

When people think about being active in the winter, they think of skiing, skating and other self-propelled activities. But it's time to think about snowmobiling as a solid winter workout - and the Canadian Council of Snowmobile Organizations (CCSO) has some proof that say just that.

A University of Guelph study entitled "The Physiological Assessment and Analysis of the Physical Demand of Riding a Snowmobile" is soon to be released, and in a preliminary view of the report, it's proving that the activity level of snowmobiling has traditionally been underestimated. While this news may not be surprising to those who snowmobile regularly, it does help to change the perception that motorized sport isn't advantageous to health.

Conducted in 2016-17, the study evaluated the physical demand of snowmobiling, considering both cardio-respiratory and musculoskeletal demands. It also examined if activity location would play a



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role in the physical demands. Researchers compared the study results to the American College of Sports Medicine's Compendium of Physical Activities. This tool defines activities by their aerobic demands as a metabolic equivalent (MET). A MET is a unit that represents the amount of energy required to maintain human function while sitting or lying awake at rest. Therefore, an activity of 3 METs would be 3 times more demanding than rest.

Snowmobiling falls into the category of moderate intensity which range between 3-6 METs. The average METs for groomed trail riding scored almost 4, while mountain riding came in closer to 7. This puts snowmobiling in the same physical activity range as other winter activities such as recreational ice-skating, snowshoeing, snow shovelling or chopping wood.

So if winter is not your most active time of year, snowmobiling may be the way to go.

You can help beat the winter blues by traveling the trails, which locally, are some of the best in Ontario.

Join The Club

In Ontario there is a 30,000km network of provincial snowmobile trails. The trails are organized into 12 districts, each with a local operator (ie: Snow Country Snowmobile Region.) All districts are under the umbrella of the OFSC - Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs. What is truly incredible about snowmobiling is that the trail network is a combination of public and private land, and the trails are groomed and managed by volunteers. Snowmobiling is one of the largest volunteer-driven organizations in Ontario.

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