



**GEAR TIPS:  
BASE-LAYER**

A good base-layer wicks moisture away from your skin and regulates body temps, keeping you moving and comfortable. Patagonia Capilene base-layers are a perfect fit for a wide range of outdoor activities. There are several different weights, and each weight is designed for different levels of physical exertion and temperatures. Patagonia offers a thermal-weight, mid-weight, and lightweight. The mid-weight is the best all-around base-layer for exertion, wicking, and temperature regulation in a wide range of weather conditions. If you prefer more relaxing skiing with less effort, then the thermal-weight base-layer is the best option. It is the warmest and most breathable base-layer Patagonia offers, and it will keep you plenty warm as you unwind on the trail.

# Try Cross-Country Skiing

Never tried XC skis? Well, you are missing out! Rent some gear that fits and find a flat and pretty trail to discover winter at its most glorious. TEXT AND PHOTOS BY DANIEL SHEPLER

Now is the time to get out and play in the snow on cross-country skis, and in Northern Michigan we are fortunate to have exceptional access to first-class trails. For beginners, one to try is the Leelanau Trail, a 17-mile path that runs from Traverse City to Suttons Bay. There are plenty of access points along the way (you don't have to do the whole distance!) where you can park a car and spend a few hours skiing.

Cross-country skiing is a low-impact exercise that offers a bounty of health benefits, providing a total body workout that burns calories, builds cardiovascular fitness and improves joint health. That kind of physical activity in the great outdoors also does wonders for clearing the mind and boosting the spirit during the midwinter grind. Getting into the sport is easy, and you don't have to have any prior experience. Several

ski shops around can point you in the right direction and set you up with the proper gear—fit to you.

On a fresh winter day I connected with some family for a few hours on the Leelanau Trail. We met at one of the access points, unloaded the skis and clipped into them. It was nice and sunny, and the trail was particularly inviting. The stillness and serenity of the skis gliding through the snow, the birds singing, and the blanket of snow covering the rolling hills of the countryside was just what I needed. **T**

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