

The



Learn
Show Ski
Fundamentals



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Basic skills to help you become a show skier



Skill 1

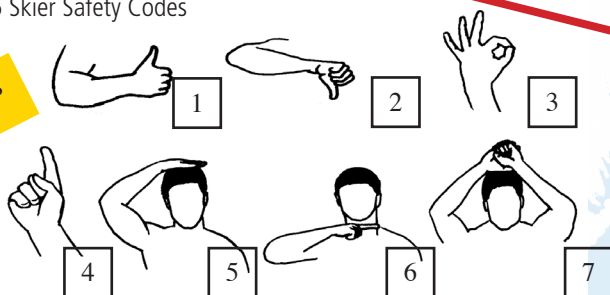
On land, demonstrate:

- The seven skier hand signals
- Placing feet in and adjusting bindings
- Holding the handle properly
- Proper body position for starting
- Proper body position while skiing

Explain five of the 15 Skier Safety Codes

Important safety rule:
Always wear flotation

Hand Signals



- 1. Speed up:** The "thumbs-up" gesture indicates that the skier would like the speed increased.
- 2. Slow down:** The "thumbs-down" gesture indicates that the skier would like the speed decreased.
- 3. OK:** If the set speed or boat the path is good, the skier may use the OK signal.
- 4. Turn:** When either the skier or the driver wants the boat turned, a circle motion with the arm over the head with one finger in the air is used. It is usually followed by pointing in the direction of the turn.
- 5. Back to the Dock:** A pat on the head indicates that the skier would like to return to the dock.
- 6. Cut Motor/Stop:** A slashing motion with the hand across the neck indicates the boat is to stop immediately. This signal can be used by the skier, driver or observer.
- 7. I'm OK (after a fall):** This important signal indicates that a skier is OK after a fall. It consists of both hands clasped over the head. It should be used every time the skier falls.

Water Skier's Safety Codes

Rule 1: Always wear flotation. A properly fitted personal flotation device is designed to fit snugly, so that it won't slip up on the body during a fall. The recommended type is a jacket or vest that covers the chest, abdomen and back.

Rule 2: Always be sure your equipment is in good condition. Your personal safety and enjoyment depend on the equipment you use. Check your equipment regularly. Be sure that your skis do not have sharp or protruding surfaces that could cut or scrape the skier. Check towropes for frayed areas or broken bridles and handles. Repair or replace damaged or unsafe articles.

Rule 3: Don't give the starting signal until ready. Make sure you are ready, the slack has been taken out of the rope and you are clear of any dangerous obstacles around you. Keep your ski tips up.

Rule 4: Do not ski near docks, pilings, other boats or swimmers. Always look ahead and be sure you are aware of your surroundings and where you are going at all times. Many water ski injuries result from collisions with docks or other solid objects.

Rule 5: Never put any part of your body through the handle or wrap the line around yourself in any way.

Rule 6: Never ski in shallow water or an area where there may be obstructions above or just beneath the surface.

Rule 7: When a fall is inevitable, try to fall backward or to either side. A forward fall increases the chances of contact with the ski.

Rule 8: Know and use the skier hand signals. It is particularly important to use the skier's "I'm OK" signal after a fall if you are all right.

Rule 9: If you fall in an area where there is other boat traffic, lift one ski half way out of the water. This will signal to other boats that there is a skier in the water.

Rule 10: Never ski to the point of excessive fatigue.

Rule 11: Always ski during daylight, from sunrise to one-half hour after sunset.

Rule 12: Never ski directly in front of another boat.

Rule 13: Always use equal length ropes when skiing double.

Rule 14: Always ensure that the motor is "off" when a skier is entering and exiting the boat.

Rule 15: Always have an observer in the towboat.

Fundamentals For Show Skiing

The following are basic skills that should be learned by the beginner show skier after learning to ski on two skis and on a single ski as outlined in the "Learn to Slalom" Basic Skills brochure.

In show skiing there are specific skills for female and male skiers. Starting with skill 6, the distinction will be noted, i.e. leg ballet for females, barefoot skiing for males.

Skill 1 – SITTING DOCK START ON TWO SKIS

When doing the sitting dock start you are already 2/3 of the way up, so relax and be ready to ski.

After you have mastered the dock start by your self, challenge yourself by completing a sitting dock-start with several experienced show skiers



Just like the deep-water start, it is important to keep your knees bent. But you will need to bend your arms and keep your elbows in to resist the initial pull of the rope.

Helpful Tip



Hold the rope with your palm up, handle on the bottom of the coils. **NEVER** place your hand over the coils of rope.

Skill 2 – LANDING IN SHALLOW WATER

To land safely in knee-deep water, be sure to approach the shallow water nearly parallel to the shoreline until you are comfortable gliding to a stop in shallow water. As you slow and start to sink, your upper body will tend to fall forward. Be prepared to counter this by bending your knees and leaning back as you slow to a stop. As you learn to judge your speed and the distance it takes to slow to a stop, you can increase the angle of approach to the shoreline.



Be prepared to step forward out of your skis when you come to a stop.

Helpful Tip

Skill 3 – SITTING DOCK START ON ONE SKI

Complete a sitting dock start on one ski. Sink safely to a stop in knee-deep water.

The one ski dock start is similar to the two-ski dock start. It is important to keep your knees bent and to bend your arms. Keep your elbows in to resist the initial pull of the rope, which will be greater and much more sudden than with the two-ski start.



Challenge yourself by completing a sitting dock start with several experienced show skiers.

Skill 4 – STANDING DOCK START ON ONE SKI

Complete a standing “hop-dock” start on one ski.



To prepare for the one ski standing dock start move to the edge of the dock standing on your free foot right at the edge. Balance on your free foot and lift the ski slightly above the dock with the tip lifted higher than the tail. Do NOT jump forward. Let the boat/rope pull you off the dock. As it does resist the pull with your arms. Be ready to bend your skiing foot when you hit the water and be prepared to bring your arms in a bit to keep the skiing foot from dragging behind your hips. Place your free foot on the ski behind your skiing foot as soon as comfortably possible.

Helpful
Tip

Challenge yourself by completing a standing hop-dock start with several experienced show skiers.



Skill 5 – SITTING DOCK START ON TWO SKIS WITH FLAG POLE

Complete a two-ski sitting dock start carrying a flag on a flag pole, and land safely in knee-deep water. For this skill you will need a special ski with rubber “crutch tip” or similar device to hold the pole in place on your ski. This type of ski is standard show ski equipment, and most clubs will have several readily available.

Helpful hint: Let the flag pole rest in the crook of your shoulder. Do not try to hold it with your hand against the handle.



Skill 6 – BEGINNING LEG BALLET FOR FEMALES

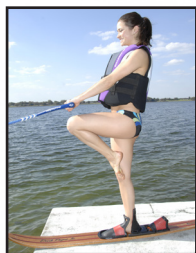
When learning to ski on one and two skis, you practiced lifting a ski off the water to do a skier’s salute. Now that you are skiing on one ski, you need to practice standing on the single ski on one foot while moving your free leg into different positions. Begin with your free foot at your standing leg knee, free knee pointing straight forward and toes pointed. Slowly extend your leg to the front, directly toward the boat and return it to the standing knee. Do this several times. Next, repeat the process but move your free leg to the side and finally move it to the back, away from the boat. The optimum here is a front swan, which will necessitate your upper body to lean forward. You will need to pull the rope in and down to help maintain balance with your standing foot slightly in front of your hips.



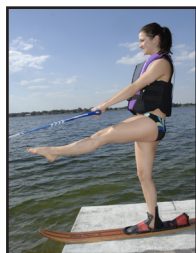
Skier's salute

NOTE: The leg ballet is an example of several show ski skills that are female specific. Most females ski on their right foot, primarily because everyone skiing on the same foot leads to easier performing of difficult routines in large groups.

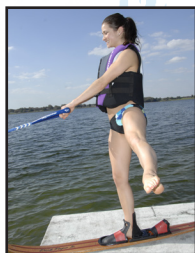
Challenge yourself by doing the leg maneuvers while holding the handle with one hand.



Foot to the knee



Leg front



Leg side



Front Swan

Skill 6 – STEPPING OFF A SINGLE SKI FOR BAREFOOT SKIERS

Using just the boom, boom with a short extension or long-line, perform the one ski step-off and barefoot ski for 10 seconds.

Barefooting is an advanced skill for stronger skiers.

There is a separate Basic Skills brochure on how to barefoot with several learning methods. Stepping off a ski is included here because this is a much used barefoot start method in ski shows.

**Helpful
Tip**

Use a ski with very loose binder, or, use a special "step-off" ski with only the toe-piece of the binder.



The step-off method allows you to be on top of the water, skiing at barefoot speed. As you start to place your free foot on the water it must be done slowly and gently. If the foot is placed too abruptly, the friction of the water will push it behind you.



Once you have your free foot placed and riding on the water, slowly transfer your weight to that foot. When you have most of your weight on that foot, lift the other foot up and off the ski and place it alongside the foot that is already "barefooting." Don't worry about the ski, it will leave your foot quickly as soon as you take weight off that foot. Do remember to bring the foot "stepping off" the ski forward before placing it on the water because it will naturally be behind the barefooting foot as you lift it out of the ski.

With the help of Keith St. Onge, www.worldbarefootcenter.com

Again, as with barefooting, learning to jump is listed here as a logical progression to help males skiers become stronger skiers. It is not to say that females can't learn to jump. If they are so inclined it will be as much fun for them as for the males.

Skill 7 – BEGINNING TO JUMP FOR MALE SKIERS

This is another step in helping you become a stronger skier preparing you for carrying pyramids and doubles. Start with an experienced jumper alongside to guide you in the proper line-up to the jump



The first few jumps will be at an angle toward the boat which will help keep you from sliding on the ramp. Maintaining the proper skiing position is a must. Feet should be shoulder width apart, knees bent, arms straight and lean forward a bit as you approach the ramp, just like you would if you start walking up a hill. The ramp surface will feel very slippery so FREEZE as you approach the bottom. Do NOT pull or try to move, you will only slip on the ramp, which will result in a fall.



The first time off the ramp will be quite a thrill. Suddenly everything will drop out from under and you will be hanging in mid-air. Try to hold your skiing position and be ready to bend your knees to absorb the landing.

Skill 7 – SIMPLE PYRAMID - LAND PRACTICE

To learn even the simplest of pyramids, **land practice is a must!** The beginner female skier should demonstrate the ability to properly perform a 2-1 pyramid with two partners who are experienced show skiers. The beginner base skier should demonstrate the proper base skier position and how to land on shore with a female riding safely on the front of his skis.



Good basic posture is a must for everyone learning to build a pyramid! Head up, shoulders square, back straight and knees bent. If starting with the climber skiing on one ski between two base skiers it is very important for the base skiers to bend their knees enough to give the climber a "step" to place her foot/feet, and for the female to place her feet as high up on the base skier's leg as possible for a good solid "step." The step up should be made in one smooth movement. It is very important for the base skiers to remain steady with as little movement as possible; shoulders square and back straight up. Base skiers should **NEVER** let their shoulders roll forward.

Skill 8 – SIMPLE PYRAMID, TAKE IT TO THE WATER

Demonstrate on the water the ability to properly perform a 2-1 pyramid with two partners who are experienced show skiers.



Pictured is a three-step climb. Beginners may find it helpful to add an intermediate step making the second step to the thigh instead of going directly to the shoulder.

When first trying this pyramid, the steps for the female climber will be to the thigh of one base skier followed by a step to the thigh of the other. The second set of steps will be from the thighs to the shoulders.

As the climber starts lifting her second foot, that base skier should reach across and grab hold of the other base skiers upper arm, which will add stability to the pyramid.

The climber should pull up on the rope when skiing between the base skiers. The climber will gradually need to let out a bit of rope as she climbs higher. When at the top she should be standing tall, leaning slightly back against the pull of the rope for balance.

Climbers, be sure to place the palm of your hand against the base skiers neck, not on his shoulder where it will be right where you want to put your foot.



SKILL 8 – SIMPLE PYRAMID, TAKE IT TO THE WATER

Demonstrate on the water the ability to properly perform a 2-1 pyramid taking off the dock on the shoulders with two experienced show skiers.



Helpful hint: When the climber is taking off sitting on shoulders take care with the rope to hold it out in front of the base skier.

Building a pyramid with the climber taking off the dock sitting on the shoulders of a base skier makes for a more difficult start for the base skier.

When ready to begin the climb one base skier should reach across and hold the other's upper arm for stability. (This will

keep the base skiers from getting too far apart which the outward pressure of the climber will tend to cause.) The climber then lifts her outside leg over the base skier's head and climbs to a standing position.

Climbers, when down on the base persons skis, rest your hands gently on his wrists and stand on his toes, not of the front of the skis.



IMPORTANT CAUTION: The climber's rope should **NOT** have the typical ski handle but should be a braided section of rope at least three feet long and should be approximately two feet longer than the base ropes. This enables the climber to adjust her balance on the rope as she climbs and stands and will prevent entanglement in the handle in case of a fall.

Skill 9 – PREPARING FOR DOUBLES SKIING – STEP-UP START

There are two ways to get a female on the shoulders of a base skier – stepping up off a single ski or taking off on the shoulders. The latter, while quicker, is definitely more advanced for the base skier. Below is the step-up method.

Again, as with pyramids, **land practice is a must** when practicing doubles skiing, no matter what skill skier you are.



**Helpful
Tip**

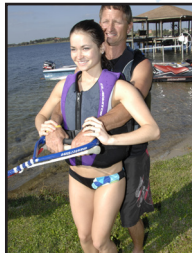
Good basic posture is essential for everyone learning to ski doubles! Head up, back straight, knees bent. When starting the step-up, it is very important for the male to firmly grab the female's outside foot and hold it tightly against his knee. As the female begins her step, hold the foot against your knee and lift up slightly. For the female, do not look down, keep your back straight and shoulders up, and take your inside leg and swing it up and over your partner's shoulder until you are sitting on his shoulders. Once you are up, pass your handle down to your partner.

Once up, the female should hook her feet around her partner's back and hold on with the feet, not by squeezing the thighs together around his neck.

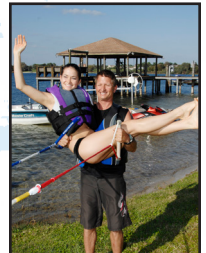
Skill 10 – PYRAMID AND DOUBLES LANDING

There are two ways to land carrying a partner. Typically pyramids land with the female standing on her partner's skis while the typical doubles landing will be with her in his arms. Demonstrate both methods on land and then on the water.

Female skiers, when landing on the front of his skis, be careful to stand on his feet, not on the skis in front of his feet. Also, hold onto his wrists, not the handle.



If landing in his arms, be sure to reach around his back and get a hand-hold under his armpit to help support your weight.



Skill 11 – PREPARING FOR THE DOUBLES DOCK START

Demonstrate a dock start with a partner. The partner should be an experienced doubles skier. The skiers should be able to take off the dock and land safely in knee-deep water without falling.



ALWAYS use a spotter when learning a doubles dock start to make sure the female being carried doesn't hit the dock if she should fall back on take off.

This is a difficult start. It is a very hard pull off the dock for the male. The female must be sure to lean forward with the pull of the boat and not let her upper body/weight go backward. The female has to maintain a solid grip with her feet against the male's back. **Don't** squeeze your thighs on his neck!

Skill 12 – DOUBLES SKIING – ON THE WATER

Demonstrate the ability to properly perform a Front Angel on the water with a partner. This skill should be completed with a partner who is an experienced doubles skier.

The two most basic doubles positions used in ski shows are the lay-back and front angel.



Lay-back

The lay-back is accomplished by the female hooking one leg under the male's arm and allowing herself to "fall" or lay back until her back is nearly against his back.

The Front Angel is accomplished when she stands on her partner's thighs and leans forward with her thighs against the handle for balance. In both positions it is important for the female to arch her back, which adds balance for the skiers and will appear more graceful to the spectators.



Front Angel

When doing the layback, guys, **push the handle down**. Do NOT let the weight of the girl lift the handle. Gals, hook your foot under his wrist and lock your knee. "Fall" back under control & be sure to point your free toe.

Helpful Tip

When doing the Front Angel, gals, lock your knees as you lean forward. Guys, you will need to compensate for her forward lean by leaning in the opposite direction.

Having fun show skiing? GREAT! That's what show skiing is all about, having FUN! And remember, be sure to communicate how much fun you're having to everyone watching. Wear a big smile all the time, wave and establish eye contact with the audience, when possible on the water and especially when you come to shore from an act - even if you fall, smile and wave. If you show the spectators you are having fun they will have fun too. Have FUN with your show skiing!

Lynn Novakofski
Water Ski Hall Of Fame Inductee, 2009



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