

The Safety Site

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Recreational Safety takes Responsibility and Control

Skiing Exercises at Home

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One of the best ways to get the most out of a skiing trip is to arrive fit, healthy and ready to ski. Poor levels of fitness can mean that you ski less than you'd like to because you fatigue quickly. Being ski fit can may also reduce your risk of injury. Get fit for skiing by doing some ski-specific exercises in the weeks leading up to your ski trip. Check with your doctor before starting a new fitness routine -- especially if you have been unwell or sedentary recently.

Squat for Stronger Thighs

Your thighs are arguably the hardest working muscles in skiing, and squats are one of the best thigh exercises around. Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart and your hands by your sides. Push your hips to the rear, and bend your knees until your thighs are roughly parallel to the floor. Stand back up and repeat. Make this exercise harder by holding weights in your hands. Do two to four sets of 12 to 20 repetitions resting 30 to 90 seconds between sets.

Improve Your Agility with Lateral Jumps

Lateral jumps are a good skiing exercise because they strengthen the outside of your thighs -- the muscles you use when you push off your edges -- and also improve your agility and coordination. They are also good for increasing leg power and strength. Stand side on to a shin-high barrier. With your feet together, jump over the barrier and then immediately jump back. Keep ground contact to the minimum and make your jumps quick and light. Do two to four sets of 10 to 20 jumps. Use a higher barrier for a harder workout.

Increase Your Endurance With Wall Squats

Wall squats are an effective at-home leg endurance exercise as they require no specialized equipment and can be performed anywhere you have a suitable wall. Stand with your back resting against a smooth wall and your feet slightly in front of you. Slide down the wall until your knees are bent to 90 degrees and your shins are vertical. Push your back and butt against the wall as hard as you can. Hold this position, but not your breath, for as long as you can. Relax, rest and repeat for two to four sets.

Planks for Stronger Core

Your core muscles work hard when you ski, especially when you change direction or ski over rough terrain. Consisting of your abs, waist and lower back muscles, a strong core also supports your spine and may reduce your risk of injury. Lie on your front with your arms bent and elbows resting on the floor. Lift your hips so your weight is supported on your arms and toes only. Hold this position for 30 to 60 seconds

and then rest. Repeat for two to four sets. Do not hold your breath as this may cause your blood pressure to rise. This exercise can also be performed on your side to target your oblique or waist muscles.

Build Better Balance with the Tree Pose

The tree pose is an effective way to improve your balance, and if you want to spend more time on your skis and less time on your butt, you'd better make time for some balance training. Stand on one leg and pull the sole of your other foot up and in so it is pressed firmly against your inner calf, knee or thigh depending on your flexibility. Turn your knee out and open your hips. Place your hands together in front of your chest, out at shoulder level or above your head as preferred. Hold this position for 30 to 60 seconds and then switch legs. Make this exercise harder by standing on a soft pillow or closing your eyes.