



Fundamentals are key to skiing and riding

By Sam Morishima
Contributing Editor

Why do we love skiing or riding a board?

It's the challenge of riding that keeps us in love with the sport.

The challenge is what fuels our thirst for more. The changing conditions of snow and terrain demand that we adjust our technique. However, most skiers and boarders understand only one technique and rely on it for all conditions and situations. Being satisfied with the way you ride - forcing a one trick technique on different terrains - can be inefficient as well as becoming boring and frustrating!

Golfers do not rely on one type of club or way to hit the ball, but use a different club and hitting technique that varies with the situation at hand.

Different snow, terrain, slopes, etc... demand different techniques as well.

So why do so many skiers and boarders go for a one-size-fits-all attitude? It limits their

riding to one technique while a plethora of conditions exist: groomed, powder, moguls, Sierra cement, mash potato, etc...

Each has its own optimal way of riding.

The reason is that skiers and riders are not receptive to learning other techniques.

Sure, you can obtain different types of skis or boards meant to optimally ski or ride different conditions, but you still need to know how to use them.

Understanding and knowing how to execute the appropriate techniques allow you to maximize the use of your skis or board.

The most critical aspect to learning different techniques is to ride in a manner that allows you to adapt to different situations. In other words, allow the body to feel the snow and the terrain so as to adapt to the changing conditions.

By being receptive, your body can learn and flow into the appropriate technique.

To prepare ourselves to

accept and discover the appropriate techniques we need to make sure our skiing and riding fundamentals are in place.

The two most basic and critical fundamentals that can help us adapt and make us receptive to different techniques are the same for both skiers and snowboarders.

Fundamental No. 1: Staying flexed. Don't be stiff and upright. Flex and stay low and loose will give you better control due to a lower center of mass adding to your stability and allowing you to make shorter radius turns.

It also helps stabilize and absorbs shocks when the terrain becomes icy and bumpy.

Just flex your ankles and knees. For skiers, it is important that you flex your ankles first, otherwise just flexing and bending your knees will put you on your heels causing you to sit back pushing the skis ahead of you and losing control of them.

Fundamental No. 2: Allow your skis or board to initiate the turn - not your upper body and arms.

For both skiers and snowboarders - use your feet to initiate the turns. The feet are the closest things on your body to the ski or board and they have the greatest effect on the ski/board and snow interface affecting the direction and movement of the ski/board.

For the skier, rolling the feet (foot inversion little-toe-edge and foot eversion big-toe-

edge) to create an edge provides the turn for our shaped skis.

For the boarder a foot dorsiflexion results in a heel edge and foot plantar flexion for a toe edge.

What is important to add for the snowboarder is to initiate the toe edge turn first with the front foot slightly leading the back foot with the plantar flexion. This will give a smooth carved toe edge turn.

Allowing a feet first action provides you with greater sensitivity to your terrain.

By making sure our fundamentals are solid, we create a foundation on which any skier or snowboarder can learn and acquire new skiing and riding techniques.

Experiment different movements as you go down various runs. Your enhanced sensory in your body will discover better techniques in riding and skiing.

The most important aspect of all is that it will bring back the excitement and the challenge of the sport and keep us loving it.

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