

MOUNTAIN BIKING

How to stud your tires for winter riding

TIPS FOR YEAR-ROUND BIKING

Once you've winterized your bike, don't forget to winterize your body. Like skiing, winter mountain biking requires windproof, breathable clothing. For the feet, try a combination of boots and toe-clip covers, each made of insulated stretch material. For the hands, winter cycling gloves are a must. Lobster-claw styles are best. Of course, the head sees more heat than any other part of the body; conventional vented helmets alone aren't enough. Lycra-and-fleece hoods fit comfortably under a helmet and will keep your neck, forehead and chin warm.

—B.K.



PHOTOS BY DANNY COFFEY

After drilling holes through the tire's knobs, I thread the screws from the inside-out (left). For better turning, I aim some screws at a slightly outward angle from the tread (above).

By Bill Kerig

■ MOUNTAIN BIKES can be as much fun in winter as in summer. To tame snow and ice, however, it helps to have the gripping power of studs on your tires.

Flat-head screws make excellent studs. Use half-inch sheet-metal screws, available from any hardware store. Next, find a used knobby tire, perhaps the one you rode on all summer and were ready to replace.

With a 3/16th-inch bit, drill holes from the outside of the tire in. You can create any tread pattern you want, but make sure the holes go through the knobs of the tires, not through the grooves. For extra cornering power, drill some holes at a slight outward angle at the edge of the tread (but not on sidewall).

Next, turn the tire inside out and thread the screws through the holes. The end of each screw should protrude no more than 1/4-inch from the tread of the tire. If they extend farther, they'll bend and puncture the tire.

Once all the screws are in, apply at least two layers of duct tape over the screw heads to keep them from puncturing the inner tube. Or you can buy a thorn-proof rubber insert that fits between the tube and the tire. One product, called Mr. Tuffy, can be purchased at most bike shops. Another alternative is to cut up an old "sew-up" road-bike tire and lay it between the tube and the studded tire.

Finally, turn the tire right side out, mount it on the rim and you're ready to go. The whole process should take about an hour, and you can change the studs if they wear out (unlikely in one season).

With studded tires, you can pedal on snow and ice, and even rip down slick hills. But take it slow at first; the studs won't necessarily make you one. →

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