

## Preseason Ski Exercises: Best in Ski Preseason Ski Exercises

**Your no-frills formula for a more productive season on the slopes.  
Text by Constance Chen, M.D. Illustrations by Jesse Lefkowitz**

From: <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/adventure/fitness-training/ski-exercises-0612.html>

Bill Knowles wants you to forget the Bowflex and the Bosu Trainer. "They're not the best tools to help you ski faster," he says. While you're at it, lay off the leg presses and wheelbarrow sprints too. "They aren't the best ways to get stronger and avoid injury," he says. In fact, the man who trained snowboarding phenom Hannah Teter to gold in Torino wants you to discard all gimmick gear and focus on functional fitness, a training philosophy that favors targeted workouts that replicate the unique demands of a particular sport.

"The key is to train movements, not muscles," says Knowles, the director of iSport Training in Killington, Vermont. "Hoisting 400 pounds (181 kilograms) on a leg press machine won't necessarily translate into results during a long, demanding ski season."

Knowles's four workouts below mimic the movements of snow sports to build strength and improve balance simultaneously. The results: increased stability, sharper turns, and cleaner runs. "Improve your strength and balance," he says, "and you'll fall less and reduce the chances of ending your season early."

Need proof? Four years ago Knowles started training the 15-member ski instructor team at Killington Resort. On average the group spends five hours a day on the slopes. "The increased exposure significantly upped their chances of injury," Knowles says. But since adopting Knowles's techniques, the instructors have been virtually injury free. "No workout will prevent injuries completely," Knowles says. "But give me a room, a chair, and a ball and I can make you a more athletic skier."

**More Ski Exercises: [See Bode Miller's preseason workout >>](#)**

## THE WORKOUTS: Four simple moves that produce extraordinary results

### Ski Squat

**The Benefit:** "The Ski Squat approximates your leg motion when skiing moguls or riding rough terrain," Knowles says. "It creates the same burn too."

**How-To:** Stand on one leg in a ski-boot stance (leaning forward slightly), and place the opposite foot onto a chair or bench behind you. Squat down to 90 degrees without letting the standing knee sway. Do three sets of 12 reps on each side. To increase difficulty, hold a dumbbell or free-weight plate.



### Downhill Lunge

**The Benefit:** "This movement simulates carving turns on groomed terrain," he says. "Stepping to the side is like loading up the outside ski. With practice, you'll gain the confidence to carve better turns."

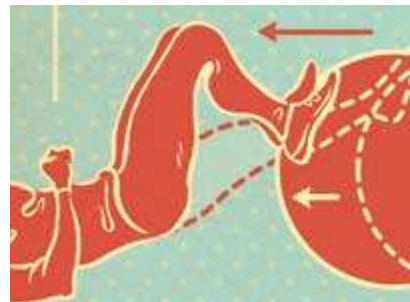
**How-To:** In a ski or board stance, step laterally while bending the lead knee to 90 degrees. Immediately push back to the starting position and repeat on the opposite side, staying low as if you were skiing. Do three sets of six reps on each side.



### Hamstring Curl

**The Benefit:** "This exercise strengthens the hamstrings to protect against knee injuries. By keeping your hips off the floor, you also strengthen the core."

**How-To:** Lie on your back and place both heels on top of a physio ball, keeping your arms at your sides for balance. Lift your hips off the ground and roll the ball toward you until the bottoms of your feet are flat on the ball's surface. Roll back to the starting position. Do three sets of 15 to 25 reps.



### Leg Recovery

**The Benefit:** "A fatigued skier is more likely to catch a ski in the snow. When this happens you must then balance on one ski while controlling the other. This exercise mimics that situation to improve stability and prevent a crash."

**How-To:** Get into a ski or board stance, hands on hips. Lift your right foot off the ground, straightening your leg to the side. Lower your leg, bring your foot back to the **raised** position, and repeat. Do three sets of 10 to 25 reps on each side.

