

Freezy does it

THRILLS AND CHILLS
Believe it or not, ice swimming is growing fast



DRINK IT IN Firm's new sports drink

ROOT OUT THE BENEFITS

A Scots company have launched a sports drink that harnesses the benefits of root ginger.

The founders of Active Root say they have combined ginger root extract with pure cane sugar to create a natural hydrator which helps settle your tummy too.

The company said: "Exercise, especially running, can cause nausea and stomach upsets and the root ginger works to counteract these issues."

■ Find out more at activeroot.co.uk

GEAR OF THE WEEK

SKINS K-PROPRIUM running tights

Compression wear brand SKINS are launching a new style of running tights this month.

They're designed to enhance something called proprioception – the unconscious perception of motion and spatial awareness.

The makers say they fight fatigue and reduce the risk of injury.

SKINS said: "Built using Dynamic Gradient Compression, K-PROPRIUM helps improve your performance by getting more oxygen to your active muscles and removing waste products from the body faster."

"The unique proprioception power bands, with a similar effect to athletic strapping, support the body's prime



Have you tried?



FIONA RUSSELL

If you've always fancied plunging into a loch in the dead of winter in a pair of Speedos, this is the sport for you. Scotland hosts its first ever official championship ice swimming event at Loch Lomond on Saturday, so come along and chill out

Advice and ideas

ICE SWIMMING

What is it: Ice swimming is the official title for swimming in open water with a temperature of 5C – or even colder.

Wetsuits are banned. Swimmers are allowed only "a standard costume, goggles and cap". Brr.

Tell me more: The International Ice Swimming Association was founded in 2009 by South African Ram Barkai. Almost 50 nations, including the UK, are members.

The Ice Mile is considered the ultimate competition distance, but a 1000m event has been introduced more recently to allow more people to compete.

There is a full calendar of events at world and national level. And on Saturday, Scotland hosts its first ever international competition.

The IISA Ice Cup & British Ice Swimming Championships will take place at The Cruin on the western shore of Loch Lomond, with the championship race swum over 1000m.

IISA founder Ram said: "Our passion is to swim in icy waters in every location possible around our globe. We're delighted to see a new event in Scotland."

Pauline Barker is a leading figure in IISA Great Britain, who are running the new event in partnership with Balloch-based Swim 4 Miles.

"We've held British ice swimming championships in southern England before but there is a demand for a competition in Scotland," Pauline said.

"Loch Lomond is perfect, with a stunning location and



TAKING THE PLUNGE
Swimmers from almost 50 countries now brave the cold at IISA events

water that will hopefully be cold enough this month. We've heard that many international ice swimmers are keen to come to Scotland. We hope they will in future years as the event grows."

There will also be an Ice Gala at The Cruin, with shorter races of 50m to 500m and a ceilidh to warm everyone up.

Pauline said: "The shorter races give a wider number of people the chance to try ice swimming."

"We also hope people will come to spectate and enjoy a number of other entertainments, including a post-race party."

For many swimmers, our lochs are chilly enough in summer. And most will wear a wetsuit for warmth.

Yet a growing number prefer to swim in just their cossies – all year round.

Emma Cummings, of Helensburgh, is a keen cold water swimmer and has entered the 1000m race on Saturday. She believes ice swimming has

many benefits, including the "fantastic adrenaline buzz you get when you come out of the cold water".

Emma said: "I've swum in water as cold as 3C and I've got used to getting in. I do scream a bit at first, but once I'm in it feels incredible."

"I love the surreal feeling of swimming amid nature, in such a pristine environment."

"The feeling after an ice swim is fantastic. It leaves me buzzing for many hours afterwards."

The Loch Lomond event will be Emma's first Ice Swimming 1000m competition.

She said: "I'm nervous about the race, but it's a first event for Scotland. And it's so close to my home, so it seems perfect."

"It's also something very different. I'm looking forward to giving the race a try."

Where can I find out more?
For more info go to: www.internationaliceswimming.com, www.iceswimminggb.co.uk and www.swim4miles.co.uk

Join me on my adventures in Scotland's great outdoors by checking out my award-winning website at www.fionaoutdoors.co.uk. You'll find lots of great information about walking, cycling, running and other outdoor activities, as well as kit reviews.

