

Preparation and Conditioning for Skiing and Hockey

Author: CCA Staff Team Date: Nov 24, 2015 [Back Care Tips](#), [Blog](#), [Injuries](#), [Sports](#)



Winter can be a splendid and enjoyable time of year, especially if you love winter sports like downhill skiing and hockey. These Canadian favourites are enjoyed by many during the winter months, but do pose some risks to your muscles and joints if you are not adequately prepared.

Commonly, muscles that work to internally rotate the hips are activated and engaged during skiing – key for maintaining balance and coordination¹. A great way to condition the body and build muscle memory for skiing is to practice your technique with the use of balance boards, in-line skates, or sports that require quick movements and changes of direction. Another important aspect to skiing is the need for endurance and stamina. Interval training is a great tool to build endurance, where you maximize your input for short bouts of time. The gains made through interval training can translate into meaningful improvements to your overall endurance²; however, as with all activities, progression is key.

Another great winter activity is our beloved hockey. Hockey involves a combination of endurance and explosive activity, which requires the body to be conditioned aerobically and for muscular strength³. For example, skating for long durations can serve as great aerobic practice; whereas exercises such as short sprints, box jumps and TABATAs will help build anaerobic capacity, as well as your ability to do the aggressive bursts required for the sport.

If you are an avid skier or hockey player, now is the time to start preparing your body for the season. Here are some general tips to help [prevent injury](#):

Maximize Joint and Muscle Function

With sports like skiing and hockey, maintaining good muscle and joint range of motion is important. Building [mobility](#) is key to preventing injuries. Your chiropractor can help you improve your joint and muscle function, as well as provide some guidance on how to best increase your mobility safely based on your individual goals and needs. The earlier you start, the better prepared you will be.

Warm-Up and Stretch

Prior to hitting the ice or the hills, it is always advisable to warm-up. Start with gentle activities such as walking or skating to increase the blood flow to your muscles. You may also want to do gentle stretches before you play to help prevent injuries. Better yet, consider working on your overall mobility before the season begins to enhance your athleticism and improve your performance. You can use the [Straighten Up Canada](#) app to help you move during the day, or you can try our [hockey stretches](#), which you can also apply to skiing as well.

Check Your Equipment

You should always ensure that your equipment fits and is in good working condition before you begin the season. Your equipment supports and protects your body from injury while you enjoy your favorite activities. If you need to buy new equipment for the season, ask a professional to help you find the best equipment for your needs.

Brush Up on Your Technique – Take a Lesson if Necessary

Bad habits or poor technique in any sport can increase the risk of injury. Agility and technique can greatly enhance your performance in winter sports like hockey and skiing, so it's extra important to spend time learning new skills. Even avid skiers and hockey players take the time to practice skills and drills before they start playing and competing. Consider lessons with a professional to refine, practice or even learn new technique before you begin the season.

Your healthcare team including your [chiropractor](#), can also help you prepare for your winter sports. Meet with them to discuss the sports you'll be participating in this winter to make sure your body is ready and for strategies to decrease the risk of injury.