

The Basics

Monday, 06 August 2007

Learning

Basically, snowboarding technique is closer to skateboarding and surfing than skiing.

If you are a skier, your knowledge of edge control, snow, unweighting and general balance and co-ordination will come in handy, but you will have a lot to un-learn.

If you can bear to miss a good day's alpine skiing, choose a day when there are a few centimetres of new snow to cushion your early falls.

Lessons are recommended.

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Getting Started

Start on a nursery slope: walk up and practise sideslipping.

Try it both ways, toes facing downhill with the heel edge biting, then facing the slope with the toe edge biting, to get the feel of both positions.

At this stage turn by sitting down.

Some teachers recommend you take your poles for the first day, since this avoids some of the tedium of falling around on your butt or knees, but your balance is affected, and it's preferable to dispense with them from day one.

Basic Stance

In the basic position, you face down the slope, with 70 percent of your weight on the front foot, 30 percent on the rear, legs slightly bent, shoulders turned forwards, arms extended for balance.

OK, so standing up is good. Next we need to know how to get to the top of the slopes, not to mention the need to steer this plank…

for more information see setting your stance

Lifts

Most lifts, especially draglifts, were designed way back in the dawn of time when man was still mucking about with fire, day-glow nevica and skis.

Although we've come a long way since, snowboarders still have to negotiate these cantankerous mechanical monsters.

Have nothing to fear, with our guide; soon you'll be looking forward to your ride up on the lift as a chance to rest your weary legs and scope out your next ride down.

Using Drag Lifts

Release your back binding and fold it down so it doesn't drag in the snow. Place the perch behind your front leg or under your rear arm. Trip the lift trigger as you pass if necessary.

Either place the rear foot back on the board between front and rear binding, preferably on the 'stomp' pad, or use it to balance by running it in the snow alongside.

Using Chair Lifts

On chair lifts it is easier to position yourself to catch a chair with the rear foot free, but easier to disembark if both are attached. Swings and roundabouts, and everyone falls over the first few times they get off the chairs.

Once you've mastered the lifts, why not try for some big air. You know, jumps!

The FIS Code

Also note that many resorts also have additional rules and regulations, especially in the USA. Check with each resort you visit. Certain resorts also reserve the right to confiscate your liftpass, without refund, for reckless riding. Watch out !

Do not endanger or prejudice others.

Ride in control and adapt your style and speed to your ability and the mountain conditions.

The rider in front has priority - leave enough space when overtaking a slower slope user.

Look up and down the mountain before moving off or entering a marked run.

Be aware of the blind spot over and just behind your leading shoulder.

Only stop at the edge of the piste or where you can clearly be seen.

When climbing up or down, always keep to the side of the piste.

Obey all signs and markings - they are there for your safety.

In case of accident, mark the area with your board, provide help and alert rescue services.

All involved in an accident, including witnesses, should exchange names and addresses.

All the above are legally binding for all slope users.