

Disclaimer: This information are my personal thoughts and are PROVIDED FOR PURPOSES OF ENTERTAINMENT ONLY, and is/are not to be construed as ANY SORT of guidance or recommendations in any way! Thanks to my momma's advice, MY BELIEF now is that in Skiing, SCUBA Diving, Parachute-jumping, Hang-Gliding, Rock-Climbing, and moderate-to-difficult hiking/running: AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION IS WORTH A POUND OF CURE (or more)! Tom Dollman at 08:09:10 on 11/12/13.

My BODY-Getting in CONDITION for Ski-Week (AND Keeping Warm)

We try to do some exercises before the trip (even as little as 4-6 weeks is helpful if you haven't started, yet), because muscles used for skiing are not normally exercised in our day-to-day activities... although vigorous hiking and roller blading are pretty good. For your information, what we TRY to do several times a day well before the trip are the following:

- Wall sitting: back up against a sturdy wall, slide down the wall until at a sitting-in-a-chair position, hold for as long as possible (building additional minutes every day). Might have to use a prop to get back upright (afterwards)
- High abduction/adduction: Can use a beach ball between your knees either laying on your back (or if we're really good, while wall sitting...whew!); squeeze and hold, then release, repeating as much as we can. ALSO using different bunji-cords around my knees and pulling outward repeatedly.
- Balance: We also try to balance on one foot, knee slightly bent (with a wall/chair nearby just in case) for extended periods... switching feet... want to be slightly weighted more on balls of foot, than heel. We also have a balance board which gives dynamic balancing using both feet... whew!
- Of course, there's hiking, and things I have seen others try (ice-skating, roller-blading, etc)
- KEEPING WARM: the secret is layering. The ski-clothing industry has some specialized fabrics that we use for "base layer" (NOT COTTON) next to skin, 2nd layer (maybe the same kind of layer, but it will remain clean for the following day, while my "base layer" is drying out after hand washing), maybe even a third layer.
- Ski-Bibs or pants (suspenders if needed), maybe a fleece on top as part of water-resistant jacket (I've found jackets at Burlington store), or as an extra layer for unlined ski-jacket, neck-gaiter, good hat (most of my body heat is lost thru head, so I try a knit hat (or HELMET when skiing),
- ALSO we use good water-resistant gloves that fit (Becky also uses some thin-but-effective glove-liners which absorb moisture and help with warmth, also rinsable-outable),
- Finally, we do not use thick ski socks, but sometimes a liner along with thinner, designed-to-ski-with kind of socks!
- I have found some stuff at Burlington Outlet, Gander Mountain, but there are ski-shops places in Albuquerque or Taos to buy (also Wal-Marts in Taos/??).

KNEES... On "Blown-Out" Knees

BACKGROUND: I have been on about forty ski trips to the western U.S. Invariably, in any large ski group there is liable to be someone who "blows out" a knee. Here's why: The anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) & medial collateral ligament (MCL) are two of four knee ligaments that tend to tear when overstressed in a ski situation. When someone falls on skis (note: occasional falls happen in skiing, at least, to me) and the skis do not come off soon enough, EACH ski creates a long lever to torque the leg-knee in an unnatural way, therefore, there is a tendency to overstress the knee joint and its ligaments. Ligament tears or separations are expensive (\$15,000 or more) things to repair and there is a long, involved (and maybe never completed-to-normal) rehabilitation process. Even when only a strain occurs, it has knocked me off skiing the rest of the trip and perhaps the ski season, as well. Unfortunately, I cannot muse about boarding/riding – never tried it and am too old to learn, I guess.

I have personally had three, "trip-terminating", lesser knee injuries by not faithfully performing my own ski-binding-test and (re)adjustment procedures. My belief is that hard skiing all day exhausts my leg muscles so that the muscles and tendons around the knee are NOT performing up to the same level as in the morning, therefore muscles are NOT protecting my knee ligaments. An orthopedic surgeon I rode the on the chair-lift one day confirmed this and the fact that most skiing injuries occur near the end of the day – when skier is tired. He said it only takes about 8 pounds of force in the wrong direction to tear an average person's knee ligament. And an average-person is in the eye of the beholder.

When someone rents/buys skis from a ski shop, they ask for age, height, weight, and skiing ability. Based on these factors, as well as the length of the ski-boot's sole plate [based on the boot size], they consult a chart to determine settings for the ski binding release mechanisms both toe and heel. [Think of the interface of the ski binding with the rigid ski-boot as the "DESIRED Breakaway Part" of a long-complex lever system which begins with the ski tip & tail and ends at the knee-joint... the knee-joint is an "UNDESIRABLE Breakaway Part"] This chart (see <http://www.dinsetting.com/dinchart.htm>) was developed, presumably, by the ski-binding industry and ski-area-insurance companies to avoid liability in the case of a lawsuit over a damaged knee or broken bone resulting from use of ski equipment. [There is usually a waiver of liability on the rental form you sign for any equipment you may be renting, and probably in the fine print of your lift ticket, as well.] Many shops use these charts to obtain an "appropriate" DIN setting. My personal belief is that individuals in any group of people with the same boot-size and age/height/weight/ability will have vastly different strengths and conditioning in the legs, ankles, and knees; but only the individual can make that sort of determination - **the ski technician can not and will not**. Additionally, there is a possibility (it has happened to me, twice) that the shop may even misread the table or improperly follow it. I and others have represented themselves as less experienced, lighter-weight, and older) skier than reality to get the lower, safer DIN settings that the chart indicates!

On a trip last millennium to Jackson Hole, two ladies in our group of 78 skiers damaged their ACL's. The doctor there did a good job of repairing them (he does about 50 per week, now maybe \$10K cost each, and potentially not fully covered by "average insurance coverage," much less Medicare), but the problem may have been preventable if they had DYNAMICALLY checked & tested their bindings. Oh yes, the bindings were set the way that the shop's chart had indicated, but the two ladies (good skiers, both) didn't test their settings. Please note that ski shops typically do not like for people to test bindings on premises, they say "go outside." Again, it's all about THEIR liability, not my knees.

How I test and exercise my bindings (on my self-owned skis, after I have sprayed them top and bottom thoroughly (outside) a bit with [only] Pure Silicone Spray once or twice – I DO NOT use WD40 or JP80, as I think they enable crud to invariably accumulate and cause the release mechanism to have too much friction, so settings are inaccurate):

- (a) I put on my ski socks & boots (both feet)... and get ready to work on the RIGHT ski.
- (b) RIGHT-REAR binding: I use my hands to release the REAR binding several times just to loosen it up (that spray helped)
- (c) I have someone stand/kneel on the tail of my right ski.
- (d) I then secure my right foot into ski-binding (i.e., fully engaging or "snapping into" front and back bindings), then stand feet slightly apart, left foot (without ski on) slightly ahead of right-foot.
- (e) I try to "walk forward out of the binding" by trying to take the "next step" pulling my right foot. My right foot HOPEFULLY comes out of the rear binding, with no strain on my leg/knee.
- (f) I'll use a screw-driver to back-off the rear binding setting if any difficulty in "walking forward"
- (g) That tests my rear binding, I do it **several** times to loosen up the binding, readjusting if needed
- (h) Now for RIGHT-FRONT binding
- (i) I reinsert my right foot into binding (fully engaging "snapping into" front and back bindings), and have someone stand/kneel on the tip of the ski.

- (j) I stand, feet partially apart, (might need a chair or wall nearby) right foot somewhat forward, and have my wife use HER ski boot to kick MY toe-part of MY RIGHT boot three times or more to loosen up the FRONT binding both to the inside and to the outside. [that is, Kicking my RIGHT foot loose to the inside and repeat by kicking my RIGHT foot to the outside.] OK... RIGHT-FRONT-BINDING is ready to TEST.
- (k) MY TEST is to try to pivot my foot (clockwise) out of the binding - that is, I twist my leg to the right and my toe comes out of the front binding with no strain on my leg/knee. I repeat that **several** times, and then test for counterclockwise release - toe releasing from front binding to the left with no strain on my leg/knee. I then repeat that **several** times until I'm satisfied that the front binding is OK. If not, it is an incremental process, I will loosen up the settings (lower DIN number) with an appropriate screwdriver or a coin, and repeat all three processes (**several** times). Repeat whole routine with left foot/boot/ski. I mark the skis to show left & right. This is not all, though. My best option is to quit skiing when I am tired (i.e., well before "last run" in the "flat light"). When I don't do that, I'll try and remember (i.e., after lunch) to adjust the front binding to a lower setting (& retest) in order to protect my knees. Like I said before, I've injured right knee twice (including a fracture) when I skied after 2pm in a fatigued state on the AM binding settings. If you need help doing this, find me or one of our other experienced Huntsville Ski Club Skiers to give you a helping hand in the adjustment/testing!!

EYES Can Get Sunburned, too!

"Sunburn of the Eyes" is a very real and dangerous condition (hurts, too). Snow surface intensify and reflect sunlight into my eyes, so UV protection is a must. Amber lenses work well for me in low- or flat-light conditions. Double-pane goggles tend to fog-up less (I like to see where I'm skiing). I made sure the lenses/frames are shatter proof. I have seen goggles that fit over prescription glasses, and I suppose most goggles would work with contacts. I always have problems with fogging goggles if I "store" them on my forehead instead of around my upper arm. Yes, I use defogger – a combo of "Smith's Defog Cloth" and "Cat Crap;" sometimes they even work.

My HEAD... I (Always) Wear a Helmet... Now

I have a sad (but not tragic) story to tell regarding my excursion into some trees... made 4 mistakes:

- (1) Skied alone to amongst trees;
 - (2) Skied (tired) late in the day;
 - (3) Wound-up skiing in an area that initially was OK, but downhill it got too advanced for me;
 - (4) Was skiing without a helmet.**
- Four times Dumb!!

I knew better, but I was in "my zone" this one beautiful (Feb 6, 2003) afternoon at Steamboat, and the trees had been so good the previous several days on my new skis with my ski buddy. To make a long story short, my chest/ribs had a collision with an pair of Aspen trees which knocked all my ability to breathe away, then shocked/knocked me unconscious for some unknown number of minutes. No head hit, only chest (two fractured ribs). I am truly blessed to be relatively uninjured from this experience. When I go back into the trees (and many resorts have some excellent groves to ski in, cautiously) or any , I'll wear my good-quality helmet, carry a loud whistle on my jacket zipper (and have practiced SOS on it), ski with one or more buddies, ski not when I'm "fresh", and know the best way to get out of trees onto the appropriate blue/black run for me.

You do NOT have to be a tree-skier to want a helmet. I use my “brain bucket” all the time when I’m skiing. So does Becky (and she didn’t even have a tree to convince her). You may be able to rent/demo a helmet.

My TOES... Losing Toenails is not fun

We (Tom & Becky) always trim our toe-nails pretty closely due to ski-boot tightness, as those times we failed to do so resulted in blacked-and-six-months-later-falling-off toe nails.

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