

Ski/Board Safely

For those venturing to the slopes this season, Durham House has some great advice.

Despite common assumptions that a ski or boarding injury is most likely to occur on the first day, Matthew Bennett, BCA Chiropractor and the first to work with the British Alpine Ski team, comments:

“After three days of skiing, using unaccustomed muscles, skiers become confident but are physically tired and their capability isn’t necessarily matched to their confidence”.

If you’re enjoying winter sports this year, here are some tips to ensure you can stay safe on the slopes:



Pre-ski fitness tips:

- **Don't just sit there** - Exercising through squats, sit ups and cycling is good way to tease the right muscles.
- **It's a balancing act** - Balance is the single most important factor in skiing. Use a wobble board to improve balance and build up ankle muscles. For a thorough ankle workout, rocking heel to toe is good for snowboarders and left to right is best for skiers.
- **Jump around** - Use a mini trampoline to work all those 'skiing' muscles.
- **Roll with it** - Roller blading is perfect practice and will help you develop a good ski posture so you look like a pro on the slopes.
- **Check it out** - Most skiers find turning one way easier than the other. Poor technique might not be the problem, so talk to a chiropractor for advice.

Prevention is still better than cure and these tips can help you avoid injuries. Just one joint or muscle out of line can be a disaster when you are traveling at 40 miles per hour on two skis.

Out on the slopes:

- **Hot and cold** - Warm up before strenuous skiing. Start off gently rather than heading first for the black runs and round the day off with a stretch.
- **Take plenty of breaks** - Over exertion will ruin your holiday - moderate the length of skiing time and listen to your body. Pain is a warning sign, don't ignore it.
- **Liquid lunch** - Drink plenty of water and isotonic drinks to avoid dehydration and stay clear of alcohol, tea and coffee.
- **Wrap up** - Make sure clothing is warm and adequate for the cold weather and don't forget hat and gloves.
- **Put the boot in** - No matter how many lessons, skiers won't improve without the right boots and this is where most skiers put their first foot wrong. Skiers often choose on comfort alone - don't make this mistake! Get a moulded foot bed from the ski shop first as this improves fit, comfort and ski control. Opt for a shop with a wide range of boots so you are spoilt for choice.
- **What a bind** - If you are prone to going 'knock-kneed' when you ski, look out for lateral alignment. Wedges expertly placed under the binding can make a huge difference.
- **Carry on** - Always be careful when carrying skis / boards. Leave them standing upright so you don't have to bend to pick them up. Carry them over your shoulder, swapping shoulders regularly.
- **Ice is nice** - With an acute injury, use ice rather than heat.
- **Tread carefully** - A great deal of people are injured by slipping on ice at the ski resort, not just on the slopes. Wear shoes with a deep treaded sole and use strap-on studs for ski boots to help keep you upright.