

## What is Urban Mushing and Dryland Racing?

A fun way to enjoy the beauty of a human-canine athletic team without snow or a lot of gear. Traditionally, mushers trained their sled dogs during the off season (when there is no snow) using wheeled rigs or carts. This has developed into a style of mushing known as Dryland and uses bikes, scooters, small carts, and even your own feet. Recently non-mushing people have discovered the enjoyment of dryland mushing in more urban environments where it is not feasible to have lots of dogs and there may not be consistent snow to sled on. Any breed of dog can learn to do this, and it is a fun way to work on training and exercise both of you!

Canicross is probably the most economical and simplest way to do urban mushing. You simply have a harnessed dog help pull you as you walk or run along the trail.



You can use a mountain bike or scooter with 1 or 2 harnessed dogs for a bit more excitement.



And if you get really hooked, you can use a non-motorized cart to explore the trails. You can buy these from mushing companies, or make one yourself. Make sure you include good steering and brakes!



Some things to keep in mind before you get started:

- 1) Start slowly and gradually build up your distance as you and your dogs become conditioned.
- 2) Dogs overheat faster than people do. Take your runs in the early morning or late evening when temperatures are below 50F and provide lots of water for your dogs.
- 3) Keep an eye on your dog's feet to make sure their pads are not worn. Avoid pavement and hard rocky surfaces. Using booties can help if your dog has a sore pad or you are on rough surfaces.
- 4) Use a properly fitting padded harness to avoid having your dog pulling by his neck.
- 5) Use basic commands to cue your dog so he knows what you want him to do. Typically mushers use "haw" for left, "gee" for right, "whoa" to stop, "hike" or "lets go" to start, and "on-by" to go past a distraction or another dog.
- 6) Make sure that you and your dog are having fun! Start slowly on trails your dog already knows and enjoys, then become more adventurous as you both get comfortable as a team.

For more information, visit [www.skijor.com/canicross](http://www.skijor.com/canicross), [www.canicross.co.uk](http://www.canicross.co.uk), or [www.sleddogcentral.com](http://www.sleddogcentral.com).

Please visit our website for additional information about mushing in Colorado or to become a CMM member, [www.colomtmushers.org](http://www.colomtmushers.org).

