

SKI HEALTH

SNOW JOKE

Winter sports are great – you can go abroad without getting sand wedged in your crevices while sitting on a patch of sand smaller than your average toilet cubicle. But there is some vital preparation to be done before you go – we got the experts to give us their advice on how to get your body all set for the slopes

THE PHYSIOTHERAPIST SAYS...

➤ SNOW FUN IF YOU'RE INJURED

- After spending months sat at your desk, your body needs some pre-ski fine-tuning.
- Prevention is the best cure. Before you go, work on:
- **Strength and flexibility** The most-used muscles in skiing, your thighs and quads are an important muscle group in stabilising the knee. Have a look at *The Ski Fitness Expert Says...* for how to build up yours.
- If you know you are naturally inflexible, then spend a few weeks before you go away stretching every day. The areas you should target are your calves, quadriceps and hamstrings, as well as the lower back.

➤ WHILE YOU'RE THERE

- Warm up and warm down properly – stretch your hamstrings, thighs, hips and calves before and after you hit the slopes. Hold each stretch gently for 30 seconds – it shouldn't hurt!
 - Keep your boot bindings in top condition so that they release correctly if you do fall. This helps to prevent injuries that can result from a twisting fall.
- Rebecca Christenson is a physiotherapist specialising in the field of ski injuries – see www.puresportsmed.com*

THE SKI FITNESS EXPERT SAYS...

➤ GET YOUR BODY PREPPED TO PROTECT

- Strength, endurance, power, balance, flexibility and core stability are needed for skiing and snowboarding – start training a minimum of six weeks before you go.
- **Cardio** Walk at an incline of over 12 per cent for 20 minutes, with some intermittent running on a lower incline. This places demands on the heart and lungs and works the quads and gluteals (buttocks).
- **Muscle strength and endurance** For thigh strength, the basic squat is very ski- and board-specific – and it works just about every muscle in the lower limbs.
- **Power** Increases strength and speed. Exercise with explosive movements – jump sideways and immediately rebound. Less fit individuals will need to improve their strength before a full plyometric (power) workout.
- **Balance** Use a balance board or a wobble cushion to mimic bumpy snow conditions. Perform step-downs or squats on a cushion or board. At home, stand on one leg for a minute – closing your eyes adds difficulty.
- **Core stability** Target your deep stabilisers and trunk rotators using sit-ups and pilates.

Cordelia Banks is a specialist physiotherapist working at Bodyfactor in London and Surrey – see www.bodyfactor.com

THE ALTITUDE EXPERT SAYS...

➤ BEING HIGH IS HARD WORK

- The good news? Thinner air makes for increased speed. And the bad? You may find yourself short of breath and more susceptible to injury.
- Everything at altitude is harder – the reduced oxygen forces you to increase your anaerobic work.
- When you are tired, your poise and posture suffer, which can cause you to fall. Improve your fitness before you go and take regular breaks from the slopes.

➤ CONCENTRATION CAN LAPSE

- Your brain uses about 40 per cent of the body's oxygen, which is in lesser supply at altitude. Feed your brain by ensuring your liver stores are full with glucose, which is brain food. Try a breakfast of mixed fruits with honey.

➤ AND DON'T FORGET...

- You will get an urge to pee more regularly – this is your body's way of removing bicarbonate from the blood and aiding the release of oxygen. So drink plenty of fluid.
- Richard Pullan runs London's Altitude Centre, where you can hire altitude-training equipment or book altitude-training sessions – see www.altitudecentre.com*

HEALTH QUERIES

BREAKFAST JUST MAKES ME HUNGRIER



DR ADAM CAREY

THE EXPERT Everyone says eating breakfast will help me slim, but I get hungry even earlier if I do eat it. What am I doing wrong?
 "This is based on what you choose to eat at breakfast. Highly refined cereals, toast and jam or pastries such as croissants cause rapid swings of your blood sugar. This leaves you feeling hungry at mid-morning, when you often grab something easy. Instead, breakfast on quality protein – eggs, lean bacon, fish or a protein shake. Protein prevents hunger for longer."

Dr Adam Carey is a leading nutritionist and advisor to Maximuscle – see www.maximuscle.com

CAN I GET FIT WITHOUT THE GYM?



SIMON LOVELL

THE EXPERT I want to get fit, but refuse to join a gym. I run and do sit-ups and press-ups at home, but what else can I do?
 "Buy yourself a Reebok step and set of dumbbells – weight-based exercises will increase your muscle size and deplete any body fat. With this kit, you can work the whole body. Use resistance bands, chairs and items from around the house to add weight to your workouts – there's nothing wrong with two buckets full of water for bicep curls and a sandbag on your back for squats."

Simon Lovell is a personal trainer – see www.theheatfitness.co.uk

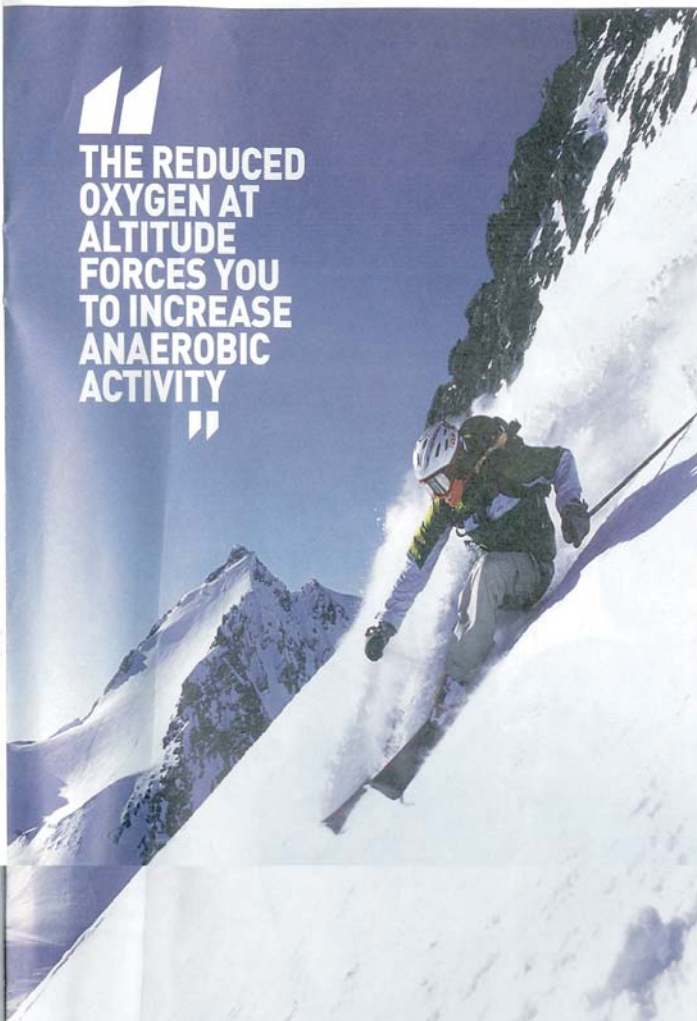


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ANAEROBIC
ACTIVITY**
”



IS THE NEEDLE NECESSARY?

THE EXPERT

I have heard about physiotherapists using acupuncture to treat joint injuries. Is this effective, or should I avoid it?

“Acupuncture is widely used to treat a number of health problems. Physios using acupuncture in the UK are likely to adopt western methods, which means treating the painful points in your muscles with needles, which can have an effect on joint pain. It isn't something to avoid, and it is becoming more common. Any physio should be able to justify the treatment they use – and this includes acupuncture if they use it.”

Sam Wilde is a specialist musculoskeletal physiotherapist – see www.puresportsmed.com

Sport has assembled a crack team of experts in the fields of fitness, nutrition and general wellbeing to answer all your questions. Send your questions in to sarah.shephard@myfreesport.co.uk...

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