

Queens

Physiotherapy and Sports Injury Clinic



Telephone: 01252 522644

Website: www.queensphysiotherapy.co.uk

Email: queensphysiotherapy@hotmail.co.uk



Queens Physiotherapy's Top tips for a Successful Ski Trip

- Ensure that you are in **good physical condition** before going skiing. Improving your aerobic fitness will help you to acclimatise quicker to altitude changes and improving your strength will help to prevent injuries.
- The **Quadriceps** are the main power muscles used during skiing. These can be trained with exercises such as lunges, split squats, step ups, deep squats and cycling. Try not to use wall squats/ski sits which can translate into skiing with weight on the heels. The quadriceps work in two ways on the slopes. Not only do they help straighten the knee but also control it from a straight position into a bent position. This slow release is called eccentric strengthening and is a fundamental part of ski training. Doing exercises such as step downs off a step is a perfect way of working your quads eccentrically. Make sure your alignment is perfect (your knee should be over your 2nd/3rd toe). Start with 30 reps and add weight when it begins to feel easy to do.
- Skiing relies heavily on external hip rotation eg, the **gluteus medius**, so the importance of training these muscles cannot be underestimated. The exercise to do is the 'clam': lie on your side with your hips and knees in a skiing position. Keep your ankles together and your hips steady as you lift your top knee, like a clam opening and closing. You should feel the muscle working in the outside of your buttock. Repeat 30 times and then practise the same movement in a standing position, so you can learn to use those muscles while skiing.

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- Once you have built up your strength and fitness, move onto **propulsive movements**. A good place to begin is jumping sideways on and off a step, starting with a low step and gradually making it higher – this will particularly help on steep narrow slopes where fast movements are essential. Always make sure your alignment is perfect.
- On the first day, allow yourself time to **acclimatize** and get your “ski legs”. Take the first few runs easy and get your rhythm.
- Don’t ski without a **helmet!** Goes for children and adults alike. If you buy your own, you know its history and if it could be damaged inside or not.
- Make sure you **warm up** and **cool down**. Tired and stiff muscles are a recipe for potential injuries.
- Ski within your capabilities and don’t get talked into runs that you know are too fast and that you know that you are not skilful enough to complete. **Don’t let peer pressure win!**

