



Physiotherapists:  
The Body Specialists

# Physio Tips

Skiing and  
Snowboarding

Physiotherapy Association of BC

## Safe Skiing and Snowboarding

Winter enthusiasts look forward to this time of year when there's an abundance of winter activities to enjoy, like skiing and snowboarding.

Before heading out to the slopes, you need to remember that winter activities often pose a higher risk of injury if time isn't taken in advance for proper body conditioning.

Physiotherapists see an increase in "impact" injuries in winter. They recommend good conditioning program prior to hitting the slopes. Workouts to stretch and strengthen thighs, hamstrings, buttock muscles and abdominal muscles can also help.

### The "ABC's of Winter Conditioning"

**A is for Alignment** – People spend a lot of time in seated or contorted postures, which can affect postural alignment. This may limit the body's ability to achieve and maintain peak capacity and may lead to pain or injury.

A Physiotherapist can tailor a program of stretching and strengthening exercises to promote optimal postural alignment.

**B is for Balance** – Balance is a fundamental component of any sport, especially skiing. If you have a sedentary lifestyle, you may need to "train" your balance reactions for sport related activity. Most gym's have balance equipment available. Use them to improve balance and ultimately enjoyment on the slopes.

**C is for Core Training** – Skiers and boarders need a strong core or torso as an "anchor" for the legs. These are the muscle groups that work together to stabilize the trunk. Exercises that have a rotational component and work the core areas in three dimensions are best.

While many sports such as cycling, or weight training are one-dimensional, life and sports, like skiing, are 3-D so you must train for them.

**D is for Deceleration Control** – Skiing and boarding are all about controlling the gravitational pull on frozen water. A typical ski turn usually lasts 2-3 seconds. Skiers must be able to control their deceleration speed to slow the forces of gravity and finish their run safely.

Exercises that work the quadriceps in a slow controlled manner such as step ups, split squats and lunges are excellent ways to train for this. They mimic the forces of skiing and allow you to improve strength in a hip-extended position - the functional position for all sports.

Physiotherapists are experts in movement and mobility, body mechanics, muscles and joints. They will help develop an exercise program specially-tailored to your needs, putting together the right combination of activities to improve physical fitness and avoid injury.

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