

Back to Health

Association of the Colorado Chiropractic Association
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Ready, Set, SKI!

Practical tips for hitting the slopes.

It sounds nuts! "Let's strap some slippery boards to our feet and fly down a snowpacked mountain." Crazy as it sounds, skiing and snowboarding are incredibly popular winter activities – and lots of fun. Being popular and fun does not make them safe, however. These are dangerous sports, but with a little common sense, you can make your time on the slopes safe and enjoyable.

Skape Up for the Slopes

Get ready to ride and ski at least four to six weeks before your trip. Try a combination of agility, strengthening, and flexibility exercises. Aerobic exercise will build stamina and weight lifting or stair climbing will build strength. For balance and agility, try jumping rope or raquetball.

Be honest with yourself about the limits of your ability and physical condition and then ski within those limits. Be sure to get your equipment in shape BEFORE you go. Skis and snowboards should be tuned every year by a reputable ski shop, including a check of the bindings. Check your boots for

proper binding fit and sole wear. Your bindings are the most important part of your equipment and they should be replaced every three to four years. Have the releases on your bindings checked by a qualified technician. The leg you save could be your own.



Know What You're Doing

Take lessons. You'll be much more confident – and safe – if you learn from an expert. You'll also find out about skiing and riding etiquette.

Read trail maps ahead of time. Most ski resorts have web sites with trail maps included. Only ski on runs that are appropriate for your skiing ability.

First Run Do & Don'ts

Do eat a healthy breakfast before your day on the mountain. Don't forget to drink plenty of water during the day because dehydration is common at high altitudes.

Do some simple stretches before the first run, including your calves, hamstrings, and lower back muscles. Jog in place for a few minutes.

Don't start with a difficult run! Take a couple of runs on the easy slopes first to

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Back to Health
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loosen up before you tackle the run named "Psychopath."

Don't be afraid to say "no" to a run that is too difficult for you. Take your time and go at your own pace.

Focus 100% of your attention on your skiing or boarding and the mountain in front of you.

What do I wear?

Mountain weather is unpredictable, so be prepared. In addition, as you exercise, you'll build up body heat, so dress in layers. Then you can peel off or unzip different layers as the weather dictates. A hat is vital. Bring a hat even if you don't think you'll need one. Over 30% of your body heat is lost through your head. Mittens are warmer than gloves.

It's often sunny on the mountain and the reflection from the snow makes it extremely bright. Be sure to wear plenty of sunscreen and good sunglasses or goggles with UV protection. Goggles are essential when it's snowing.

Helmets are the latest rage in ski resort wear, but don't think you're completely safe from injury if you wear one. Always use common sense and ski or board within your limits.

The Last Word . . .

Avoid taking one last run. Typically, the last run of the day is the most dangerous. You're tired, the waning daylight makes nasty bumps harder to see, and everyone else is tired, too. Quit early and enjoy the wonderful après-ski activities.

Regular chiropractic care can help you stay healthy and happy and ready to hit the slopes. Ask your doctor of chiropractic to recommend exercises to fit your personal needs. Have fun this winter and stay safe!

Thank you to the following doctors of chiropractic who contributed to this newsletter:

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Live by the CODE and stay alive!

Skiing and snowboarding can be enjoyed in many ways. You may see people using alpine skis, snowboards, telemark skis, cross country skis, or specialized equipment. Regardless of how you decide to enjoy the slopes, always show courtesy to others. Be aware that there are elements of risk in skiing that common sense and personal awareness can help reduce. Observe the code shown below and share with other skiers and riders the responsibility for a great experience on the slopes.

- ❖ Always stay in control, and be able to stop or avoid other people or objects.
- ❖ People ahead of you have the right of way. It is your responsibility to avoid them.
- ❖ You must not stop where you obstruct a trail, or are not visible from above.
- ❖ Whenever starting downhill or merging into a trail, look uphill and yield to others.
- ❖ Always use devices to help prevent runaway equipment (except handgrips & straps on ski poles).
- ❖ Observe all posted signs and warnings. Keep off closed trails and out of closed areas.
- ❖ Prior to using any lift, you must have the knowledge and ability to load, ride and unload safely.
- ❖ Know the code - it's your responsibility. In some states, like Colorado, it's the LAW!

Information from www.nsp.org
the National Ski Patrol web site.