



# CANADIAN OLYMPIC ACTIVITY CHALLENGE



## CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING

Cross-country skiing began in Norway and was used for transportation and hunting. The first races in cross-country skiing were among soldiers in the mid-1700s. The sport was included in the first Olympic Winter Games in 1924 in Chamonix.

There are two techniques used in cross-country skiing: classical and free (or skate skiing). In classical, the skis move parallel to each other through tracks or grooves in the snow. The skis are propelled forward in a striding motion. Poles are used to gain power from the arms. Free technique or skating is done on a smoother snow surface without grooves. This technique is much faster and resembles ice skating with the use of poles.

At the Olympic Winter Games, there are six categories of events. In the skiathlon, the athletes use both classical and freestyle techniques, changing skis in the middle of the race. The sprint will use classical technique in PyeongChang 2018, and the athletes will race a 1.5km course. The team sprint will use the skate technique, and two athletes will each do three separate legs of the race. The relay is a 4 x 10 kilometre relay for the men and 4 x 5 kilometre for women. There are also individual races and a mass start race 50km for men and 30km for women.

Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia have won the most Olympic cross-country skiing medals. The Canadian team has had great success internationally as of late. The team heads to PyeongChang 2018 after a strong 2017 season where Canadian Alex Harvey became the first ever North American skier to become World Champion (in the 50km event) and also win a World Cup in the 15 kilometre freestyle.



# CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING TRIVIA

## HIGHLIGHTS



Chandra Crawford

- Cross-country skiing has been used for hunting and transportation for over 6,000 years, but it became a popular recreational activity starting in the mid-1800s.
- All three of Canada's Olympic cross-country skiing medals have been won by women (Beckie Scott – gold in 2002 and silver in 2006; Sara Renner – silver in 2006; and Chandra Crawford – gold in 2006).
- The Canadian men had five top-10 finishes at Vancouver 2010 thanks to superb skiing by Alex Harvey, Devon Kershaw, Ivan Babikov, and George Grey.

## FEATURED ATHLETE



### JESSE COCKNEY

OLYMPIAN, SOCHI 2014

Jesse Cockney started skiing in the frigid winters of Yellowknife, Northwest Territories. He moved south to Canmore, Alberta when he was seven, and it was there that he excelled at cross-country skiing. Jesse had a stunning sixth place finish at the World U23 Championships, and placed ninth at a World Cup last season. Jesse raced the sprint, the relay, and the 50km mass start in Sochi 2014. Jesse is proud of his aboriginal heritage as an Inuvialuit, and has a personal goal to be a positive role model for youth across the country.

Learn more about Jesse at

<http://olympic.ca/team-canada/jesse-cockney>.

# CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING ACTIVITIES

Described below are daily cross-country skiing physical activities that can be used in the classroom and gym. Have fun!

## SLIDE FOR GOLD RELAY

At the Olympic Winter Games, cross-country skiing events change between classical and free technique from Games to Games. Athletes in the free technique events use a style that resembles ice skating. The forward motion comes from pushing out on the inside edge of the ski. This relay game lets students practice pushing and gliding in the gym.

 **Participants:** 2-3 teams

 **Space:** gymnasium

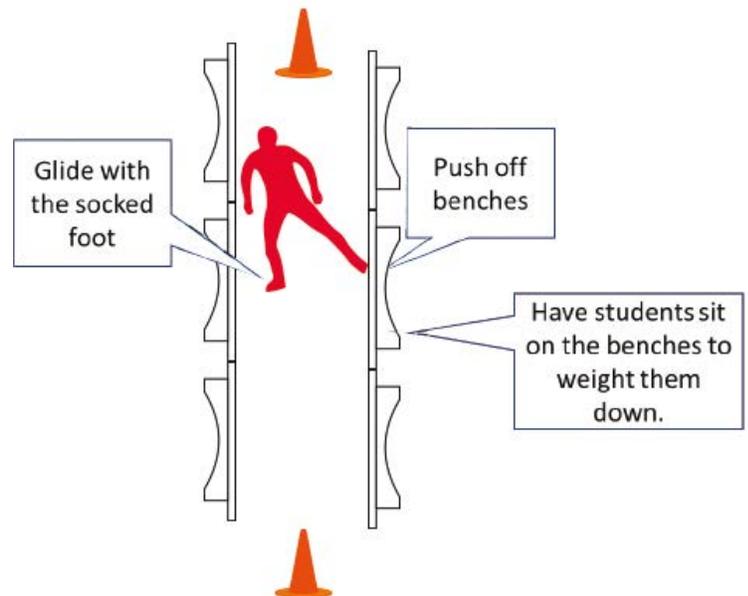
 **Equipment:** 1 pair of thick wool socks or 2 sliders (dish towels, face clothes, or J cloths) per team, 2 pylons for each team, gymnasium benches

### SET-UP:

- Place the pylons 15m apart, laying out a start and finish line for each team.
- Lay the benches on their side creating a corridor of benches for each team.
- The benches should be 1-1.5m apart, and positioned so that the sitting side of the bench is turned inwards.

### ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION:

- The teams line up in single file behind the start line. On “go”, the first member of each relay team puts on the wool socks or stands on the sliders.
- Students then use the skate skiing style to slide to the pylon and back. Instruct the students to push off the sides of the benches to gain forward motion.
- The student then removes the wool socks or returns the sliders and tags the next person on their team. The next student on the team, puts on the wool socks or sliders and slides to the pylon and back.
- The relay continues until everyone on the team has completed the course.



### ACTIVITY EXTENSION:

Make the relay more fun and challenging by having the students dress up before they do their leg of the Slide for Gold relay leg. Include ski clothing items like gloves, toque, ski pants, and ski jacket. Once they complete their leg, they must take off the ski clothing items, and the next person on their team must dress and slide the route.

# CHAMPIONS' CIRCUIT

Cross-country skiers are some of the fittest athletes in all sports. The skiing motion uses full body, and the athletes must train year-round to handle the demands of the sport. When not on snow (dry-land training), they use various exercises to develop strength, balance and agility. This fun obstacle course will work on these skills.

 **Participants:** partners

 **Space:** gymnasium or large outdoor space

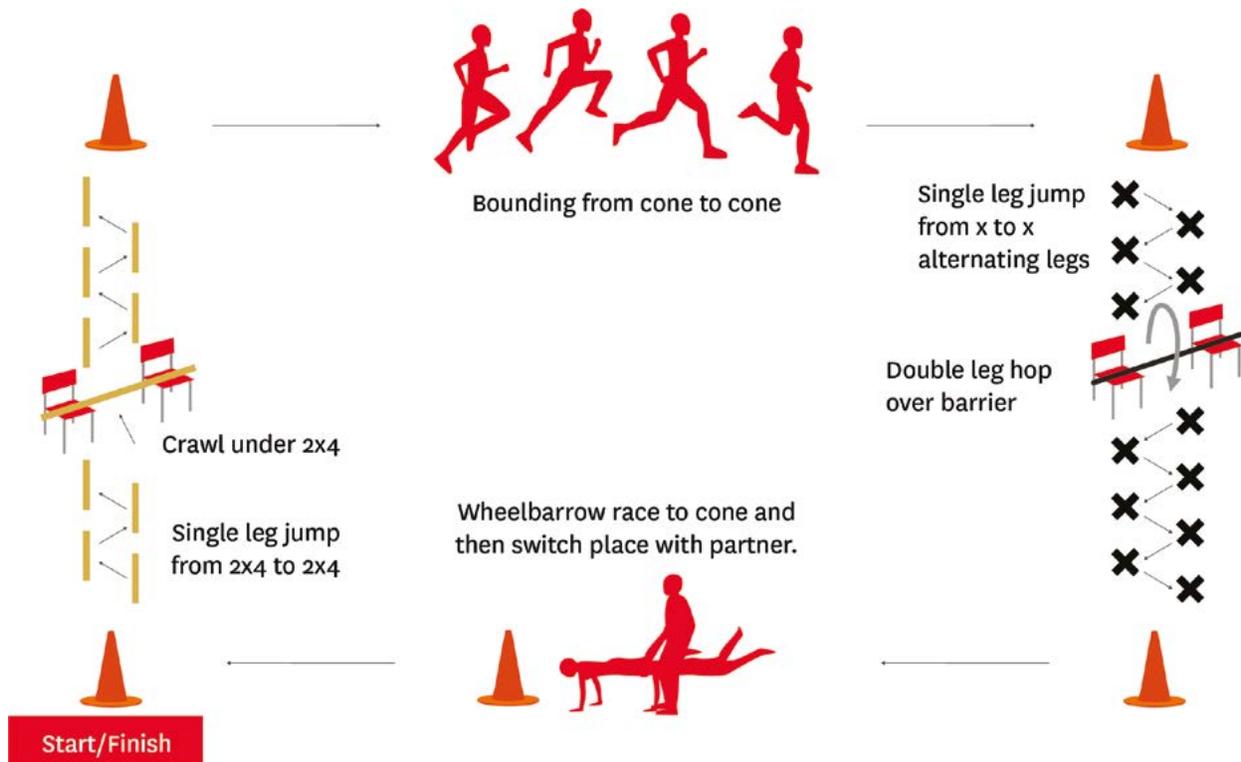
 **Equipment:** 10-12 2"x4" wood boards, 4 pylons, masking tape, 4 chairs, broomstick or floor hockey stick

## SET-UP:

- Set up gym as illustrated.
- Place the 2"x4" boards with the 4" sides lying flat.
- Mark the "X" with masking tape, and place them far enough apart that students must leap to reach them.

## ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION:

- Pairs of students run the course three times: the first to try it out, the second for time, and the third to beat their best time.
- Record the students' best times over a week, tracking their improvements.



## ACTIVITY EXTENSION:

- Break the students into teams of 4 and do the course as a relay.
- Instead of running for the final leg, have the students sit on a roller board and double poll using floor hockey sticks.

# RED LIGHT/GREEN LIGHT

In classical style cross-country skiing, the skis move parallel to each other through tracks or grooves in the snow. The skis are propelled forward in a striding motion. The athlete leans forward into the stride as they push off the back leg. This requires balance and skill. This game helps to build the balance required for this motion.

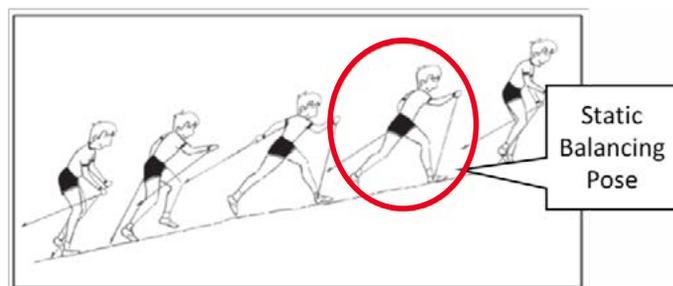
 **Participants:** entire class

 **Space:** gymnasium or field

 **Equipment:** aucun

## ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION:

- Mark off a playing area.
- The teacher and students stand on opposite ends of the playing area.
- When the teacher yells “green light” they run forward. When the teacher yells “red light” the students have to stop and do a static balancing pose – like a classic ski pose (standing on one leg leaning forward in the striding position).
- Remind the students to alternate the left and right leg for balancing.
- The teacher continues to yell “green light” and “red lights” until the students are at the other end of the playing field.



## ACTIVITY EXTENSION:

Have the students use ski poles for this exercise. If poles are not available, they can use floor hockey sticks.

# BRINGING IT TO THE CLASSROOM

they started “Project Maple Syrup.” A few weeks later 7,400 tins of the sweet liquid were delivered to the Norwegian. More on the story is found at <http://www.cbc.ca/sports/norwegian-rewarded-for-olympic-sportsmanship-1.602311>.

Imagine that you were part of “Project Maple Syrup,” and your job is to write the thank you card to send along with the syrup. Describe what you thought was good about what the coach did, and why their actions showed fair play and sportsmanship.

## INSTANT ACTIVITY:

Only have a minute of classroom time to get up and be active? This activity will get the heart pumping. Split jumps work the muscles used in classic technique (diagonal stride) cross country skiing.

Stand tall and take one big step forward with your right foot. You should now have your right foot forward and your left foot back. Both legs are bent at the knee. With a jump, bring your left leg forward and your right leg back. How many split jumps can you do in one minute?