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Guidelines For Skiing Conditioning

Skiing requires a combination of dynamic balance, muscular strength and endurance. Although the legs are heavily relied on for power in skiing, a skier's strength should be developed throughout the entire body to allow the body to work as a team. That means that the very famous "CORE" must be adequately strengthened, specifically in rotational type of movements.

For those of you who do not perform strength training on a regular basis, I recommend that you spend a good 6-8 weeks to develop a base of stability and strength across the whole body. Get yourself properly evaluated by a certified trainer and have them establish a program involving all of the basic movement patterns: pushing, pulling, squatting, lunging, bending and twisting. Be sure to work exclusively with compound movements, (multiple muscles being worked at the same time). Also, train muscles that are antagonists to the obvious muscles being used during skiing (don't just train the quadriceps, work the hamstrings as well). This will create balance within the body's musculature that is crucial for stability and to avoid injury.

Core Strength

When we use the word CORE, we are referring to all the muscles of the abdominal wall, the lower back and the hips. Strength, stability and mobility in the trunk are crucial for the dynamic movements required in skiing. The body synergy, coordination and core strength needed to slalom are tremendous, let alone throwing moguls into the picture. The capacity to perform these movements properly without compensation and overuse of certain muscles starts with *CORE* strength. We need to learn how to move from our

center. Performing exercises using the following tools will force you to engage the CORE: stability ball, Bosu, balance boards, Sit-fit, TRX band and the foam roller. For example, perform a dumbbell chest press lying on your back on a stability ball. Squat standing on a Bosu. Perform your crunches lying on a stability ball.

Dynamic Balance

It is one thing to be able to stand on 1 leg, and it is another to be able to stand on 1 leg and jump up and down on it. Skiing requires us to transition from a body action/movement to stabilization. When you are hitting moguls, the demand on your body is a combination of rotation of the lower body, while landing on unstable footings. So guess what, we need to train our bodies in this manner. Here is a great exercise to test your dynamic balance:

Single leg squat and stick (5 sec. holds).

Keep one foot always off the floor. Perform for 5 reps of 5-second holds in the squat position. **Insert picture 1A and 1B**

Incorporating exercises like this into your routine will improve your performance on the slopes.

Cross-Training

Skiers do not require the cardiovascular endurance of a marathon runner. So, if you are conditioning yourself for skiing why perform 60 minutes of long single tempo cardio? The answer is you don't need to for skiing. What you do need is agility, quick reflexes and explosive power. Performing cross-training or interval cardio training you can work these elements as well as your aerobic system. Here is a very basic example of interval training:

Jog 2 min.

Run 1 min.

Sprint 30 sec.

Repeat 5-6 times

Total training time 17-21 min.

For the more advanced trainee, here is an even more specific cross-training program for skiing purposes:

Rope Skipping 1 min.

Lateral rebounding or hopping 1 min. **Insert picture 2A and 2B here**

Zig Zag running 1 min

*Repeat 5-6 times
Total training time 15-18 min.*

Power

As aforementioned, explosive power, speed and agility are needed strengths to excel at skiing. This modality of training is reserved for the intermediate to advanced trainee. That means that you need to have training experience under your belt with a solid base of core stability, strength and flexibility. This style of weight training incorporates quick and explosive movements often involving jumping, hopping and leaping. The power phase in your program should be the last one and performed close to the beginning of the ski season. All serious skiers looking to improve on the slopes need to incorporate a power phase into their off season training regiment. So, get started on your base training programs, and consult a qualified trainer to teach you this more complex modality.

Flexibility

It is pretty obvious that the dynamic movements performed in skiing require mobility in the joints. Adding 15-20 minutes of stretching after your workouts and on a daily basis will help you to achieve the required flexibility for maximum performance. Injury prevention is another big bonus for stretching regularly. Most common sports injuries are caused by a combination of tight muscles and muscular imbalances. Focus on your tight zones and be sure to hold your stretches for a minimum of 60 seconds. To find out exactly where your tight zones are get tested by a qualified trainer.

Workout Schedule Recommendations

- Perform 3 weight training workouts per week of no more than 1 hour each.
Breakdown: a) 6-8 weeks of general full body conditioning
b) 2 weeks skiing specific stability
c) 2 weeks skiing specific strength
d) 2 weeks skiing specific power
- Perform 3 cross-training cardio sessions per week.
- Stretch your entire body with a focus on tight zones for 15-20 min. per day.

Here are some exercise examples to apply to your skiing conditioning programs:

Stability Phase Movements:

Picture 3A and 3B – Oblique Jackknife with stability ball

Pictures 4A and 4B – Twisting Lower back extensions on stability ball

Strength Phase Movements:

Picture 5A and 5B – Squat to alternating rotational overhead press

Pictures 6A and 6B – Lateral lunge onto Bosu

Power Phase Movements:

Pictures 7A and 7B and 7C – Scissor Jumps

Pictures 8A and 8B and 8C – Lateral Bosu Hops

**TO GET YOUR OWN PERSONALIZED CONDITIONING PROGRAM
CONTACT US AT INFO@TRAINWITHMIKE.CA OR 514-817-0967.**