



■ **SUPER DAVE FACT:** Get into the holiday spirit by taking the Bright Nights Train in Stanley Park from 3 to 10 p.m. daily. Check out www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/parks/events/brightnights for details.

SOURCE: Metro Vancouver

■ **HOT SITES:** Check out the following great sites: www.snowshoeracing.com, www.snowshoemag.com, www.trailpeak.com.

SOURCE: Metro Vancouver

Head for the mountains

Snowshoeing a great way to see the backcountry

By DAVE NORONA
for Metro Vancouver

Just because Mother Nature has blanketed the Lower Mainland's finest hiking trails with a thick layer of snow, doesn't mean that you have to wait until spring to get up into the mountains. Just grab a pair of the latest lightweight snowshoes, your backpack, and a will to explore!

Snowshoeing is a great way to get up into the mountains with your friends and enjoy our beautiful backcountry. The old school giant tennis-racquet-sized snowshoes are a thing of the past, replaced with an efficient, compact, tapered design that encourages a natural walking or running stride.

Grouse, Cypress and Seymour mountains all have snowshoe specific trails and rentals that allow you to try this awesome sport. There is no learning curve — you just put them on, grab a friend and go.

If you are looking to purchase your own snowshoes for short hikes or runs, then look for the smallest size possible. Most snowshoes will not fully suspend you above the snow on those powder days anyway and smaller snowshoes will be easier to manoeuvre and are a lot lighter.

If you are using your snowshoes for backcountry access like winter camping or snowboarding, then moving to a larger size will allow you and your extra weight to move more effi-



Dave Norona makes his way up Dam Mountain on Grouse Mountain. KIM DUESS/FOR METRO VANCOUVER

ciently over the snow.

Atlas Snowshoes has led the way in development and have the best suspension and binding system. Their aggressive claw crampon will climb anything. They also offer many different models to suit any outdoor enthusiast. Regardless of your endeavours, renting first is the best way to try out all the different models before dropping your hard-earned dollars.

If you want to get involved

but don't know how, check out the Yeti Snowshoe Academy Clinics on Mount Seymour. These non-intimidating sessions run throughout the week and weekends and are designed with you in mind. You will walk, hike or run with like-minded individuals and have a great time on the snow. Professional instructors will guide you. Snowshoes are provided or you can bring your own.

The Yeti Snowshoe Series is also the fastest growing

snowshoe series in the world and you can sign up for one or more of the five series races throughout B.C. that consist of five- and 10-kilometre run distances.

Check out the Yeti Academy at www.theyeti.ca.

Just remember you can be down in the city getting rained on or up in the mountains in your own winter playground, it's all up to you!

For more Super Dave info, check out the website www.davenorona.com.

Gear Guide



SEALSKINZ SOCKS

Description: SealSkinz are a lightweight, waterproof and breathable sock that will keep your feet toasty warm during your next winter snowshoe outing. Wear them next to your skin or over a thin sock for extra warmth.

Price Range: \$59.99

Where to find it: www.sealskinz.com.



HELLY HANSEN SPORT CUFFED HAT

Description: Helly Hansen's Lifa base layers are perfect for any outdoor adventure. This lightweight Lifa beanie will keep your noggin warm while you snowshoe your way to the various mountain peaks surrounding Vancouver.

Price range: \$25 **Where to find it:** www.hellyhansen.com



ATLAS DUAL TRAC SNOWSHOES

Description: Atlas' super lightweight, tapered design Dual-Trac enables you to walk or jog with a natural stride. The strong aluminum foot claw will allow you to climb anything your heart will allow.

Price range: \$279

Where to find it: www.atlassnowshoe.com



MOUNTAIN HARDWARE OFFWIDTH JACKET

Description: Mountain Hardware's Offwidth jacket is an air permeable soft shell made of stretch-woven nylon. It is wind and water resistant and breathable. Perfect for any epic snowshoe adventure.

Price range: \$150

Where to find it: www.mountainhardware.com

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