

6 ways to get your body ski ready this winter

With the snow season around the corner and Mt Buller just 3 hours away, the allure of a winter getaway may be just what the doctor ordered. The only downside of these types of seasonal sports is the risk of injury, should your body not be properly prepared. [Alanna Churcher](#), *Physiotherapist and Pilates Instructor* at our Langwarrin clinic, shares her tips for getting your body ready for the ski season ahead.

The most common pathway to injury is through a process called 'Delayed Onset Muscle Soreness', or DOMS for short. This usually hits day two or three of your ski holiday due to the long hours of eccentric contraction your legs have to endure.

Despite that fatiguing muscle ache, the real consequence of DOMS is decreased muscular recruitment throughout your turns. Without the right muscle control you could be exposed to a wide array of injuries with damage to knee ligaments being the most common. The ACL ligament in the knee is under highest strain during full knee flexion when coupled with a rotation force of the tibia (shin bone) internally (Jordan et al, 2017). Given that this is one of the more common positions to wipe out in when skiing, you can see why pre-season injury prevention is so important.

DON'T WORRY- you can decrease your risk of injury significantly by implementing the following key steps over the 6 weeks prior to your ski holiday.

1. Increase your core strength:

Trunk stability was the number one risk factor for the injury of ACL +/- MCL in elite skiers (Heinrich D, 2014). Exercises should aim to improve core endurance through rotation to simulate its function during skiing.

2. Improve your eccentric leg strength:

Train this by running or walking up and down stairs two at a time to encourage hip knee strength and control through dynamic weight-bearing- make sure to focus on landing in your heel and keeping your knee in line with your second toe!

3. Body weight dynamic strength exercises:

Decreasing neuromuscular risk factors are essential to skier injury prevention. The following are exercises that improve control of tibial internal rotation and knee valgus in skiers (Bere et al, 2011). Single leg squats, single leg bridges, walking lunges, side lunges and side step overs encourage hip/knee coordination and control (APTA)

4. Ensure correct binding setup:

You're DIN setting on your bindings is set according to your weight, height and experience to ensure that your boot is released from the ski at the appropriate time. Too low and you may pop out during a turn, too high and you'll be rolling down the hill still clipped in. Make sure you see a ski technician to ensure you're setup is correct for you.

5. Stay hydrated:

When cold it's easy to forget to rehydrate, but you could be skiing for up to 8 hours at a time. Correct hydration is essential for injury prevention.

6. Warm up:

In cold weather it's harder for your muscular and proprioceptive systems to fire effectively. Walk to the ski runs, do some star jumps and leg swings to get the muscles warming up before a few gentle runs on easy groomers. From there you're free to start your day.

For a specific pre-season training program or advice on your ski setup, please contact one of our clinics to talk to a

physiotherapist.

– Alanna Churcher

References

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