

Safety tips from our resident ski junkie—Gene Fulkerson.

Squirters

If you play with high-power water squirters, be sure to keep them away from power lines. If you shoot water at a power line, electricity can travel down the stream of water, right back to you.

Safe Tree Skiing

Many of you may know that I LOVE TO SKI THE TREES! But I understand that tree skiing is one of those aspects of downhill skiing you either love or you hate. If you are open to the wild and wondrous world of tree skiing here's a few safety tips that are going to give you a better experience.

into trouble. This is especially important since tree skiing isn't exactly risk-free!

⇒ Pre-Training Helps

Off season the best route to get used to the trees is to spend some time downhill mountain biking, trail running or rollerblading a course. Get used to the tree-line so you can take full advantage when you've slipped into your skis.

⇒ Traverse Down

Keep in mind that trees are never evenly spaced like you see in storybooks. Traverse until you see a fairly wide lane and start skiing down; when the lane

⇒ Be Set for Hitting a Tree

It's not a matter of "if" but "when" you'll smack into a tree. Don't panic. Take your skis off and use whatever you can to climb out— poles or the tree. You may even be able to roll out. If you are not hurt it's not such a big deal.

⇒ Head for Thicker Trees

If the snow is flying and you're having trouble seeing, head toward thicker trees. When there are more trees the extra coverage helps block more snow and improve your sight line.

⇒ Be Set for an Emergency

Whenever you are tree skiing make sure you have a space blanket, food, mobile phone or radio, water, extra layers, and a first-aid kit. Better safe than sorry!

Tree skiing is loads of fun. Use these practical pointers to stay safe and make your downhill skiing adventures something to remember!

Common Sense Safety Trip

⇒ Wear a helmet

While helmets don't prevent concussions, they can lessen a concussion and will help turn a potentially lethal injury into a minor injury.

⇒ Conditioning

Strength training is good but stretching prepares your body for exertion and sports performance.

⇒ Equipment

Equipment should be properly sized and appropriate to one's ability.

⇒ Use common sense

Don't ski or ride when tired. Drink lots of water. Avoid alcohol. The list goes on.

⇒ Take a lesson

There is always something to learn. ■



photo courtesy Whitewater, BC, Canada

⇒ Ditch the Pole Straps

This one is a no-brainer; it's much better to have to backtrack and find your pole than to get carried off to emergency with a dislocated shoulder. Make your tree skiing safer by hanging onto your poles, don't attach them.

⇒ Always Ski with a Buddy

It's Standard Operating Procedure that whenever you're set to hit the slopes that you ALWAYS ski with a buddy. Not only does this make your skiing adventure more enjoyable, but you know you've got someone that can help if you run

starts to get narrow just traverse until you find a wider opening, and follow this line until you need to traverse again. Just know that one lane isn't going to get you all the way down the hill in one piece.

⇒ Is there Enough Snow?

Make sure you've got at least 6 inches of fresh snow on the top of the hill before you decide to tree ski down. Be wary of stumps and logs that may not be buried early in the season. The last thing you want to do is come flying through the trees and get your tip stuck under a half-covered log or boulder.

