



Pre-Season Snow Sports Conditioning

Whether a beginner or Olympic competitor, a simple snow sports conditioning program can help make the most of your transition back to the snow. Without some baseline conditioning you may not get the most out of your return, and you may also be at risk for injury. Deconditioning and fatigue lead to poor technique and an inability to make critical, quick decisions in the constantly changing environment of the mountain. Here are a few functional exercises that work the hundreds of muscles involved in snow sports.

Note: You should not have pain during any of these exercises. If you do, or you are unsure of your technique, consult one of your local Therapeutic Associates Physical Therapists for a program that meets your specific needs. Typical muscle soreness that lasts less than 2-3 days is normal and expected initially.

Dynamic Warm-Up: Dynamically warming up or doing specific functional movements are better ways to prepare for a strength and conditioning program versus hard static stretching. There are many different programs out there, but for simplicity sake, walking briskly or pedaling on a stationary bike will do the trick. You can learn more specific movements from your physical therapist. Do at least 5 minutes before any gentle stretching or strengthening.

Strengthening (3-4 days per week):

Wall Squats: Make sure your shin bones (tibias) are straight up and down when you are at the bottom of your squat (knees above your ankles). You will feel this in the front of your thighs, or quadriceps muscles. Do 10-20 repetitions for 10-30 seconds depending on your time and conditioning.

Single-Leg Bridges: Make sure to keep your pelvis/hips level and pull your navel in a bit. You should feel this in your thighs and back. Make sure you are not arching or over-extending in your lower back. Do 2-3 sets of 10 repetitions for 5 seconds each.

Single-Leg Squats or Step Ups: The important aspect of this exercise is to make sure that as you squat and your knee moves forward, it should not move in front of your toes and should not buckle in. You will need to lean forward at your waist the entire time and reach back with your buttocks to perform properly. You should feel this in your buttocks or gluteal muscles. Do 3 sets of 10 reps on each side.

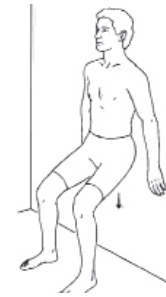
Aerobic Endurance (2-4 days per week):

It is a great idea to also work on 20-30 minutes of cardiovascular exercise. This can be in the form of cycling, walking briskly, jogging, or using an elliptical trainer or Stairmaster.

It is important to remember that no land exercise can fully simulate the act of snow sports, so hit the mountain slowly, do some warm-up runs, and get the rust out. Then you'll be on to those double black diamonds in no time!

If you have any questions, have pain preventing you from enjoying the mountain, or are interested in more personal and specific programs, please contact your local Therapeutic Associates Physical Therapist. Enjoy the slopes!

By: Tony Rocklin, PT, DPT, Director, TAI Downtown Portland Physical Therapy



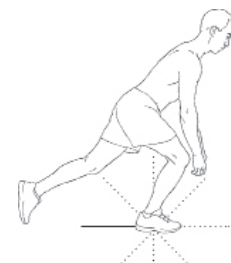
© VHI

WALL SQUATS



© VHI

SINGLE-LEG BRIDGES



© VHI

SINGLE-LEG SQUATS