive, visionary and proven effective.

Many participants have personal goals ranging from the improved skills, fitness, weight loss, finishing a race, or winning it. The program is open for all levels and abilities, from beginner to Jedi.

Individuals or teams interested in entering, surviving or winning the most challenging multi-sporting and extreme athletic events on the planet from 5 to 500km like ultra-marathons, cross-country ski events, ski-mountaineering, obstacle & adventure races, snowshoeing, trail & mountain running, orienteering, obstacle courses or surviving the zombie apocalypse.

Our most competitive athletes (Olympians and World Championships) train along side everyone else and help mentor developing athletes.



Natural fitness labs offers:

- 140 expert lead technical and training sessions, special clinics, coaching support and fun (fall-winter) and another 100 FREE trail-running sessions (Spring-Summer-Fall);
- Expert-led weekly group training sessions;
- Training programs, semi-private groups, personal training and virtual coaching (costed option);



- Library of instructional videos and films;
- Sports specific fitness testing;
- Fitness and Performance Programs;
- Technical instruction and coaching by elite athletes;
- Training Camps;
- Cardio and strength annual training programs;
- Technique and fitness training;
- Special trail running seminars and clinics;
- Certified coaching staff;
- Kinesiology expertise; and
- Direct access to a network of sports experts and sports medicine professionals.

## THE TEAM

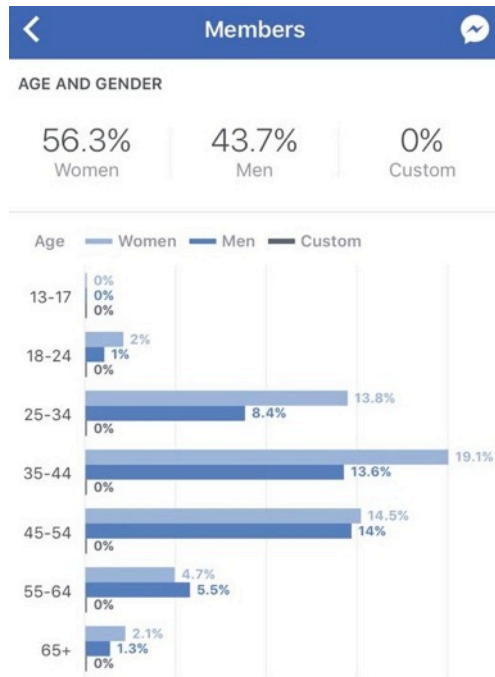
Come train along side:

- Olympians and Paralympians in skiing and biathlon;
- World champions in: Mountain Running, Snowshoeing, and ITU Winter Triathlon;
- National champions and team members in: cycling, trail running, xc running, triathlon, ultra running, biathlon, xc skiing, trail running, mountain biking, adventure racing, obstacle racing; and
- Some wickedly fast road-runners.

Our practices are inclusive and are designed for all levels and abilities.



## DEMOGRAPHICS



- There are approximately 2000 people in natural fitness lab;
- Half of the participants are women;
- Between 50-150 attend practices regularly at any given time;
- Ages vary from 18 to 72 with the average age being 30 years young;
- Running top speed varies: from 70min to 28min for 10k road. The average PB is 50min for 10km;
- There are about 12 men out of the whole group run quicker than 1:10 half marathon and 8 women completing a marathon under 3hrs.
- Warm up and long distance group runs are done at approximately 5:30-6:30min/km





## RESULTS



Most dominant team in the: World Snowshoeing Championship, ITU Winter Triathlon World Cup, Gatineau Loppet and National Long Course XC Skiing Championships, National Trail Running and Mountain Running Race Series, National Snowshoe Race Series, Masters Nationals Cross-Country Running Championships, and National Spartan Obstacle Racing.

## INDIVIDUAL RESULTS

World Snowshoe Championships, ITU Winter Triathlon World Champion, National Cycling Champion, National Long Course Cross-Country Skiing Championships, National Ultra Running Champion, 3<sup>rd</sup> Fastest Canadian Boston Marathon, Winner Toronto Half Marathon, Winner Army Run, Winner National Capital.

## PEDIGREE

Sixteen Olympic or National Team level athletes in the program.



## RUNNING



TRAIL RUNNING Free your self from the roads and engage in a richer and more enduring experience. Explore different trails in the park every week. We offer group and route options depending upon speed.

TUESDAY – 18:25hrs - 1.5 hr Group Trail Running Training. Build super-human cardio-vascular power, strength and Jedi-like agility. Different location, course, format and group dynamic every time.







THURSDAY 18:00hrs – 1.5hr Track Workout – Speed. It is a fantastic opportunity to tune your technique under the watchful eye of a coach. Organized in partnership with Cirrus track club. Meet at Mont Bleu Track parking lot P2 in the Gatineau Park.



SUNDAY 09:00hrs – 2hr Group Trail Running – Distance and endurance. Discover a new trail with friends every week.







Cross-country skiers are the best-conditioned athletes on the planet. Fast track your skills, fitness and performance inclusive and friendly environment. Many participants have personal goals ranging from the improved skills, fitness, weight loss, finishing the Ski Marathons, to elite high-performance racing. The program is open for all levels and abilities, from total beginner to racer. It is the most fun you will have in the snow this year. Our competitive ski team regularly trains with the adult program and helps mentor developing skiers. Five Olympic and 15 former members of the National XC Ski Team have skied for the team. Ten-thousand people have learned to ski with the lab over the past 25 years.







TUESDAYS 18:25hrs - "Train to race" Normally consists of a variety of interval and intensity sessions to develop power-endurance and specific strength. This workout has a training focus for novice to expert skiers.



SATURDAY 09:00hrs-Noon. Longer conditioning session for fitness or racing. We also use this time to have special events or clinics.







SUNDAY 09:00hrs-noon - Distance training for intermediate level skiers to elite racers. The ski tour starts from a new location every week and explores new trails.



The lab's Nordic Skiing Clinics and Training Camps will tune your skills in either skating or classic disciplines.

*Safety, efficiency, or high-performance.*

The ski clinics and camps offer:

- expert instruction in either classic or skating styles
- a comprehensive review of all techniques
- analysis
- supporting videos and manuals
- fun and friendship





SNOWSHOEING



WEDNESDAYS 18:25-20:00 - Group snowshoeing adventure. Normally the training consists of a variety of Fartlek or varied pace (run/hike) and terrain (slowest folks are moving at a fast hike). Discover a new snowshoe trail every week. Snowshoeing is a bridging sport between running and skiing. It eases the transference of skills from one activity and another while lessening change of injury coming off snow to earth. It is also a common ground where runners, cyclists, triathletes and skiers can compete in nearly equal footing. Prevent injury and build power for your running season. Snowshoeing in the forest is an intimate experience, Instead of running on the roads this winter, let your adventure out!



Ski Mountaineer Racing is excellent cross training for both skiing and trail running. Athletes climb to the top of the mountain using skins and super lightweight alpine touring gear, and race back down.

THURSDAYS 18:25 -20:00 at Camp Fortune, Chelsea, Quebec







## OTHER ACTIVITIES



We will spice-up the sessions with optional special events and activities:

- Adventures
- Biathlon
- Orienteering
- Hut-to-Hut Skiing
- Winter Triathlons and Pentathlons
- Potlucks
- Ski and Spa
- Winter Adventure Racing
- Ski Mountaineering





## SPECIAL CLINICS



We organize a number of special clinics and training camps:

- Trail running, mountain running, dryland training, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing clinics
- Women and daughters skiing and trail running festivals (Fast and Female)
- Waxing, equipment selection, training etc

## SEMI-PRIVATE CLINICS AND CLINICS

We offer semi private technique courses for trail running, dryland training, snowshoeing, cross country skiing and skimo.

## PRIVATE LESSONS AND COACHING

Book your private lesson, coaching or consultation with Lise Meloche, Two-Time Olympian and World Cup Gold Medalist.

We can also provide winning yearly and eight-week programs for multiple sports and personalize them to your needs.



## PRACTICES & THE PROGRAM

We are based out of Chelsea, Quebec; in the heart of the Gatineau Park, with over 200km of forest trails, it is nature's playground. Come on an adventure with us.



There will ALWAYS be practices regardless of weather! -30c snowstorms, wind, ice storms, +30 etc, solar eclipses, earthquakes, solar mass ejections, bugs, Xmas, winter solstice, thunder, freezing rain, lightening, sand storms, darkness, sunshine, rain, hurricanes, local tornados, or chemical biological radiological nuclear weapons of mass destruction threats of terrorism ... especially in cases of alien invasions, the zombie apocalypse and mass extinction events.

Check group training at [www.trirudy.com](http://www.trirudy.com) for practice times and locations. Go to our virtual clubhouse on Facebook and interact in real time. Visit to a comprehensive resource library for technique and training. [www.youtube.com/xczonetv](http://www.youtube.com/xczonetv)





## THE PRINCIPALS



Dave McMahon and Lise Meloche first met on the National Biathlon Team and formed a lasting personal and professional partnership centred around skiing. Lise raced two Olympic games and 200 World Cups; winning 7 medals, including four (4) Gold and a World Championship title. Dave was Canadian National Champion, ranked 3rd in the World for summer biathlon, and represented Canada at the World Snowshoe Championships and World Loppet circuit. Dave is an elite winter triathlete and trail runner. Together, Dave and Lise: wrote the cross-country ski manual; built an independent film production company; produced several award winning films on skiing; launched a skiing channel viewership of two-million subscribers; and mentored thousands of people to ski through natural fitness lab - the largest skiing, snowshoeing and trail running program in the country.

Who's Who in Canadian Sport, Volume 3 1999 by Bob Ferguson ISBN 1-894282-00-0.

[www.naturalfitnesslab.com](http://www.naturalfitnesslab.com) is a not for profit company promoting health and fitness operating for the past 30 years.



## TESTIMONIALS

### Mark Sutcliffe, Editor iRun Magazine and Radio Show

*"Dave McMahon suddenly appears on top of a huge outcropping at Camp Fortune, a giant rock that ends abruptly with a drop of four or five feet before the trail resumes below. Only a few minutes earlier, about 30 of us had tried in succession to run up and down this rock without much success. Many of us came to almost a complete stop and then took six or seven tiny steps to lower ourselves down the steep incline. But Dave doesn't even break stride. He bounces one step off the leese of the rock and sprints forward on the trail, taking a sharp turn while gathering speed. By the time he stops, the rest of us are applauding. Watching and learning from Dave, I am quickly becoming hooked on the sport of trail running. But like that rocky stretch at the top of the path, it's a leap I don't make easily. This sport should be a natural fit for me. I like trails, I like hiking, I like running and I even like running on hills. But I haven't done a serious trail run in almost four years. Unfortunately, I have developed an entirely unreasonable fear of injuring myself by landing awkwardly and stumbling. On my last trail run, I turned my ankle, then started worrying about doing it again. The fear made me run cautiously and rigidly, which in turn made it more likely to happen. I turned my ankle half a dozen more times before the end of the run and gave it up, thinking I had weak ankles that couldn't stand any instability. Since then, I've stayed out of the woods. But the opportunity to learn from a trail-running guru was too hard to resist. Dave and his wife, Lise Meloche, have been leading runners through Gatineau Park for years. They even have a video company for which Dave records spectacular trails across the country, running at high speed with a camera. In other words, while most of us struggle to negotiate a tough trail, Dave runs it while looking through the lens of a camera. Some of Dave's recorded runs have been watched by astronauts running on the treadmill aboard the International Space Station. Last Sunday, Dave and Lise gave an introduction to trail running that set me back on the right path. As I suspected, the problem was never in my ankles, it was in my head. Dave taught some very useful technique for climbing, descending and turning. Trail running requires a lot more knowledge and tactics than routine jogging, and some of it is counterintuitive. You have to think on the fly and adjust your body so you're landing softly and maintaining your balance throughout your run. But the most valuable lesson for me was how to overcome my fear of stumbling. Dave's advice was to run like you're on a track, with a normal stride, a lot of bounce in your step and a fearless attitude. As he pointed out, if you're worried about roots, rocks and branches, you'll pass over most of them in the air if you maintain a normal gait. I imagine it's a lot like running across a series of logs floating on a river, or the rare contestant who actually manages to clear some of the crazy obstacles on the TV show Wipeout. If you quickly spring off every*





surface your foot strikes, you're a lot less likely to stumble. The more time your foot spends on the ground, the more likely it is to get you in trouble. All of which is easier said than done. But by the time the clinic was over, I felt like I had overcome my mental block. In the space of two hours, I went from nervous to comfortable. By the time we had run up and down Camp Fortune I was ready to do it all over again. There's still a lot to learn, but I feel like I've crossed a mental divide much greater than the rock that Dave bounded across. I have a whole new world of running I can blend in with my existing training. The trails offer a break from the monotony of road running and a different challenge that can help you improve overall technique. And they often provide shelter from the blazing sun and a completely different climate from a summer run on exposed city streets. Not to mention the scenery. Ottawa is surrounded by spectacular and well-maintained routes with a wide range of difficulty level. You could do a different run every week and not run the same route more than once a year. You really shouldn't be a runner in this city without taking advantage of the trails. Which is why, thanks to a little more technique and a lot more confidence, I think I'll be doing this again soon." - **Mark Sutcliffe, Editor, iRun**

### **Lynne Bermel, Ottawa Sun Newspaper**

*"Last weekend, Dave McMahon was on one of his favourite trails in the Gatineau Park when he ran into a cross country skier who had crashed on a downhill. The skier had failed to negotiate a corner that had been snowploughed down to the gravel. The skier ended up with a few broken parts to show for it.*

*That caused McMahon to wonder how many others were risking injury, broken equipment and a few bruised egos because they didn't know how to take the down hills properly.*

*True to form, McMahon didn't stop there.*

*The next day, the former biathlon champion turned cross country ski coach and film producer, was on the Net, inviting anyone he knew to a special "crash course" on proper descending techniques.*

*He's running that course at Camp Fortune tomorrow – the latest in his long line of programs and instructional offerings he's developed over the years to teach people about cross country skiing as well as adventure racing, trail running and mountain biking – sports he affectionately calls "clean oxygen fed activities."*

*"I've always been into sports that tax the cardio and muscular systems. You can't find a better all over body workout than cross country skiing," says McMahon, whose adult Nordic ski program that he runs with wife Lise Meloche, a two time Olympian, has grown to 400 members and is one of the largest in the country.*

*"Cross country is all terrain skiing. What goes down must go up," he says.*

*"Not to knock alpine skiing, but let's just say the return on investment is a lot higher than riding a chair lift."*

*They live less than 200m from the edge of the Gatineau Park. For the last 20*



years, when they haven't been working – he's a full time engineer at Bell Canada and she is a high school teacher - they've rarely been out of it.

"When I came to Ottawa and discovered the Gatineau Park, adventure races were almost non-existent," he says. "There weren't any organized groups or trail running events. I worked out alone most of the time. It got boring. Eventually, I started to organize group training sessions and they slowly took off. Now, we can get as many as 80 people out to our trail runs. It's crazy."

"It's like being a kid and inviting your friend to come out and play. They're there, rain or shine, night or day."

McMahon and Meloche have also developed a series of motivational and instructional DVDs on skiing and training. Their cross country skiing DVDs have been described by the ski industry as the Warren Miller equivalent. They produced the official DVD manual for Sports Canada and the Canadian Association of Nordic skiers.

They finished their latest project last summer where they ran, skied and mountain biked wearing a steadicam on trails of major parks across Canada to produce astronaut training programs for the Canadian Space Agency.

Their DVDs will be used by astronauts in space training on treadmills who will get a point-of-view experience of being there at Gros Morne in Newfoundland, on the trails in Lake Louise, on the cross country ski course for Vancouver 2010 in Whistler or along the West Coast trail.

His next project? A DVD on proper downhill technique of course!"

**- Lynne Bermel, Ottawa Sun Newspaper**

"I moved to Ottawa five years ago from Calgary for graduate studies with some hesitation that I would miss the Rockies. As soon as snow fell I discovered the great skiing in Gatineau park, but soon got bored of skiing on my own and not having anyone to push me. Two years ago I found Natural Fitness Labs which was exactly what I wanted, a chance to improve my ski technique, gain fitness and meet people with common interests. Going out for a good ski or run is a great stress relief, especially when your thesis seems to be sliding off a cliff. I will soon be moving from Ottawa and one of things I will miss the most is this group. Thanks Dave and Lise!!!" -

**Nicholas Utting**

"Through their free trail running group, Dave and Lise have created a great community of outdoor athletes who love the Gatineau. They continuously bring people together to challenge and inspire each other. Thanks for all your time and energy, Dave and Lise! - **Nicky Cameron**

"From an every-man's point of view: Whether on shoes or skis Dave and Lise will take you places you never thought you could go. You'll run farther and ski faster than you ever expected to go regardless of your age or initial fitness level. And, best of all, you'll meet new friends and have a blast doing



it!" - Robert Scruton

*"Dave McMahon and Lise Meloche continue to push the limits of training with technology by producing the best video based tools out there! Gurus of nordic skiing and trail running, they continue to generously share their knowledge and passion for endurance sports- inspiring everyone to push their own boundaries!" – Ray Zahab, Ultra Marathoner*

*"My first encounter with the xczone ski camps was as a novice trying to master the intricacies of skate skiing. Over the course of two days, we were slowly transformed from awkward, inefficient machines into a group of athletes who could begin to feel the fluidity and force behind true technique. This was accomplished with precise instruction, specific drills and excellent snow conditions. Dave McMahon and Lise Meloche have been wonderful ambassadors for the sport of XC skiing. Their camps will appeal to a range of athletes, from both the novice to the competitive skier. Their dedication and love of the sport shines through not only in their technical knowledge, which is second to none, but also in warmth and enthusiasm." - Suzanne R., Triathlete, Osteopath, Physiotherapist.*

*"Thank you for the incredible day on the XCZone camp. I can honestly say that it was one of the finest days of instruction I have ever received, and will be sure to pass on to everyone I run into. Your patience, understanding of the technique, enthusiasm, and attention to detail was superb, and it showed in the results by the end of the day with the majority of skiers. Compared to downhill skiing I used to teach, you have a far tougher task at hand with X-Country. I only congratulate those who surpass my expectations, like you both did! Dave staying me until dark is just a small example of that. Thanks again" – Grant - a rookie but loving the Clean Oxygen Fed Sport!!*

*"Anyway, I took your camp I think three years ago - maybe four. Just so you have some background - I taught myself to xc ski in 1972 when I moved here from Montana and realized the relatively pathetic state of downhill skiing (I learned to ski on "the hill" which was Bridger Bowl - 2000' vertical with constant powder. I never saw anyone sharpen their edges until I moved here). I taught the first Jackrabbit league in the city in Kanata, and was the city coordinator for the Kanata Jackrabbit league the following year. That year I got my CANSI Level 1 instructor's ticket. During that time, I met Jackrabbit Johannson twice, and was completely inspired by him. I skied the final Gatineau 55 (on 220cm wood skis with 3-pin bindings) in 7hrs and 20 minutes after having skied through the pine tar - the sun was going down as I crossed the finish line - I had no idea how far 55km was. Two years later I did the Keski 50km classic in 6hr and 6 minutes, then laid out for several years, then did the 25 a few years later in an embarrassing 3 hours (shame! shame!). I had taken several one-on-one personal lessons over that time,*





and a couple of club sessions with the Nortel ski club, trying to learn to skate and to improve my classic. As you can tell, I am not a serious racer. I ski because I love everything about xc skiing. The year I took your camp, I was in my late 50's, still couldn't skate for more than 15 or 20 strides at a time without going over my AT, and was getting discouraged about ever skating the Keski 50 in under 4 hours, which is my partial goal in my long-term plan to ski at least 10km in my 100th year. I didn't quite know what to expect from your camp. I knew about the two of you, and that you were both world class skiers, but I didn't know how well you would be able to transfer that knowledge, and I didn't know about the quality of the people you'd have assisting you. I crave, and consequently seek out, high quality and excellence. Your camp provided both. It was the best thing that I have done, ever, to improve my skiing ability. You guys were excellent instructors - patient, only gave us one thing at a time to work on, gave us mantras and visualizations which I still use ("Open the hips!" "Present the heel!" and my fave from Dan Mallett, who told us that the little tassel on our caps was for the ski gods to grab onto and pull on, in order to help us extend our glide when we were on one ski!). Your approach was hard to describe, but far more gestalt than sequential and hierarchical. I came away from the camp knowing how to ski with my body, not my brain. I experienced the zone (and have several times since). You were well organized, had more world class instructors than I knew lived around here (who also knew how to teach), but most of all, I had a great time. The camp was pivotal in my skiing career - it helped me to ski better and enjoy it more than any other (compact) experience I've had. The first Keski I did after your camp, I trained like crazy, and took two hours off my personal best (!) when I skied 42km classic in 3hrs 40min. I can't say that all of it was due to your camp, but I don't think I would have been able to do the training without having done your camp. So, you two have made a significant contribution to my life! No wonder I'm a big fan. I still can't skate up the hill from P8 to the bottom of Penguin without stopping, nor up the Pink's Lake hill, but I'm working on it. I'm looking forward to your camp this season. In 2005, I will skate the Keski in under 4 hours. Thanks very much for all you have done, with the camps, the videos, the DVDs, and with your accessibility. You improve the quality of life here. Best regards." - **Tim**

"Running is great anywhere, but being able to run away from cement, buildings, cars, people looking down at their phones - is simply a gift. I don't always take advantage of the gift, but remind myself that the extra effort to bike, drive or run to a natural running back place is always worth it. Better done with friends of course." - **Christina Sutcliffe, National Life Guard Team**

"As a ultra trail runner and xc skier with Natural Fitness Lab, this great group of athletes led by coaches Dave and Lise, have inspired and encouraged me



*to dream big, to exceed what I thought I was capable of doing while enjoying the journey getting there."* - **Dale Costello**

*"Discovering beautiful trails, in nature with a group that always pushes me further than I ever imagined - physically and mentally."* – **Harriet Finn**

*"I joined Natural fitness lab group ~10 years ago for help with my xc skiing to finish the Canadian ski marathon. I bought the dvd unlimited finally made the commitment to practice with the group. My experience was limited to some recreational xc skiing with cycling friends. Fortunately I had some endurance from my long distance cycling rides from 200 to 2000 kms with randonneurs. I thought at the beginning that this was Dave McMahon & Lise Meloche job to train ordinary people to be able to xc ski. I learned later that they had real professional jobs, although I still do not know how they can dedicate some much time to everyone, thank-you. I continued to improve and meet some fantastic people for long lasting friendships. The xc skiing helped my cycling and was successful in some long rides. Then there was trail running. I learned that it would help my xc skiing. Although I did not know how to run, it did not seem to stop me. The experience with the group is always magical in the Gatineau park, even if my teenage daughter thinks my activities are boring. Then the club introduced snowshoeing, which is supposed to help my trail running to help my xc skiing to keep me cycling longer. I was sold, since the Wednesday's night sessions were free! It did not matter how cold it was, people keep coming out and we looked like a bunch of miners climbing fortune hill with our headlamps. I love the practice with Natural Fitness Lab group, always start on time, do not cancel practices and people are always smiling. Some of the most caring people I have ever met. I have exceeded all my expectations: Canadian Ski Marathon Coureur des bois gold (8 bars-bib280 ), twice Canadian triple ski challenge finisher <http://www.momtahan.com/tripleskichallenge/>, ( csm 160 km, gâtineau loppet 51 classic and 51 skate skiing ), 2015 , 2nd place age group for loppet weekend 51 km events behind Estonian. In 2014, I took up trail ultra running and with the coaching of Dave & Lise have finished 125 km uthc, 4 x 50 milers, 2 x 50 kms and 114 km sinister 5 of 7. There is so much variety of trail runs, snow shoeing and xc skiing. I also learned roller skiing which has helped my recovery. There are almost 300 free videos on youtube <https://m.youtube.com/user/xczonetv> . The energy and friendship are priceless I am indebted to the perseverance of the natural fitness lab group led by Dave and Lise. Keep healthy within positive outdoor environment."* – **David McCaw**



*"What I learn from Lise & Dave, in terms of technique tips and general motivation, I pass onto the young ones I coach. Motivation is about gaining competence, becoming independent and feeling like your part of a community. Lise & Dave help foster that community known as "Fit for Life".*

**– Bob Arnold**

*"To chase or be chased; either way, you get faster."* - **Caroline Bisson, Athlète paralympique.**

*"What was a new way to explore trails became a major part of my life. It has been 13 years now. I have remained as healthy if not healthier than I was when I first met Dave and Lise. The group has cost me nothing and is worth everything. The group environment, which has participants from all walks of life has provided me with a rich backdrop to the daily grind of being a working parent. While some of the group may be considered outliers and truly exceptional people, most, if not all offer a friendly welcome and camaraderie. It is an amazing group with deep expertise in computer science, kinesiology, environmental science, political science, management consulting and extensive knowledge of every possible aspect of healthy living, sports performance and of course humour. Humour is a common theme to every practice and it can remove within minutes the most bewildering of days one can face. Special mention goes to the makers of home made maple syrup, honey and kefir. The group has provided and will continue to provide me with tremendous health benefits and relationships I never would have otherwise had. I am consciously thankful of my participation in Natural Fitness Labs. Special thanks to Dave and Lise, Adam, Graham and Emily, Matt, David, Guy, Eric, Cal, Janice, MC, Ilona, Paul, Bag Lady aka Amanda, Claude, James, Nathan, Nicky,, Shelley and Mike."* - **Brent Brill**

*"How can I express 11 years? The companionship; the excitement of the season's first: trail run, xc ski, snowshoe run; the racing; the satisfaction of getting to the end no matter how slow; the coaching (now I understand! though doesn't mean I can do it.); the incredible scenery and atmosphere of Gatineau Park...the wind, the sun, the clouds, the hills, the valleys, the friendly dragon flies, sunrise, sunset, the shining moon lighting the xc ski trails, the misty foggy days, Penguin Hill, Champlain Lookout, Shilly Shally, Luskville Caves, the Fire Tower, the deer to watch, the bears to be afraid of, the wild turkeys, the falcons, the incredible ravens; tired legs, Les Saisons afterwards...lots more as it comes to me. Well, this is what I came up with. I'll try to get a photo of myself. 'When I'm with Natural Fitness Club everything*





*seems right. From learning a difficult technique and practicing it to a quiet Sunday long run in Gatineau Park—and everything in between—it's just right!* - **Stuart Pursey**

*The group has helped me heal after the loss of my mother. It's like a second family. Always great to look up and around to appreciate life with others.* – **David McCaw**

*“The group has given me additional positive energy before, during & after my cancer testing and surgeries to survive.”* - **David McCaw**

*“Natural Fitness Lab – Year round fun in the greatest gym of all nature.”* – **Claude Marchand**

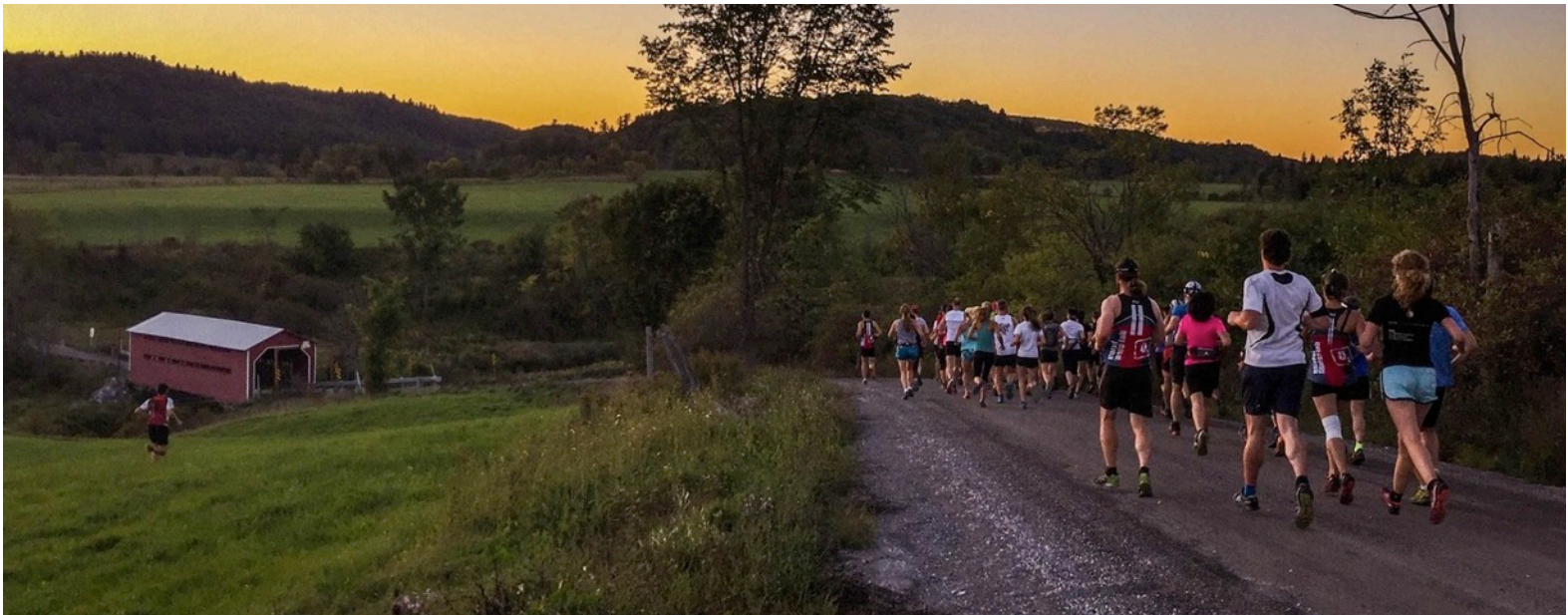
*“Pavement used to be my only friend, until I met the trails and now they are #1”* - **Brenda Ross, Endurance Nation Race Director**

*“I love training with the group because it pushes me out of my comfort zone. I get out of my put pace and try to keep up with faster people which makes me stronger and thanks to Dave and Lise's advice I am becoming a better athlete physically and mentally.”* - **Nathalie Long, Canadian Adventure Racing Team**

*“Since joining NFL I have gained more confidence as a trail runner and am forever being inspired by the people I meet, everyone has a unique story! The group has taught me so much, including how to love the outdoors, even in the “worst kind weather”. I am so grateful for the encouragement and guidance I receive from both Dave and Lise as well as all the other talented group members.”* – **Leela Howitt**



## LINKS



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FB Group RACE TEAM

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FB Special Resource Centre

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/naturalfitnesslabresourcecentre/>

STRAVA Team

<https://www.strava.com/clubs/naturalfitnesslab>

Map of Gatineau Park

[http://s3.amazonaws.com/ncc-ccn/documents/GP\\_SummerTrailMap\\_2017\\_LR.pdf](http://s3.amazonaws.com/ncc-ccn/documents/GP_SummerTrailMap_2017_LR.pdf)



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Trail Conditions

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/naturalfitnesslabtrailreport/>

Healthwise Article

[http://www.xczone.com/Healthwise\\_Ottawa\\_Winter\\_2010-2011\\_web.pdf](http://www.xczone.com/Healthwise_Ottawa_Winter_2010-2011_web.pdf)

The Oxygen Project

[https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLXhmUuXXOIXmUfPq\\_aPVWBu\\_Tlw3xVBsQ&spfreload=10](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLXhmUuXXOIXmUfPq_aPVWBu_Tlw3xVBsQ&spfreload=10)

Nordic Skiing Videos

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLXhmUuXXOIXlWglZgH-nn256TqQQdkFs>

Training Videos

[https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLXhmUuXXOIXln60yldtTq\\_EzIfPCkWqqT](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLXhmUuXXOIXln60yldtTq_EzIfPCkWqqT)

Trail Running Videos

[https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLXhmUuXXOIXm95hVJxv7fQluSd\\_Be4543](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLXhmUuXXOIXm95hVJxv7fQluSd_Be4543)

Oxygen Trailer

<https://vimeo.com/135677470>