

WEEKLY RESORT TIPS

Get the most out of your Spring Lake Mountain Experience with These Tips and Feature Articles!

ADVANCE SKIER TIP — CONTROLLING SPEED ON STEEPTERRAIN

By Mike Doyle, About.com Guide

When advancing skiers take on Black Diamond terrain they should have a strong knowledge of how to keep their speed under control as the terrain gets steeper. There is hardly anything more scary, or more dangerous, than being out of control and then having to make desperate skidding attempts to stop. Martin Heckelman, in The New Guide to Skiing (p. 58–60), recognizes this problem for advancing skiers and addresses it with a set of exercises involving medium radius and short radius turns with sequential photos (photos 47A–D, 48A–D, and 50A–D) of himself skiing through the exercises.

In essence, Heckelman’s exercise relies on foot pressure applied to the downhill ski in varying degrees to use the time the ski is set into reverse camber to determine the distance between turns. The time and attitude in crossing the fall line will vary and control speed.

Martin’s directions for applying and releasing foot pressure to control speed include:

- Thinking of having two sponge balls underfoot and pretending to alternately compress and release the balls.
- Compressing and releasing the sponge balls with a purposeful rhythm, left, right, left, right, etc.
- Singing a rhythmic ditty such as “Tea for Two” to help make the ski compressions and releases an ingrained fluid technique.

Testers’ Execution and Evaluation

On the snow for these exercises were myself, Tom, and Katie. All advanced skiers, Tom and I average about 25 years of skiing experience, while Katie is a teenager with four years of youthful experience. We each, individually and apart, read and studied the exercises and photos directly from The New Guide to Skiing.

Practicing Radius Turns

We practiced the medium and short radius turns together on some Blue trails of varying width and steepness without discussing what we read. We then moved on to a Single Black trail that offered just the steepness and varying width we needed see what we each got out of the exercises. We would ski it through then return to the top and discuss what we thought, after which we would ski the same trail again, stopping at obvious terrain changes and talk out how we felt applying Heckelman’s technique at each point.

Focusing on the Narrows

As it turned out Tom was very comfortable with establishing the rhythm especially on the wider terrain. He had no problem with the steepness. He did have to really concentrate to keep it going in the narrows, as did I. We discussed making more commitment into the narrows and increasing pressure on odd or every other short turn. This saved energy and still gave us control and confidence. Katie, who started skiing on shaped skis, had no problems with short turns at all. She



kept good rhythm and pop in the narrows. She did find the medium length turns a bit hard on the legs as she had to hold her edge hard on the steep. Tom and I, being stronger, had no problem in the longer turns and everyone stayed with the “beat” and rolled over the knees through the turns.

Varying Turns While Keeping a Beat

Overall, Marty Heckelman does an excellent job creating this exercise to build a rhythmic approach to black terrain, teaching the skier to vary turns to terrain while keeping a beat.

In the after-test critique the only complaint from Katie—she wanted to ski to her Ipod music and not “Tea for Two.” Hey, if it works for her, or for you, I’m sure Marty Heckelman won’t mind this variation.

This exercise goes in the skier toolbox for future practice in different snow conditions. For details on this exercise, as well as much more advice and tips for skiers, Marty Heckelman’s The New Guide to Skiing (Buy Direct) is an excellent resource.

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TIPS FOR MOGULS SKIING

By Mike Doyle, About.com Guide



Start Small

When you are just starting to try to ski well in moguls, start on small bumps in not too steep terrain. Moguls on Black Diamond trails can be both intimidating and dangerous to beginning mogul skiers. Many ski resorts have begun to set aside small «chutes» of seeded (man-made) moguls on Blue Square slopes just for practicing. Seeding just the sides of steeper trails, so skiers can practice and still be able to ski out of the bumps in case of a misstep, has also become popular.

Use the Mogul

Don't always try to zip through the troughs or go around the bumps, especially early on in mogul skiing. When you ski up onto a bump or ridge use the top, when your tips and tails are not touching snow, to change direction or initiate an edging down the front side for speed control.

Look Ahead

Don't get into the habit of looking down at the mogul immediately in front of you. When your head is down, you are already out of balance and moguls come at you much to fast to not look ahead and pick a route or line. Even if you have to change your line, keep looking down the hill, and remember you don't drive a car by looking at the hood.

Absorb the Bumps with Your Legs

When you ride over a bump, use your legs like a shock absorber. Rising on the mogul, flex your ankles and knees to keep from being launched off the mogul. Then extend into a tall stance on the back side, and use the extension to turn or check edges as you ride into the trough.

Keep Your Poles In Front

Get in the habit of keeping your poles within your vision and moving with your turns. This aids balance and rhythm, and keeps you from falling into the backseat (the backseat is when your body mass is no longer centered over your boots, but falls back behind your boots and bindings).

Side Slip for Control

Speed control is the most important factor in mogul skiing and side slips and hockey stops come in quite handy in the beginning. They can evolve later into a nice flat ski and edge feathering technique.

Help Your Head

If you have a helmet, wear it in the moguls and keep your speed to your comfort level. All those great mogul skiers you see on the slopes have one thing in common—they all try to stay in their comfort zone.

TREE SKIING—EIGHT TIPS FOR SAFE TREE SKIING

By Mike Doyle, About.com Guide



Tree skiing most commonly refers to skiing off the groomed slopes, in and among trees of various sizes, shapes and types. It is exhilarating and easily accessible at any ski area in North America. The U.S and Canada are said to offer the best tree skiing

in the world because, on a grand scale, the mountains of North America don't reach the barren heights of Europe's Alps and South America's ski resorts.

Into the Glades

Once you venture off groomed trails and into any glades you need to know you are increasing the possibility of being hurt, i.e. running into a tree. Trees are not bendable slalom poles. There is no give to a tree and a head-on, or even an arm smack, can cause serious injury. However, that being said, and hopefully understood without the need for practice, here are a number of precautions to take to make tree skiing as safe as possible.

Trees don't Move—Ski Where Your Ability Allows

East, West, or in between, do not randomly ski into a stand of trees. Most ski areas have marked gladed areas available that are rated for standard ability levels. However, there is little or no real tree skiing for abilities less than high intermediate. Remember—grooming machines don't fit in the forest—so, you need to be able to ski in the various conditions you will find there. You will find powder, crud, iced over ruts, etc.—whatever Mother Nature puts up on a given day.

For the most part, tree skiing means quick, short turns—many of them. If the glade is marked double black or higher, expect sudden or protracted areas combining the trees with steep verticals, bumps, cliffs, and other fun obstacles. Be sure you are ready to ski there.

Ski With Friends and Stay in Sight

Ideally, ski with two friends, one to stay with someone injured and one to go for help. It doesn't take more than maybe 10 or 20 feet to lose sight of a person in the woods. While most marked glades lead downhill to open groomed terrain that is not always the case—especially in areas marked for higher ability. If you lose sight of your partners, call out until you can regroup again. Actually, a whistle carries a lot farther than yelling, but try to use it only when you really get that creepy, all alone feeling.

Be Bound By Resort Boundaries

In a ski resort setting the area boundaries are generally marked by tree signs, snow fences or ropes. Don't randomly ski past the boundary markers because that area is not routinely patrolled.

Watch the Time

A good general rule is not to enter the woods after 3:30 PM, because if you get lost, getting found quickly, after dark, is problematic.

Backpacks are Great Friends

Carry whatever you want, but at least bring water, some energy snacks, a compass, and a trail map for orienting.

Look Between the Trees

The lower the elevation, the closer together the trees are, and that can be very close together. Don't focus on the trees, look into the spaces between the trees—the body tends to initially follow the eye.

In the East and Midwest

I shouldn't have to say always wear a helmet and goggles, but I will. In the East and Midwest, the glades are lower and thicker, so don't ski with your pole straps on as they can easily get caught on branches. Be careful of the depth of the snow cover. If there's too little snow it won't cover evergreen root systems which can ensnare a ski tip with very bad results. Also, be extra careful skiing "slides"—bare rock, but, inviting verticals, cleared by mud slides.

In the West

Again, I shouldn't have to say always wear a helmet and goggles. The big issue tree skiing in the deep snow country is tree wells. Tree wells are areas of very loose uncompressed snow that form a hole or depression around the base of a tree. Evergreen trees, especially, have large and low hanging branches that can hold a lot of snow. This prohibits snow from filling in and consolidating around the base of the tree. These holes are hidden from view by the tree's low hanging branches and a head first fall into a tree well can be dangerous.

Recognizing the dangers of a tree well and taking preventive measures are very important. The risk of falling into a tree well is completely avoidable, so assume all trees have a hazardous tree well. Do not Wbuddy. The Northwest Avalanche Institute, Mt. Baker Ski Area, Crystal Mountain, and Dr. Robert Cadman have put together Tree Well and Deep Snow Safety for anyone skiing trees anywhere in deep snow.

(all content taken from http://skiing.about.com/od/skiingtips/Skiing_Tips.htm and is being used under the schoolwork Fair Use Doctrine solely for the purpose of specific learning exercises.)

Are you Outfitted for the Slopes?

Making sure you have all the essential equipment to keep you warm ensures a better experience on the slopes. Our two outfitting shops are available for you to peruse items you may have left at home. Also, remember to visit SkiPerk for a hot cup of cocoa or coffee when you need a break from the cold! We hope you enjoy your time here at Spring Lake Mountain, and the below outline of what you'll need before hitting the slopes.

Sunglasses or goggles to protect the eyes from bright light and windblown snow. They must be shatterproof and give good protection against UV light.

Suncream and lipsalve to protect the skin from UV. Use factor 25 or above, fair skinned individuals should use factor 35 or above.

A high waistband or bib and braces gives better protection around the midriff as the jacket won't ride up above the top of the trousers so easily.

Trousers should have an elasticated inner cuff to pull over the top of the boot to stop snow getting in. It should not be tucked inside the boot.

Warm hat to protect the head and ears. Over 50% of the body's total heat loss can occur from an unprotected head.

Polo neck shirt, fleece or jersey to give a good seal round the neck. In cold weather a thin scarf can be used around the neck and face.

Windproof jacket, preferably with a high collar which fastens snugly round the neck and chin for cold weather. A concealed hood can be useful.

Gloves or mitts should be loose around the hand and fingers but have a good seal with the jacket at the wrist. Mitts are warmer than gloves but have to be taken off more often to adjust equipment. Thin undergloves can be worn for extra warmth.

Socks should be smooth rather than ribbed and fit without wrinkles. One pair of loop stitch socks is enough. They should be long enough to extend above the top of the boot.