

# Skiing injuries

Most skiing injuries occur between 1 and 4 o'clock in the afternoon and one of the main contributing factors is fatigue. Beginners are much more likely to be injured and especially those snow boarding for the first time.

Knee injuries account for one third of all injuries on the slopes and this is due to the twisting nature of the sport. Also because the feet and ankles are pretty much fixed by the ski boot, any rotational force is transferred up the leg to the knee.

Ski bindings are now designed to reduce the number of shin fractures and this has been successful because the number has decreased over the years. However the number of knee injuries has increased a small amount.

The two ligaments at the knee most susceptible to injury are the medial collateral ligament (MCL) and the anterior cruciate ligament (ACL).

The MCL runs vertically along the inside of the knee and can be injured if the knee falls in suddenly as in the plough position and the body falls towards the ski. This results in an inwards force at the knee and the ligament may tear.

The cruciate ligament, which sits inside the knee, is more likely to be injured if the skier falls back heavily and quickly onto the back of their skis and over bends and twists the knee. This can be quite a significant injury and will require a lot of rehab and possibly surgery.

The best way of helping prevent these injuries is firstly to ensure bindings are checked every day and that they release quickly. Also to ensure that ski's and boots are well fitted and appropriate to your level of experience. And there is no doubt that the fitter and more experienced the skier, the less likely they are to sustain an injury.

Ligament injuries to the thumb are probably the next most common injury in skiing. This tends to be due to the ski poles. When a skier falls and is still gripping the poles, the thumb can be forced back resulting in sprain to the supporting ligament of the thumb. This normally responds well to ice and rest but may need taping or splinting to protect it from further injury. Also before gripping the ski poles the hands should go up through the loop before taking hold of the pole handles.

Snow boarding is becoming more and more popular and is both challenging to both endurance and balance. Snow boarders tend to sustain more upper body injuries as they try and save themselves when they fall, landing awkwardly on their hands or shoulders. Consequently the more experienced the snow boarder and the better their balance and fitness the less chance they will be injured.



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