



GEAR TIPS!

Longboards are basically large skateboards designed for cruising along sidewalks, paved trails and roads. Their size, suspension and larger, softer wheels all make for a more comfortable, stable ride. Nate Farran recommends long-lasting bamboo boards, and specifically boards made by Loaded. Bamboo is environmentally friendly because it rapidly regrows and is more sustainable than other trees. Loaded boards offer an impressive warranty and are made in the U.S.A.

Nate suggests that riders always wear helmets for protection. If riders are interested in sliding, longboard gloves with pucks are a must for hand protection. Skate shoes provide better grip and make for a more enjoyable experience. For people just getting into the sport, elbow, knee, and wrist guards might be a good idea until they are more comfortable on the boards.

Longboards for Long Days

Glide through your summer atop a longboard.

TEXT BY DAN SHEPLER



Longboarding is a fun and relaxing way to breathe in fresh air and get the body moving—the long evenings of spring and summer make it easy to find time even after work or on a busy vacation. Gliding through one of the North's small towns or along a quiet back road, soaking up the warm evening air, and seeing people buzzing with the season's excitement does wonders for the soul. Jam out to your favorite music, or listen to the sounds of a warm night with the rhythmic hum of the longboard gliding over the pavement.

I met up with the folks at Traverse City's M22 store for an evening lesson in longboarding. Nate Farran ran through some of the new gear and hot products to use riding. His colleagues Jack Stevenson and Makenna Beers were kind enough to show me the ropes. We grabbed some boards and protective gear, hopped in the car and were off. First stop—we drove up Wayne Hill to watch the very talented Jack do a downhill ride. The towering hill overlooks West Bay and downtown Traverse City and the view provides an amazing backdrop. They walked me through some different

braking techniques, including footbrake, stand up slide and power slide—and explained when to use each one.

After witnessing Jack fly down the hill—impressive!—we headed out to the end of Old Mission Peninsula to ride the flat and tame stretches of two-lane near the lakeshore as the sun was getting low in the summer sky. We cruised along the freshwater coastline to the soundtrack of longboard wheels gliding over warm paved roads and gentle waves curling on the shore. The little adventure drowned out the distractions and worries of life we are all familiar with. It's a simple but joyous experience feeling warm air blowing through your hair as you carve back and forth down roads that meander through some of the prettiest landscape found in Northern Michigan. 📍

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