



Preparing for a fun first day on the Snow - Part II

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Contributing Editor

Hope you read Part I on exercise, acclimatizing to the altitude with proper nutrition and hydration, protecting your skin and eyes. If not then grab the previous issue of SSN and catch up - but for the rest who did let's move forward with clothing, helmets and accessories.

You want to dress for success on the hill. May it be battling the weather or trying to attract a significant other - as well as that most important reason - so you can perform your best.

When selecting what to wear, think functional. Your garments should be durable, fit well to allow freedom of movement, and keep you warm and dry.

Dress in layers. In the mountains, be prepared for changeable and extreme weather. Wear layers of clothing, rather than one thick item. You can always take a layer off if you get warm.

Think of three key layers. First layer (Base Layer): This layer will help wick moisture away from your skin and to the outer layers, where it can then evaporate, thus keeping your skin relatively dry.

Base layer garments are available in various weights to match activity level. Lightweight layers when it's warm or when you are really working up a sweat; medium or expedition weights when it's really cold or when you aren't exerting yourself, and thus generating little body heat. Wet garments that are in contact with your skin conduct 25 times more heat away from the body than dry ones.

Avoid cotton - it absorbs many times its weight in water and loses its insulating qualities when wet.

What works well as a first layer consist of a polypropylene shirt and pants or long thermal underwear made of a synthetic fiber such as polyester that has 'wicking' ability to move moisture away from your body.

Second layer or Middle layer trap warm air next to the body. The thicker the layer of trapped air, the warmer you'll be. Two or three light weight layers are preferable to a single heavyweight one, because you can adjust the amount of insulation you're wearing to your activity level and to fluctuating temperatures.

A good rule of thumb is to shed a layer before you get too warm and begin to perspire.

The same applies when temperatures cool down. All you do is add a layer before you begin shivering.

A great second layer is a lightweight wool sweater or fleece pullover and pants.

Note: Cotton clothing and blue jeans are poor choices because they won't keep you warm when they get wet.

Third or top or outer layer is your protection from the elements, minimizing heat loss from wind and cold.

Remember that even a gentle breeze can suck warm air from your body through the process of convection.

Regarding the top layer - look for a waterproof, breathable outer shell that lets perspiration escape while protecting you from wind, snow, and rain.

A good outer layer should consist of water-resistant snow pants and a jacket to protect you from snow, sleet, or rain and to block the nasty wind.

For a good snowboard jacket, look for one that is loose fitting, comfortable, long enough at the back to cover your bottom to keep snow out of your pants, and high enough at the neck to keep out the wind and cold.

Pants need to be comfortable and loose fitting. It may be nice to look for a pair with extra padding around the knees and bottom to protect you when you fall.

Key features to look for in clothing: Check for freedom of movement, yet it must provide warmth and protection. For boarders get a jacket shell with a long cut down to your hips that will keep your midriff warm and dry when fastening bindings, or on deep powder days.

Look for tough, waterproof, breathable shell to stand up to plenty of abrasion and abuse.

I like vents under the arms. This helps regulate your temperature. Open when hot; close when cold. Storm flaps covering all zippers help keep wind out. Zip-pulls (attached to zippers allow you to open and close the vents without removing your gloves.

Look for double or triple-stitched seams, and reinforced material on the sides of the jacket shell, and knees and rear end of your pants. Remember you now have some investment on you so be careful as you carry your skis and board with their sharp edges that can cut through the stitching and material on the sides of your jacket or pants, or through your gloves.

Let's move on up to your head. For minimizing heat loss from the head and protecting the little used portion of your body a helmet can be a good thing to have.

We won't discuss the fancy helmets with on-board computer, GPS, telecommunication and entertainment center features, but just how to look for a good fitting helmet.

To start with, let's determine the size. Wrap a measuring tape around your head just above the eyebrows. This is the helmet size.

Now go to the store and try on the helmet by first aligning

the front rim of the helmet above your eyebrow. Then holding the straps on both sides roll the helmet over the back of your head.

The first thing to look for is gaps. Feel the pads press on your head. They should be flush against your forehead and cheeks. Make sure that the back of the helmet does not touch the nape of your neck.

Fasten the chin strap making sure it is snug and feels comfortable. Then try to roll your helmet off your head. A good fitting helmet will make your forehead skin move as you try to roll the helmet.

You're not finished yet. Make sure your goggles - or if you are going to wear glasses - that they fit well with your helmet. Also, if you listen to music then check the use of ear phones on it.

Do your ears get cold? Make sure that the ear covering on the helmets cover and fit well.

Not all helmets are built the same. Some work with Charlie Brown's head, others fit better on Jug Heads. So try various ones. Once you know the helmet fits well then go for the colors, design, venting features, communication capabilities and such.

Other important clothing items include sunglasses or goggles to protect your eyes from harmful solar radiation, the wind, and to keep ice pellets or snow from stinging your eyes.

Remember bright sunlight reflecting off the snow can be just as bad as direct sunlight.

Select goggles that allow for appropriate range of peripheral vision. Look for wide-angle frames or sport shields. Sunglasses and goggles also come in specific tints to help you see dips and bumps in the snow on a dull day.

You can lose a tremendous amount of body heat through your head: cover it, and your feet and hands will be warmer.

Hat or cap for warmth (although it won't provide protection). Make sure that the hat or cap can cover your ears.

Some jackets have a useful hood tucked into the collar.

Wear a helmet to protect your head and for warmth.

Fleece neck gaiter or facemask to protect your face when it's really cold.

Wrist guards for snowboarders to prevent wrist injuries.

Gloves or mittens made of waterproof but breathable fabrics. Snowboarding gloves and mittens often have a reinforced palm and fingers to stand up to the wear caused by balancing on the snow.

Some also have built in wrist guards. Long, elasticized wrist or strapping on cuffs to keep out snow is a good idea.

Socks with flat seams and stretchy material that doesn't wrinkle against your skin will minimize sharp pressure points against the foot.

A thin liner socks (synthetic socks) covered by a thicker wool or pile socks or snowboard/ski socks works especially well. Avoid extremely bulky socks that can keep you from feeling connected to the ground, which is necessary for good control.

Sunscreen should always be used to protect you from sunburn and chapping in cold winds. A lip balm will prevent your lips from cracking.

Suggested Clothing Check List

- ___ Hat/cap/helmet - warm and must cover ears.
- ___ Thermal underwear - for added warmth on cold days.
- ___ Sweater, vest, wool shirt etc...
- ___ Water resistant warm-up pants or ski pants.
- ___ Parka or ski jacket - insulated, usually worn over a sweater. (most parkas and jackets are not water proof and will soak through on wet days.
- ___ Waterproof & Windproof jacket or poncho and pants - for those wet days.
- ___ Sock liner/Sock.
- ___ Gloves or mittens - water resistant.
- ___ Waterproof Sun Block - #15 or higher.
- ___ Face Mask or Scarf - protection from wind and snow.
- ___ Sunglasses - for sunny days.
- ___ Duffel Bag/Day-pack/Knapsack - to keep your small things together.
- ___ Clothing and equipment identification. Many ski items look alike. Mark all

your equipment with your name.

Use masking tape with your name for all rental gear.

Equipment Check List

- ___ Skis/Snowboard - Correct length - Binding adjusted for you by an authorized technician.
- ___ Ski brake for skis, Retention device for Snowboarders.
- ___ Boots - properly fitted.
- ___ Poles - proper length.
- ___ Ski/Snowboard Bags or straps - to protect and/or hold skis together during transport.
- ___ Ski/Board Lock - to secure your equipment when not skiing.

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For more information, visit www.endlesslope.com, or call SnoZone at (916)736-0432.

Training Tip

Listen to your body, not your mind, while skiing. It's tempting to want to get those last few runs in, but tired legs can result in accident or injury.

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