

MEDIA RELEASE

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Get set to hit the slopes this winter

Heading to the snow this winter? Eight weeks before you go is an ideal time to get your preparation underway for snow sports, the Australian Physiotherapy Association said today.

Sue Gertzel is a leading sports physiotherapist in Melbourne who runs get fit to ski programs.

“Peak performance on the slopes relies on you being fit and the best way to do this is with a specific snow sports fitness program,” says Ms Gertzel. “If you have a pre-existing injury, it’s important to find a program where physiotherapists instruct the classes, so that exercises can be modified for your condition.”

Here are some basic tips to get you underway:

1. **Get fit before you go.** It’s ideal to start your pre-ski training six to eight weeks before your holiday – you won’t have time to get your fitness up to speed once you get there. Training should include specific exercises for snow sports. Other activities such as stair climbing, running, in-line skating or cycling can be incorporated into your exercise program. Aim for three to four sessions per week.
2. **Reduce the risk of injury.** Strengthening of the muscles specific to snow sports (like thighs, butts, core stabilisers and triceps) will reduce the risk of injury and increase your enjoyment and endurance on the slopes.
3. **Look after your back.** Good back care is essential for skiers and boarders. A good stretch is to arch your back while standing with hands on hips. If you’re travelling distances to reach the mountain, break your journey every two hours and stretch. When lifting luggage always brace your lower abdominal muscles to support your back.
4. **Warm up.** Before putting on your gear and equipment, warm-up and stretch the thigh, calf and arm muscles. Start each day on the slopes with some easy runs to loosen up, and do this after each rest break as well. Make sure your equipment is well-maintained. And boarders, you should be wearing wrist guards on the snow.
5. **Fatigue is a major cause of injury from lack of control.** Stop skiing or boarding if you feel tired, and rest. Always ski in control.
6. **RICE for injury.** If you are unlucky enough to sustain an injury, immediately Rest Ice Compress and Elevate the affected part and seek help at the on-mountain medical centre.

For musculoskeletal injuries early physiotherapy treatment will give you the quickest recovery.

Find A Physio – search online for a physiotherapist in your local area. www.physiotherapy.asn.au

Physio-led ‘get fit to ski’ programs are held in a number of capital cities, see next page.

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Physio-led get fit to ski programs are held in a number of venues. Here's a selection:

Victoria (three locations)

Fitzroy, Surrey Hills, Heidelberg | Get Fit With Physios (Sue Gertzel)

Work your way through the Powder Pumper to the Mogul Muncher, do a Twist on the Piste. Taking the Cloud 9 Approach to the Happy Hour Run will get you fit enough to really enjoy your holiday. Exercises designed and led by physiotherapists to condition participants specifically for skiing and boarding. Classes start late May; twice a week for eight weeks so participants are at their fittest for the best snow. 16 classes - \$198 per person, or \$180 per person when four or more people join. Phone (03) 9328 3733 or visit www.getfitwithphysios.com.au

ACT (one location)

Canberra | Get Fit to Ski

The ACT branch of the APA is running its popular Get Fit to Ski program again this year. Twice a week (Mondays 6pm-7pm and Wednesdays 7pm-8pm) for eight weeks. Classes commence May 8 to June 3. Participants are supervised by two physiotherapists. Venue: Calvary Hospital, Bruce. 16 classes - \$175 per person. Phone (02) 6273 4724 or email act.branch@physiotherapy.asn.au

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