

TIP OF THE MONTH



Establish a specific period of activity and rest for your work out - circuit or interval training can be accomplished with as little as 30 seconds of work followed by 30 seconds of rest. You are limited only by your imagination. Add music and equipment as available and have fun! And remember, lessons help improve technique and skill, and can prevent injuries at all levels of ability.

Before beginning any exercise program, general or sports-specific, you should consult your physician, physical therapist or trainer if you have any questions or concerns about your physical ability or health.

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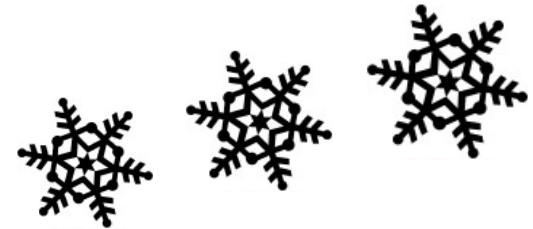


**PHYSICAL THERAPY
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Winter Sports Enthusiasts Get Ready!!



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Winter Sports Enthusiasts Get Ready!!

When other people are cringing at the thought of cold and snow, are you adjusting your bindings, waxing your boards or sharpening your skate blades? Getting your equipment ready for skiing, snowboarding, skating, snowshoeing or other winter activities is only one part of preparing for a safe winter sports season. Before the snow falls, you should also be preparing your body for the new stresses and strains it will encounter when you get out on the slopes, trails or ice. Winter sports require strength, balance, endurance and coordination. Embarrassment from a fall on your face may be the least of your worries if your body is not in adequate condition to prevent muscle strains, ligament sprains and fractures. Even if you consider yourself in relatively good shape, sports-specific training can help further reduce your chance of injury this winter.

Conditioning exercises should be focused on the skills associated with the particular sport or activity. A sports-specific training program will usually include aerobic or cardiorespiratory, flexibility, muscular strength and endurance components. Other skills such as agility, speed, power, coordination, balance and reaction time can be incorporated and will depend on your level of participation - recreational to competitive. Most winter sports require a combination of these elements. Here's an example:

GET READY TO SKI or BOARD...

Poor conditioning and lack of skill are the two main causes of skiing and snowboarding injuries. These sports require muscle flexibility and strength, strong abdominal muscles for balance and stability, the ability of joints to withstand and absorb impact, aerobic fitness, coordination and endurance. Your stretching and strengthening program should target the lower body, but don't forget the flexibility required of your entire body in a fall down a slope.

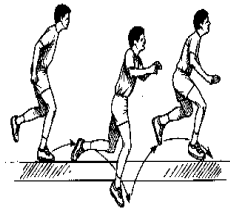
Don't worry if you don't have time for the gym - a good skiing/snowboarding program can be done with or without equipment.

Consider setting up a "circuit" including the following exercises -



1. Target the trunk, hip and thigh muscles during your aerobic work out by doing step ups, power walking or using equipment such as cycles, elliptical trainers, stair climbers or cross country ski machines for 20-30 min..

2. Stretch all muscle groups for skiing and boarding, especially shoulders, arms, low back, hamstrings, quads, for maximum range of motion. Even the best skiers and boarders fall! (Hold stretches at least 20 seconds)



3. Wall sits, squats, lunges build strength and endurance for tough terrain, moguls and maintaining a "tuck" position for speed.

4. Plyometric movements such as hopping side to side, jumping rope, jumping on a small trampoline develop muscle power and strength to help your body withstand and absorb impact or "bumps" associated with skiing.



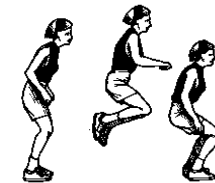
WALL SQUAT

5. Crunches, low back exercises, trunk stabilization exercises using a ball, will help provide stability and balance for your trip down the hill, and also help you to fall/get up safely.

6. One-legged squats, standing strengthening exercises, upper body calisthenics while standing on one leg help promote balance.

7. Running around cones to simulate slalom conditions, jumping side to side over tape on floor, changing direction drills help improve your agility and reaction time.

8. Weight-training using light weights or thea-band and high repetition will help you maintain the endurance necessary for a full day on the slopes. Don't forget your upper body.



Resources:

National Ski Patrol www.nsp.org
Navy Environmental Health Center
http://www-nhc.med.navy.mil/downloads/hp/Snow_Skiing.pdf
American Council on Exercise www.acefitness.org
American College of Sports Medicine www.acsm.org

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