

# SKI TUITION



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**B**eing physically in shape can make the difference between a week spent smashing powder or cruising slopes, and a week spent murturing aches and pains or worse. But what can you do to get fit for skiing, reduce your chances of injury, and get the most out of your holiday? In this article I'll be looking at some basic information to start you on the road to ski fitness. Be aware your first steps to making a fitness programme are tailoring it to your current fitness levels.

## THINK LONG TERM

Fitness, despite what many magazines try to tell you, does not happen in a week. The longer you have to train towards your goals, the better your training and end results will be.

There is no point in a sprinter running for hours nor a marathon runner training to bulk up their upper body. Likewise you need to train the right areas for skiing. The main aims are anaerobic fitness (the body's ability to work without oxygen for short periods of time), strength and power. If you like hiking mountains on your ski holiday then it might also be worth preparing yourself with some endurance training too.

## SPRINT FOR SKIING

Sprinting on a treadmill or bike is a very effective way to train both anaerobic fitness and power and prepare yourself for a skiing. Rather than jogging for hours, you can do five to ten sprints of 15 seconds to 1 minute, with rests as you need in-between. This will train your ability to work without oxygen (if you're not out of breathe you're not sprinting yet!), while also training your legs for power and power endurance (your legs are doing lots of big quick extensions when you run). Some say having the ability to work without oxygen can also be important in the powder snow.

## TRAIN THOSE PEGS

The main muscles in your body we need to consider are in the legs (ie anyone who has spent a long day on the slopes can tell you). If you are aiming to build up strength, power and endurance in your legs, how can you do this? The basic exercises are some of the best - squats and lunges should be an essential part of a skier's workout and this will definitely help you to power through the bumps! The more experienced athletes, one of the best ways to train your legs for skiing is to include plyometric exercises. This involves explosive movements and controlled landings, for example, jump squats.

## CORE STRENGTH

Balance and stability are important skills for skiing. These originate from our core - the muscles around your abdomen and spine. A great way to focus on your core is through the plank. This exercise involves holding your body still and straight in an altered push-up position, with the elbows and lower arms on the ground. The brilliant thing about the plank is that you can vary it according to your fitness needs. Beginners can start by just holding the position for 10 seconds and then gradually extending the time. A strong core you will help you to maintain your balance when skiing in hard and variable conditions.



## ALTITUDE KIDS SKI TIPS

### When Can Your Children Start Skiing?

We all love skiing, and the experience of descending a beautiful snow-covered mountain is one that we'd all love to share with our families. So when can your children start learning to ski and enjoying the mountains? In general some of the younger skiers on the slope will be around 3-4-years-old. Most ski schools will begin to accept children into group lessons at 3 years, and private lessons at 2, although this may differ from school to school. However, I have taught a 2-year-old, who was linking turns in 1 day, and a 4-year-old that could

barely stand on their skis after 1 week. So, other than age, what are the more important guidelines for when to start your child skiing? Even for adults, skiing is not easy on the body. While the little ones have the advantage of more flexible joints, which are far less likely to break than our unfortunate grown-ups they also have much less muscle and less ability to get those muscles to do what they want. A key sign of how ready your child is for skiing will be how strong and co-ordinated they are for their age. A bigger 3-year-old can get more out of ski school than a slightly 4- or 5-year-old child.

Do you have older children skiing? This can be big

motivation for a child - seeing their older siblings coming back after ski school excited and happy after a hard days skiing will push them to want to try it themselves. We see this a lot in the families that use our ski school regularly, where many of the younger siblings grow up to be the stronger skiers. Other important factors to consider are clothing (a cold skier is an unhappy skier!), weather (a bad weather day is best avoided), and finding a resort with a gentle and safe beginners slope. Hopefully with these things coming together, your children can start off on a long and happy time out on the mountains, with some great family memories!

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