

CONDITIONING FOR THE SKIING SEASON

Downhill skiing is mostly an anaerobic activity that requires short bursts of muscle energy for an explosive movement. These exercises are very effective for anaerobic training and may even begin to build some aerobic conditioning, enabling you to become a power skier by season's end.

Balance and stability are also necessary for aggressive cuts and scissors while gracefully gliding down the mountain. A consistent training regimen 3 to 4 times per week is necessary for minimal improvement to take place within a month.

Flexibility

An excellent stretching book for the sports enthusiast has been written by Bob Anderson. You can get it by writing to Shelter Publications, PO Box 279, Bolinas, CA 94924.

Strength

Strengthening the thigh muscles can be done easily without expensive equipment: All you need are:

- You
 - Space to jump in
 - A towel.
1. Lay a towel twice folded in half on the floor. Keeping both feet together, jump side to side over the towel for 30–60 seconds. Repeat 3–5 times per session. As you get stronger, open the towel to the half-folded position and repeat as above. The final stage of this exercise is to open the towel all the way and repeat the time and repetitions as above. For variation, jump to all sides of the towel, first forward and then backward.
 2. Jump as in #1, but using only one leg. Pull the opposite foot behind your jumping knee as a speed skater would do during competition.
 3. Step-ups onto a chair or stool is an excellent way to strengthen the stabilizing muscles about the knee. This can be done by stepping up sideways, frontward, and backward. Do this exercise 3–5 times per session.
 4. Exercises using surgical tubing are easily done on the road or at work and are designed to strengthen and to promote stability of the legs. Tie the tubing in a loop large enough to put around both ankles. Do not let the tension on the tubing cause you to “spring back” at the end range movements. Do each exercise for 30–60 seconds without resting and repeat 5–10 times per session. First, walk forward like a tin soldier with knees, taking large steps. Second, walk sideways in both directions. Third, try a “carioka” side step: Walk sideways but repeatedly cross one leg in front of the other. To increase the difficulty of these exercises, attempt them standing on your toes.

Exercising for 5–6 weeks, 3–4 times per week, will prove rewarding. Try to find a partner to exercise with, because 85% of people starting new exercise programs stop after 60 days when exercising alone.

Have a great season of skiing!