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PHYSIOTHERAPY

Winter sports preparation and injury prevention

Skiing and snowboarding are among the most popular winter sports. They also have a high incidence of injury. Therefore it pays to be properly prepared.

The problem with seasonal sports is exactly that. Adrenaline carries most of us through the first few days but then fatigue sets in due to lack of fitness half way through the holiday and this opens us up to potential injuries.

To prevent injury, follow these simple rules

Train before you go so you are fit and strong
Use the correct binding settings for your weight
Keep boot soles clear of grit and compacted snow
Use the correct techniques
Ski with confidence!

Pre skiing training

Start at least 6 weeks before your trip and train 2-3 times weekly. Often your baseline fitness dictates what you expect to get out of your trip so you need to do sport specific training. We are all too familiar with the groans that meet your ear on the second morning when trying to get into the boots again – and ask ourselves why we do it! Circuits are a good pre-skiing training program.

Strength

squats (x50)
lunges (x20)
stair climbing (this is most effective for skiing if you do this flat footed which works the thigh muscles and Glutes more)
wall squats (x40)

Cardio fitness

Anything that increases your heart rate uninterrupted for a minimum 20 mins 3 times per week
Walking
Swimming
Combining some stair walking (at home) with a brisk walk around the block. A past patient would do 25 flights at home daily in preparation for her trip.

Balance

This is an essential part of the training to help with unexpected terrain and to recover from the odd wobble.
Single legged squats – eyes closed, can be done when cleaning your teeth (2mins)
Side hops with feet together (x20)
Single legged jumps (x20 per leg)

Stretching

Remember the muscle needs to be stretched to a gentle pull and should not be painful – main muscles are
Front of thigh – quadriceps
Back of thigh – hamstrings
Calf muscles

First day out!

It may sound mad but mental rehearsal is excellent - and free - training. Think of what you are planning to do as this will open up the neural pathways to prepare the body – it does work! Use the warm up runs as exactly that, to make sure that you have stretched out (yes I know it's a bit of an aerobic session just getting the kids and yourself fully kitted and actually to the top of the slope).

End of the day

That evening take advantage of a hot shower or tub. Or go for a gentle walk to pump out any lactic acid.
Stretch out all muscles.

General advice

If you're tired then take a break. Quit before fatigue sets in.
Wear the correct protective gear – even the Swiss / fashion set are wearing helmets now!
Drink plenty of water throughout the day.