

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO

# ↓ RIDE IN THE COLD

BY  
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## I'M A BIG FAN OF THE SAYING, "THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS BAD WEATHER, ONLY BAD CLOTHING."

As cooler weather starts to roll in, I've learned to embrace the change in seasons. Riding in the cold can be something you look forward to, too, with the proper gear and know-how.

Winter cycling means being out on shorter, colder, and often wetter days, so focus your preparations to meet these conditions. Throughout the winter, I keep a very bright taillight as well as a 1,000-plus-lumen headlight on my bike all the time. They are essential for staying safer on an after-work ride or even the odd weekend ride that runs longer than expected. Pro tip: Plug your lights (and any other tech) into their chargers as soon as you get home. That way they are always ready to go. There is nothing worse than getting all kitted up only to realize your batteries are dead.

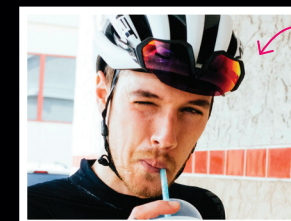
Dressing warmly enough is a no-brainer (see "What to Wear," next page), but the cold can affect your riding in ways you might not even realize. Take your tires, for example. In colder temperatures, rubber becomes harder, thus affording you less traction and compliance. Less grip, coupled with more debris on the roads, means I switch to a slightly wider tire with a more pronounced tread pattern. Keep a closer eye on your tire pressures, too, as cold air can lower the psi in your tires. As a baseline, I run my winter tires roughly 5 to 10 psi less than I would in warmer weather, given the same setup. But be aware, for every 10°F drop in temperature, you lose 1 to 2 psi in tire pressure. So, if you air up inside and go for a ride on a very cold day, you could be running up to 10 psi less than you had planned.

With winter weather comes wet weather as well. Unlike riding through a refreshing summer rain shower, getting soaked in colder weather can be downright miserable. The first line of defense is to try to stop water before it can get you wet. When

shopping for your winter kit, be on the lookout for outer layers that have either a durable water repellent coating for light precipitation or a full waterproof membrane, like Gore-Tex. Another technology I like to incorporate into my clothing arsenal is merino wool. Unlike most fabrics out there, merino wool still keeps you warm when it's wet.

Even if there is no moisture falling from the sky, the roads can sometimes be very wet. Having a good set of fenders can be a godsend for keeping you and your riding partners considerably drier. Moisture aside, the grit, grime, and even road salt of winter roads will shorten the life span of your drivetrain very quickly, so be sure to keep up on bike maintenance. If you have access to a hose in the colder weather, then you're all set. If your hose is turned off for winter, or you don't have access to one, then investing in a cheap garden sprayer is essential. I fill it with warm water and can clean off all the winter grit from my drivetrain in no time.

Although having the right gear can make all the difference, sometimes the hardest barrier to riding in the winter is mental. With less daylight available, it can be a real challenge just to get out the door. If you're struggling to find motivation, consider trying a different discipline of cycling. As someone who spends a lot of time on the road, I find myself really looking forward to nighttime winter mountain biking with my riding buddies. A trail I've ridden hundreds of times in the daylight can feel like a brand new experience at night. With fewer people outdoors, the roads and trails are quieter, allowing me to focus more on riding and less on outside distractions. Oftentimes, once I've willed myself out the door, I find winter riding to be some of the most enjoyable all year. The invigorating feeling of cold air in my lungs and a sense of accomplishment once I've finished is hard to beat.



### THE EXPERT

**CHRIS PINO** is a cycling photographer and former competitive cyclocross and criterium racer who has been riding bikes through just about every weather condition for over 10 years now. Whether it's bikepacking through the wet Scottish Highlands or training through cold Northeast winters near his home base in Philadelphia, there isn't much he hasn't ridden in. During winter, he typically rides outside three to four times per week—about the same as he does in warmer months.



## WHAT TO WEAR

→ Riding comfortably in the cold is all about layering. Wearing multiple, lighter layers of clothing is more versatile than one big bulky jacket, because you can add or remove apparel to match conditions. Plus, multiple layers do a much better job of trapping body heat between items yet still let sweat evaporate so you can avoid getting soaked from the inside out.

With proper layering, you can feel confident knowing you won't freeze no matter how cold it is. Although some people have a greater tolerance for cold weather than others, I've found the following advice suits most cyclists:

◀ When temperatures dip into the **60s** (°F), grab a long-sleeve jersey or some arm warmers. A mesh base layer or lightweight gilet is a good addition if it's windy. Bare legs are still okay at these temps.

◀ In the **50-degree** range, consider throwing on leg warmers, a lightweight jacket, and light gloves. Increase your comfort further with an insulated gilet, headband, and overshoes.

◀ When the mercury drops below **45 degrees**, grab an insulated jacket, shoe covers, and thermal bibs. Put on thicker gloves and a cap.

◀ **Below-freezing temperatures** call for the big guns. Pair insulated bib tights and a merino wool base layer with an insulated jacket. Add heavy gloves and shoe covers to complete your kit. Cover any exposed skin.



## MUST-HAVE ESSENTIALS FOR COLD-WEATHER RIDES

**1 / MAAP ALT ROAD THERMAL JACKET \$295** / MAAP hit the nail on the head with its Alt Road Thermal Jacket that balances warmth and weight. Warm Polartec Alpha insulation lines the torso. The rest of the jacket is lightweight and breathable, allowing for excellent thermoregulation. Dual zippers keep you comfortable on climbs.

**2 / SKS RACEBLADE PRO XL FENDER SET \$75** / The Raceblade Pro XL does an excellent job of keeping road spray off my body, bike, and riding partners. With the ability to quickly mount or remove these fenders via the included silicone straps, I'm not stuck keeping them on in drier weather. The set, which works well with rim and disc brakes, fits almost any road or gravel bike out there and tires up to 32 mm.

**3 / BLACKBURN COUNTDOWN 1600 FRONT LIGHT \$170** / With six modes, this powerful light maxes out at 1,600 lumens, which it can sustain for over an hour. But the 600-lumen medium setting, which lasts up to four hours, is great for everything except fast downhill mountain bike sections. The digital timer takes the guesswork out of knowing how much run time is left, and the quick-charge function gets you out the door faster.

**4 / SHOWERS PASS CROSSPOINT WATERPROOF KNIT WOOL GLOVE \$52** / Keep your hands from being the weak spot on cold, rainy days with the Crosspoint. This knit waterproof glove is a mid-weight option with sufficient insulation for temperatures hovering around freezing. But when the mercury climbs, you won't get hot and sweaty.

**5 / PEARL IZUMI THERMAL CYCLING BIB TIGHT \$175 FOR MEN AND \$165 FOR WOMEN** / A pair of thermal bib tights is a must

for cold-weather riding, and this offering from Pearl Izumi fits the bill. Fleece backing and minimal panels with less stitching ensure all-day comfort. The lay-flat straps accommodate layering without adding bulk, and water-shedding technology keeps you dry in case the weather should turn.

**6 / FIZIK WATERPROOF WINTER OVERSHOE \$70** / Cold feet can ruin a ride fast. Cold air and moisture won't get past Fizik's shoe cover, thanks to an insulating neoprene outer plus a seam-sealed three-layer waterproof fabric. The zipper at the back simplifies getting these on and off, and the reflective dot pattern boosts visibility.

**7 / RAPHA WOMEN'S MERINO BASE LAYER SLEEVELESS \$75** / Made with 100 percent merino wool, this women's base layer insulates as the digits drop. It's also highly breathable, so you won't overheat come spring. Rapha designs the shape, neckline, and stitching to reduce chafing.

**8 / SANTINI ALPHA MEN'S BASE LAYER \$57** / This sleeveless base layer doesn't look like much but is surprisingly effective in the saddle. Made of Polartec's Alpha insulation, it has remarkable insulating properties, wicks well, and dries very quickly. It's soft and comfortable against skin and keeps your core warm in a variety of weather conditions and temperatures.

**9 / BONTRAGER WINDSHELL CYCLING BALACLAVA \$40** / On the coldest days, nothing beats a balaclava. Bontrager's has a brushed interior for added warmth and comfort. The outer fabric uses a windproof membrane to keep the chill away even on the windiest days. The sleek styling doesn't bunch under a helmet, and the clamshell design lets you pull down the front for better airflow when climbing.