

ON THE SLOPES

For some people ski-ing or snow boarding once a year is the only time they do any exercise. But as a moderately demanding sport it does rely on a certain level of fitness, co-ordination and skill. To get the most from this popular winter sport it is worth investing time in preparing your body for the moderate demands that can be imposed on it.

Fitness training should commence at least six weeks before the holiday. It should combine cardio-vascular training and resistance training 3 times a week. This should include cycling, and cross-trainer, treadmill and stepper, all of which will improve cardio-vascular fitness and endurance. Interval training and climbing programmes will help develop endurance within the muscle. Resistance training to the legs will build up strength and stamina within the muscles and help minimize muscle burn and next day muscle pain that can be incapacitating when very bad. Lunges, steps up, wall squats, will all help strengthen the quads and buttock muscles. Try and simulate the ski position and lengthen the hold time to improve endurance – ensure you stretch the thigh muscles after you exercise.

Balance training will also improve your skill on the slopes, particularly with snow boarding. Balancing on one leg, eyes open and then closed, balancing on a cushion and trying to keep the body still and the shoulders and pelvis level will help retrain and improve the muscle and joint receptors that aid balance. Go for quality not quantity initially and make sure there is no strain on any other part of the body.

Most injuries occur amongst beginners and between one and four o'clock in the afternoon. Fatigue can be a big factor in these injuries, so the fitter you are the less quickly you will fatigue and there will be less chance you will sustain an injury.



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