

Safety, Health & Fitness—

How to Cope With Temperature and Precipitation

Our bodies perform much better and move more efficiently when they are warm and dry. And as any skier will tell you, getting and staying warm and dry is important for enjoyable skiing. Layering garments made of lightweight materials will provide excellent results. Many modern high-tech fabrics used for outerwear provide wind and moisture protection with breath-ability, which allows the body to shed accumulated moisture. Here's how to protect yourself from head to toe.

Head.

Without a hat, you lose body heat quickly through the top of your head, and so a cold head means a cold body. A wool hat with a fleece liner or a 100-percent fleece hat (depending on thickness) will keep your head warm. A jacket with a built-in hood is very good for long lift rides on cold, windy days. It's also extremely important to keep the back of your neck warm and flexible. A cold neck can tighten your back and shoulder muscles, contributing to overall tightness. When that happens, it becomes difficult to balance properly on the center of the skis.

Body.

A first layer of thin fleece or silk keeps moisture away from the skin and insulates the body. Choose shirts that are long enough to cover your lower back.

Hands.

Gloves and mittens come in many different designs and material. Cow or goat hides with Thinsulate or Thermolite insulation are common in high-quality gloves. Cordura nylon gloves are also available and even come with waterproof membranes. Skiers who have difficulty staying warm should consider mittens, as there is nothing better for keeping the hands warm.

Legs.

Close fitting tights made from polypropylene make a good first layer; a looser-fitting second layer of fleece works well to keep you insulated from cold. On warm days, omit the second layer. An outer layer of waterproof, windproof material is an important last guard against the elements and an important piece of equipment.

Feet.

For best results in ski boots, wear thin to medium thick ski specific socks with micro fiber. They wick moisture and are knit tightly enough to hold heat. Thick socks made with wool are less effective because they compromise fit and comfort. Neoprene ski boots covers are making a comeback. They are easy to use and increase foot warmth by about 30 percent without batteries. Boot heaters are very popular and effective if you have difficulty keeping your feet warm. Proper boot fitting and carefully designed foot beds can also increase circulation and provide much better foot warmth. Skiers with chronically cold feet can become very comfortable with proper foot beds.

Buried in a Tree-Well

Former Big Mountain Resort Ambassador Larry Hanson, was rescued by three local teens recently after having been buried in a tree-well in the lower Window Pane area of the resort's north side terrain. Hanson was discovered by Tyler Gardner and Charley Bowman of Whitefish, and Drew Lewis, visiting from the state of Georgia.

"I skied below him and saw his glove," said Tyler Gardner, who initially came across Hanson. "He was head first in the tree well so we started digging until we uncovered his head. One of us stayed with him and the other two went for patrol."

Big Mountain Ski Patrol were in the vicinity of Hanson when the boys discovered him, having been alerted of his disappearance by two skiers who entered the Window Pane area with Hanson. Reports show that Hanson's core temperature was 84 degrees when patrol brought him to the Outpost Clinic. "There is serious potential for a heart attack at that core temperature," said Bill Brown, of Big Mountain Ski Patrol. "Those kids saved his life, there's no question about it."

"I know I am lucky to be alive," said Hanson. "I want to thank those boys for stopping. Had they not found me I wouldn't be here today."

Elements of Skiing— Flexibility

Skiing or boarding involves many multi-joint movements that require a mixture of **strength, balance, and flexibility**, any conditioning program should reflect the same. The focus of specific exercises is to prevent injuries and improve performance. Make no mistake, the best way to become a better rider is to ride! But being in shape will help you to remain injury free.

Flexibility is the range of motion that a body joint can go through. It is controlled by the muscles, tendons and ligaments. The muscles used for riding include rotators of the hip, torso, low back extenders and flexors, and shoulder stabilizers. There are some great stretches that can be done on a regular basis and should help with your overall performance.

Frequency: Everyday.

Intensity: You should stretch to the point of tightness, but not pain. When you feel the tension of the stretch, hold the position for 10-30 seconds. Duration: Routine should take 10-15 minutes

The Details: Emphasis is on torso flexibility that includes hips, back, and shoulders. Rotative flexibility is important for control and the "occasional" wipeout! Cross bent knee over straight leg. Place opposite arm on bent knee and push. Hold 10-30 seconds and rotate upper-body to other side. Hold for 10-30 seconds. Switch legs and repeat.

The Details: The groin stretch is a perfect way to loosen up tight adductors (the muscles on the inside of the thigh). These tend to get worked hard anytime you go past 90 degrees knee flexion, or when you push off while. In sitting position, knees bent, place forearms on thighs. Push thighs downward. Stretch to the point of tightness and hold for 10 to 30 seconds.

The Details: The piriformis stretch can be a great benefit to the snowboarder. The muscles being stretched are the lateral rotators of the hip, one being the piriformis muscle. This muscle when overly tight can press against the sciatic nerve causing lower leg and back pain. Because the rider uses these specific muscles carving and spinning, it's easy to see why this stretch is useful. Lying supine (flat on back) clasp hands behind head. Rest left foot on bent right knee. Slowly lift right leg up. Stop and hold 10-30 seconds when you feel tightness in hip muscle. Lower right foot to floor and repeat. When finished switch legs.

Thin Air, Icy Slopes Cited In Recent Resort Deaths

Ironically, after dire warnings in a Wall Street Journal article that was denounced by Colorado Ski Country USA, a 31-year-old man from Texas died of the effects of thin air while visiting Mount Crested Butte recently. In addition to pulmonary and cerebral edemas, the man was found to have methadone in his body, although the methadone did not cause his death, said Gunnison County Coroner Frank Vader.

There was more irony in the death of a Wyoming man who worked for Life-Link, which makes avalanche gear. The 48-year-old Teton Village resident was caught in an avalanche near Teton Pass, and died after being buried for about an hour.

Katherine Norrie, the 25-year-old Breckenridge Ski Resort, CO, ski instructor who was seriously injured in a recent snow sliding incident, died last week in a Denver-area hospital.

Unusually hard, icy snow was cited in three deaths at Jackson Hole Mountain Resort, WY, last month. Joe Gili, 61, a volunteer patrolman at the resort, died last week after hitting a tree, which was also the cause of death of Thomas Plezia, 54, who died Jan. 22 and Claudia Johnson, 33, who died Jan. 17.

A Japanese snowboarder who was killed when he went off a small cliff and crashed into a large rock at Whistler, BC, last Wednesday. Vail Mountain, CO, reported that a 40 year-old male skier died after an apparent medical-related incident last week, and a 57-year-old male snowboarder collapsed and died of apparently natural causes on Feb. 1 at Sugarbush Resort, VT.

Fitness Test—

This test will give you a good idea of your current level of aerobic fitness, the area of your fitness that to a large degree is a test as to your basic health. Adding one regular 'activity' to your lifestyle can have a profound effect on your general wellness, giving you more energy to live a fuller life. The idea is always to be more active more often.

One of the best ways to measure and monitor your aerobic fitness is to measure your heart rate recovery - how quickly your heart rate drops after exercise. This step test does just that, in the convenience of your own home. Repeat it every few weeks to see how you are improving.

The Step Test

Stand about 8" away from a step, stair or bench. Make sure the step is strong enough to take your weight. The step height should be about 6.5". Step up and down (right foot up, left up, right down, left down) as fast as you can comfortably for three minutes. The ideal rate is 24 'full' steps per minute, and you should change your leading leg after one and a half minutes (left foot up, right up, left down, right).

Always warm up before exercise. When stepping, place hands on hips, keep back straight and chest high. Place heel down first when stepping up, then ball of foot, don't lean forward. Always cool down after exercise. Always check with your doctor before starting any new exercise program.

After three minutes, sit down on the step, then take your pulse for a 30 seconds and then for a full minute.

Recovery Pulse Rate After 30 Seconds

MEN - here's how your pulse reading rates:

Age	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
20-29	102+	86-100	76-84	74 or less
30-39	102+	88-100	80-86	78 or less
40-49	106+	90-104	82-88	80 or less
50+	106+	92-104	84-90	82 or less

WOMEN - here's how your pulse reading rates:

Age	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
20-29	112+	94-100	88-92	86 or less
30-39	114+	96-112	88-94	86 or less
40-49	116+	96-114	90-94	88 or less
50+	118+	100-116	92-98	90 or less