

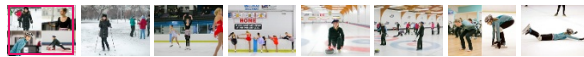
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How to Get into the Olympic Spirit

Our editor goes for the gold in four sports

By Jourdan Fairchild

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LET THE GAMES BEGIN

Shannon Miller. Kristi Yamaguchi. Picabo Street. Back in the day, I could rattle off their favorite foods, Hollywood crushes (Devon Sawa, obviously), and medal counts. Decades later, I still get starry-eyed over Olympians, the rare breed of humans who build careers out of hobbies and possess bodies of steel. What are their secrets? How do they...

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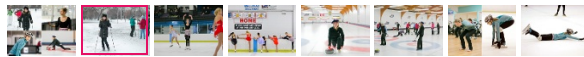
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HAPPY TRAILS

I'm a born and raised **Southerner** whose cold-weather sports of choice include lounging, bourbon sipping, and **pie baking**. To prep for my ski session, I carbo-load (extra cushioning for falls) and pile on more layers than there are in game-day bean dip. My introductory two-hour course at Montrose Beach, led by a **Tricycle Book BFF** specialist, starts

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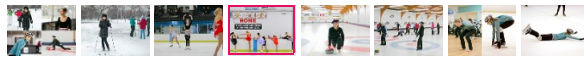
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SHORT PROGRAM

One look at my coach, Irma Sveiteryte — owner of Figure Skate Chicago and Lithuania's 1991 Junior Champion — and I know I've got a long way to go. Literally. She's on the other side of the rink, and I have to scoot at a snail's pace to get there. Babies on skates whiz past as I learn to "pizza-pie" (stop) in "hockey pose" (press back, about as) and follow the

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THE CUTTING EDGE

We all know the most important element of figure skating: sparkly competition dresses. I settle for second best by digging through two decades' worth of dance clothes (a former ballerina always keeps her gear), unearthing a pair of black tights, a leotard, and a flowery skirt. I complete the look with a sock bun and slates that my outdoorsy friends

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CURL TALK

The terminology in curling (a.k.a. the chess of ice) is straight out of a fantasy novel: There are rings, brooms, skips, and sliders (just the thought of “delivering a stone” makes me want to wear my stretchiest of stretch pants). To dress like a pro, one needs curling shoes with built-in sliders. Clean sneakers do the trick for now. [A deeper winter love](#)

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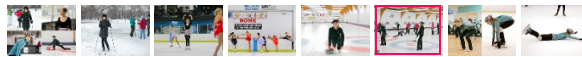
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FRESH DELIVERY

The Chicago Curling Club was founded in 1948, and on any given day from October through early April, you'll find members facing off on the "sheet" (the ice playing field). During an evening lesson, experienced player Karrie Gottschild demonstrates how to deliver a stone with (some) grace and why sweeping is serious business. Not that the

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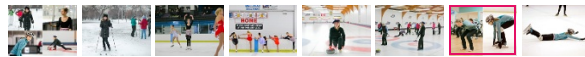
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SKATE ON BY

I likely saved the most terrifying event for last in hopes it wouldn't happen. Speed skating just doesn't seem like an activity everyone can do. (News flash: It's not.) You need body control, strong ankles, and a healthy dose of fearlessness. You also need to learn skater's position (this rounded-back, bent-knee pose), and practice foot-plant drills. I was a...

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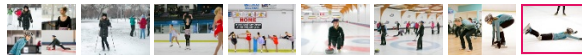
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(NO) NEED FOR SPEED

The Glen Ellyn Speed Skating Club is one of several suburban groups that teach the sport. Although I'm there for an hour-long intro course, I share the ice with a teenager who competed in the Olympic trials and several adults who hold national titles. Following our class warm-up, the final twenty minutes are spent on the ice learning to balance (trickier

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