



*Special Olympics*

# Snowboarding Coaching Guide 2021



# Acknowledgements

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Special Olympics welcomes your ideas and comments for future revisions of this guide. We apologize if, for any reason, an acknowledgement has been inadvertently omitted.

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# Welcome

## Welcome to the Special Olympics Snowboarding Coaching Guide 2021

This guide will aim to provide coaches with valuable information to improve their knowledge and skills, or to get them started as coaches within Special Olympics (SO) Snowboarding. Throughout this guide you will find a variety of other information relating to coaching the sport, such as safety, preparation and sportsmanship.

This guide should be read in conjunction with the [Special Olympics Snowboarding Sport Rules](#) document and the [Special Olympics Sports Rules Article 1](#).

Keep in mind, that this guide is just one resource which may be useful to you as you progress through your career as a coach. As you develop your own style of coaching, you will find other books, websites, magazines and coaches, which will help to shape your approach to coaching. Always be curious! Always be open to new ideas! Always keep your athletes at the heart of your coaching!





# What is Snowboarding?

Snowboarding is a sport that involves descending a slope that is covered with snow on a snowboard attached to a rider's feet using a special boot set onto mounted binding.

Special Olympics does not offer as many Snowboarding events as the [Federation Internationale de Skie \(FIS\)](#). Special Olympics does not offer half pipe, snowboard cross, or parallel events because of the safety considerations in offering these events.

## Events for Competition:

- 10 Meter Skate
- Glide
- Super Glide
- Novice, Intermediate & Advanced Super Giant Slalom
- Novice, Intermediate & Advanced Giant Slalom
- Novice, Intermediate & Advanced Slalom

For more information on Special Olympics Snowboarding, visit the [Special Olympics Snowboarding Resource Page](#).

All rules and regulations for Special Olympics Snowboarding can be found in the Official [Special Olympics Snowboarding Sport Rules](#).



# Basics of Snowboarding

## Snowboarding Attire

Appropriate snowboarding attire is required for all competitors. As a coach, you should discuss the types of sport clothes that are acceptable and not acceptable for training and competition. Discuss the importance of wearing properly fitted clothing, along with the advantages and disadvantages of certain types of clothing worn during training and competitions.

It is best to dress in layers so you can add or subtract clothes as needed. Always bring too many clothes instead of too few.

### Socks

Socks are a personal preference, but it is suggested that a wool or blended-material ski or hiking sock be used for snowboarding.

It is recommended that liner socks made of synthetic or natural fibers be worn underneath insulated socks. The liners will help wick away perspiration and moisture from the foot and add more insulation layers of air. The liners will also absorb the friction between the feet and outer socks to prevent blisters.

### Boots

Proper snowboard boots are perhaps the most important piece of equipment a snowboarder will own. Snowboard boots are made specifically to fit into snowboard bindings, and to give more support as well as the correct alignment.

Certain types of step-in bindings require the use of a compatible step-in boots, as discussed in the Binding Systems section below. Make sure all of your pieces fit together properly before going to the hill.





## Choosing Proper Boot Fit

Boot fitting is best done by a reputable shop technician. If you will be fitting boots for your athlete, try to keep the following suggestions in mind.

- Boots should fit snugly, but should not pinch at any one point.
- When the athlete is laced in and standing up, the toes should touch inside of the front of the boot.
- Have the athlete stand with their feet shoulder width apart, and bend at the knees.
  - When the athlete is lowered into this position, the toes should not touch the front of the boot.
  - Try NOT to purchase boots with extra room, as they will tend to pack out and become roomier with use.

## Putting on Boots

Most snowboard boots will have use a lace system and/or buckles that should be mastered in a warm, dry, indoor place before putting them on in the cold. Athletes should practice ensuring that they get a secure fit and that the pants and/or socks are not bunched up inside of the boot.

## Clothing

Incorporate the three-layer system.

### 1. Inside Layer

The inside (or inner or base) layer is the wicking layer. Long underwear made of synthetic materials, natural silk or treated materials will remove perspiration from the body. Both the upper and lower body should be covered by a wicking layer. A shirt that covers the neck and fits snugly at the wrists is an effective way to conserve body heat.

### 2. Middle Layer

The middle layer should be an insulating layer and consist of wool (sweater or pants), fleece (top or bottom) or treated material. Synthetic insulations or phase-change treatments have also proven to be lightweight yet very effective. This layer provides warmth by trapping a layer of air around the body. Note: Except in extremely cold conditions, the legs do not need and would be constricted by this layer.



### 3. Outer Layer

Wind and snow are blocked by the weatherproof outer layer. For the legs, snowboard pants are appropriate. A snowboarding or ski jacket works well on top. Clothing made with laminates that are waterproof, windproof and breathable (allowing perspiration to leave the body) can be useful.

Be aware that absorbent clothing such as cotton sweatpants will provide little protection from the wind and cold. Snowboard specific pants and jackets have many useful features that make snowboarding more comfortable.

Consider the ability of your athlete and the weather when deciding upon clothing for competition. For optimal competition, strive to dress your athlete in clothing that is lightweight, breathable, layered and slick on the outer surface, and that allows unrestricted movement. Do not neglect an extra set of warm, dry clothes to change into for athletes whose competition clothes will get wet with perspiration and/or snow after competition.







## Accessories

### Gloves

Gloves or mittens with the same three layers—synthetic base, thermal insulation layer and wind/waterproof outer layer—are especially appropriate for snowboarding due to the amount of direct contact with the snow. Snowboard specific gloves or mittens are best.



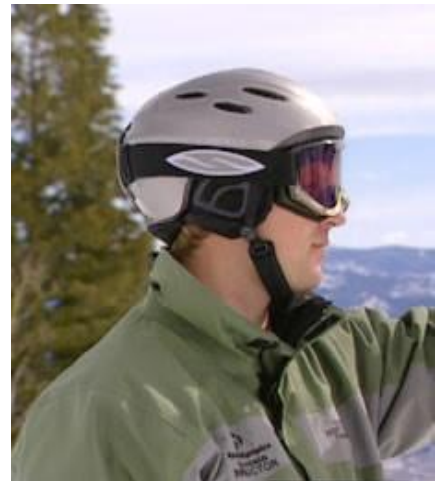
### Goggles/Eye Protection

Snowboard or ski goggles are recommended to protect the eyes from damaging ultraviolet rays, glare, wind and falling snow. Polarized lenses will cut glare, and high-quality goggles will be less likely to fog. Remember that if the goggles fog up, a goggle-friendly soft handkerchief should be used.



### Helmets

A helmet approved for alpine ski racing by Federation International du Ski (FIS) is required for all athletes for training and competition. Helmets are recommended for all coaches and race officials. A good helmet is very important to protect the head during all kinds of falls and is required for training and competition. The helmet should be tight enough that it doesn't move if the athlete shakes their head, yet not so tight as to be uncomfortable.



## Snowboarding Equipment

Special care should be taken when choosing equipment for your athlete. This guide will help you to choose equipment that will not only enhance the learning and performance of your athlete, but will help to ensure safety as well.



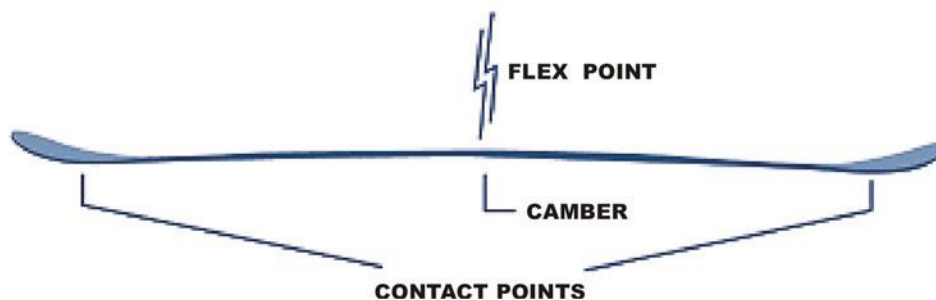
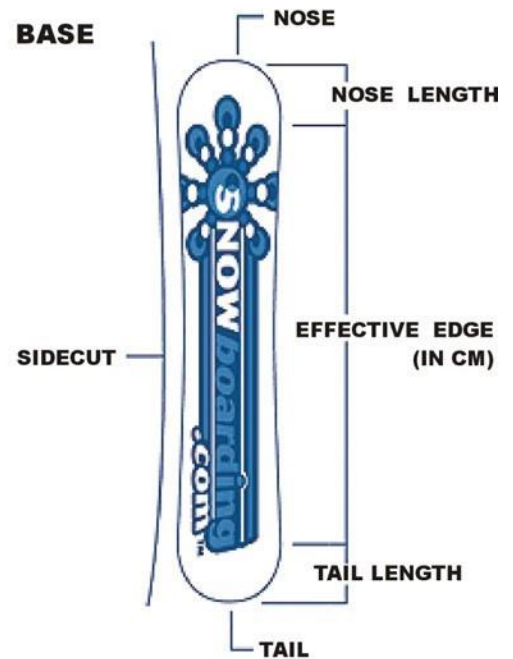
Prior to on-snow training, your athlete should be comfortable with wearing and adjusting clothing, and should be familiar with the process of putting on boots and getting into bindings.

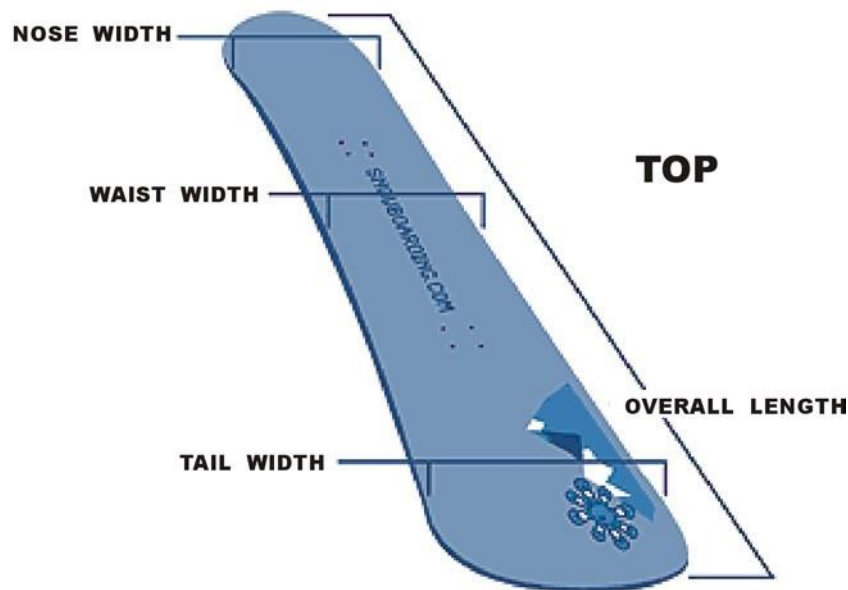
## Snowboards

There are three types of snowboards available today: freestyle, freeride and race boards. All use similar types of construction. It is suggested that a reputable board shop be consulted when purchasing a new snowboard.

There are many snowboards on the market made of plastic that are **not** allowed at ski areas. A good quality snowboard will be constructed like a ski. It will have metal edges and a P-tex base.

Consult a reputable shop in your area if you aren't sure. If your athlete will be using a snowboard that has been handed down or given to them, it is suggested that it be taken to a certified technician to be tuned and checked for proper fit and safety.





(Pictures are provided courtesy of [www.snowboarding.com](http://www.snowboarding.com) )

## Freestyle Snowboard

Freestyle boards are the most popular and most widely used. While there are many types of freestyle boards, they tend to have similar characteristics. They are wider, more stable and more forgiving to ride.

Freestyle boards are usually symmetrical in shape both from tip to tail and from side to side. They have a softer flex, which makes them easier to turn. Both ends have a shovel, and these boards are constructed to be ridden both forward and backward (fakie).

This type of board is suggested for the beginner rider.



*i: Freestyle Snowboard*



## Freeride Snowboard

Freeride boards look similar to freestyle boards, but usually are not symmetrical from tip to tail, and they place the rider slightly behind the center of the board when riding. Sometimes referred to as “directional,” these boards tend to have a stiffer, less forgiving flex and are meant to be ridden primarily in one direction (although they can be ridden fakie).

## Race Snowboard

Race boards tend to be narrower in shape and are usually slightly longer. They generally have a stiffer flex, and while these boards offer a higher level of performance, they are more difficult for the beginning rider to use, and are reserved for more advanced riders. These boards are made in both symmetrical and asymmetrical styles. They tend to have a shovel only on the nose and are made to ride only in one direction.



*ii: Race Snowboard*

## Binding Systems

There are three types of binding systems on the market today. They are the ratchet-strap binding system (the most popular in use today and the most readily available), the step-in binding system and the hard plate system.



*iii: Binding System on Snowboard*



## Ratchet-strap Binding System

The most widely used binding on the market today, this system incorporates the use of snowboard boots that are fastened into the bindings by using two or three ratchet straps.

Care should be taken when purchasing this type of system, in that many cheap plastic imitations are available.

Care should be taken to ensure that the boots purchased are compatible and fit securely into the binding. Once tightened, the boot should fit snugly, and it should not move around in the binding when fastened in.



*iv: Ratchet-Strap Binding System*



*v: Step-in Binding System*

## Step-In Binding System

It offers a significant advantage in terms of getting in and out quickly. Each step-in system requires a specific boot and the accompanying hardware. Step-in systems are made so that the boot can be secured without having to bend over.

## Hard Plate Binding System

While easy to get into, this system is the least common among snowboards, and the most difficult to find. A plate system utilizes a hard, ski-type boot that locks into a plate binding. Hard plate bindings are often the system of choice for serious snowboard racers.



*vi: Hard Plate Binding System*

Each of the snowboard binding systems available has its own advantages and disadvantages. The primary consideration should be purchasing quality equipment that will be the safest, most durable and most convenient to use for your athlete.





## Choosing Proper Snowboard Fit

Each board has characteristics that determine how it will perform for different people.

- Longer boards are more stable
- Shorter boards will be easier to turn
- Wider boards are more stable but aren't as performance oriented.
- Softer flexing boards are more forgiving and better suited for smaller riders.
- A stiffer board is more difficult to flex and will be better for heavier and stronger boarders.

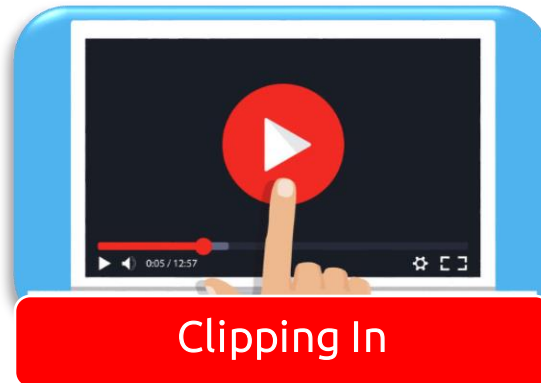
In general, a board when set on end should reach a point somewhere between the rider's chin and nose. This is a generalization, and care should be taken to match the board to the size, strength and type of rider.





## Putting Boots in Binding (Clipping in)

Athletes should practice buckling and unbuckling their binding before they go out on the snow. For athletes with step-in bindings, each one is unique and should be practiced according to the instructions that come with the bindings.



### Teaching Points – Putting Boots on and in Bindings (Clipping in)

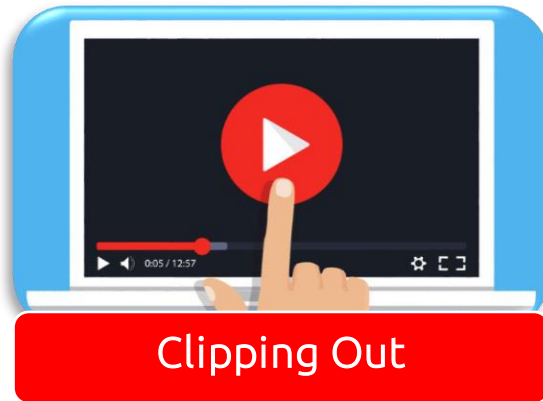
1. Begin by determining the left boot and binding from the right boot and binding. Generally, most toe and heel straps buckle to the outside.
2. Loosen binding straps so that there is sufficient play to insert your boot easily.
3. Place your boot into the binding so that the heel is secure in the back of the binding.
4. Tighten the larger heel strap first: thread the strap into the buckle and tighten until firm. Repeat the process for the smaller toe strap. (Athlete may feel more comfortable sitting while doing this for the first few times).
5. Pull the straps snug but not so tight that they pinch the foot and/or restrict movement and circulation.
6. Check the tightness of straps again after 3-5 minutes of snowboarding warm-up.
7. While on snow, it is important to ensure that the binding and the surface of the boot are free of snow before clipping in.





### Removing Boots from Binding (Clipping out)

For athletes with step-in bindings, there are several types available; each one is unique and should be practiced according to the instructions that come with the bindings.



### Teaching Points – Removing Boots from Bindings (Clipping out)

1. Begin by loosening the rear binding straps.
2. Loosen binding straps so that the boot can be removed easily.
3. Remove rear boot from the binding without losing balance. (Athlete may feel more comfortable sitting while doing this for the first few times).

If the athlete has stopped snowboarding (i.e., for the day or for a break), remove the snowboard completely:

1. Loosen the binding straps on the opposite foot so that the boot can be removed easily.
2. Remove the front boot from the binding without losing balance. (Athlete may feel more comfortable sitting while doing this for the first few times).
3. Remove the leash while securing the snowboard.
4. When setting the snowboard down, the snowboard should always be set down on the bindings to prevent runaways.



# Teaching Snowboarding Skills

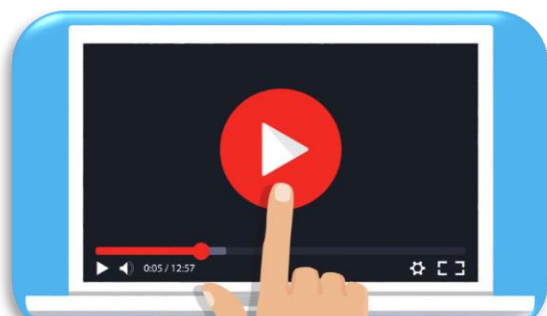
## Event Specific Drills

Drills are activities designed to teach sport skills. Progressions of learning start at a low ability level advance to an intermediate and high ability level. Encourage athletes to advance to their highest possible level. Drills can be combined with warm-up and lead into specific skill development.

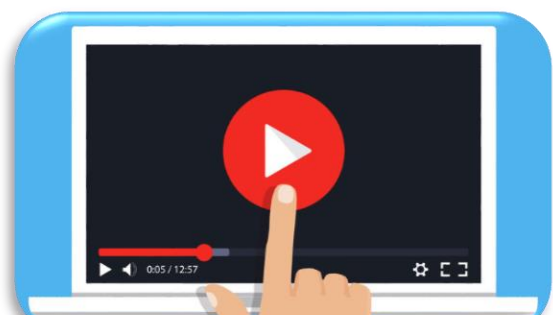
Skills are taught and reinforced through repetition of a small segment of the skill. Many times, the actions are exaggerated in order to strengthen the muscles that perform the skill. Each coaching session should take the athlete through the entire progression so that they are exposed to all of the skills that make up an event.

## Specific Warm-Up Activities

- Swing arms back and forth simulating the pendulum swing.
- Freeride: Allow the athletes to freeride their boards down the mountain for a few runs.



**Warm-Up Activity 1**



**Warm-Up Activity 2**



## **Snowboarding Basic Skills**

### **Balance**

Balance movements are used to help maintain a body's state of equilibrium. When internal (body movements) or external (gravity, changing snow conditions) forces act on the body, balancing movements are relied upon to keep the body from falling out of equilibrium. These may be large motor movements such as an arm swing, or small motor movements such as a slight shift in weight.

### **Rotation**

Rotary movements involve some sort of rotation, either by the entire body or one of its parts. Rotary movements may be large and very noticeable or fine and virtually unseen.

### **Edge Control**

This affects the way the edge of the board makes contact with the riding surface. It is the relationship between the edges of the board and the riding surface that causes a board to turn.

### **Pressure**

Pressure movements determine how strongly a board will press down on the riding surface.







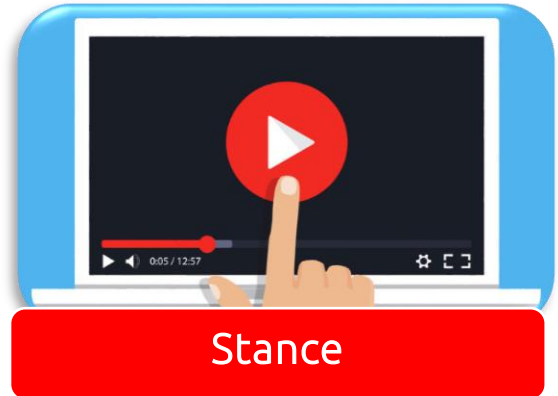
## Dry Land Training

### Stance

The stance used in snowboarding is slightly different than that used in sports such as skiing, because it is a countered position. This means that the athlete's feet will point off to the side, while the body is countered so that the torso is pointing downhill.

The athlete should start in a relaxed athletic stance, with the knees slightly bent and the feet approximately shoulder width apart. With the feet stationary, the athlete will then turn their shoulders slightly toward the front of the board (and toward the front foot).

Your athlete can practice this position first on a flat surface, and then on the snowboard with no bindings. Finally, have your athlete put on their snowboard and assume the correct stance. It is important to remind athletes that stances are too rigid to snowboard properly, and that they will constantly be moving while in their stance.



### Dry Land Skills

While on a flat surface, and practicing stance, your athletes can begin to become familiar with the skills required to snowboard, and with their equipment. This is a good time to quiz athletes on terms like nose, tail, heel-edge, toe-edge, etc. The more familiar your athletes are with equipment, the less confusion will arise as you try to explain movements while on-hill.

### Balance

To work on balance, simple drills can be used.

For example, have your athletes stand on a flat surface (without a board), and practice jumping up and landing in their stance. While in their stance (both with and without the snowboard), have your athletes feel what happens when they lean forward, and to the sides.

Have them practice leaning and then returning to a centered stance position. Remember to ask a lot of questions about how they are feeling.



As a coach, you may need to be close to prevent falls, especially when practicing balance while strapped into a snowboard. A lot of successful snowboard riding depends on how well an athlete can maintain balance, or recover balance when it has been lost.

### Rotation

An athlete can feel rotation by standing in a snowboard stance, and tuning the upper body to the left and right. The athlete should try to maintain a good athletic snowboarding position. Have your athletes experiment with rotation of the upper body first on a flat surface, followed by standing on the snowboard without bindings, and finally while clipped into the snowboard.

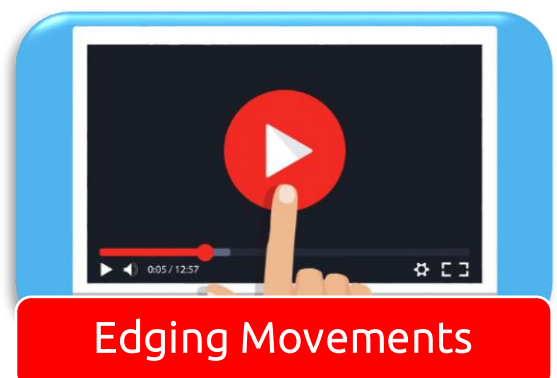
### Edging Movements

Start by showing your athlete the way a board moves when it is on edge. Start with a board lying on a flat surface. This is the position of the board when it is running straight. Tip the board toward the toeside and then the heelside to demonstrate how a board moves when turns are made. Show how a board starts by running flat, then edges on one side, goes back to flat, and then edges to the other side.

Next, have your athlete stand on a flat surface in a snowboard stance. Explain that this is the correct stance for running straight ahead. Have the athlete concentrate their weight on the toes, while maintaining balance (like pressing on a gas pedal). Follow by having the athlete concentrate their weight on the heels (like lifting off of the gas pedal or like digging in with the heels). It should be stressed that an upright position and balance are to be maintained at all times, even when weight is shifted. If the athlete is falling forward or back, they are applying too much weight, or leaning.

The athlete should follow each of these movements by returning to a centered stance with weight evenly distributed.

Finally, have the athlete clip in with one foot while standing on the board. Have the athlete place the free foot in front of the board on the toeside. Have the athlete tip the board onto its toe edge by standing on the ground and lifting and tilting the board with the clipped foot. Reverse this process for the heelside. Have the





athlete place the free foot on the floor on the heelside of the board, followed by tipping the board with the clipped foot.

## Pressure Movements

The idea of pressure can best be demonstrated rather than explained.

- Have your athlete sit in a chair.
  - Place one or both of the athlete's feet in your hands with the knees bent.
  - To show downward pressure, have the athlete push his or her feet toward you.
  - To demonstrate the effect that reducing pressure may have, ask the athlete pull their feet away.
- Next have the athlete stand on a flat surface in a snowboard stance.
  - Have the athlete practice lowering (increasing pressure) by bending the knees while in an upright position – not by bending over.
- Next have the athlete practice rising (reducing pressure) by rising up – without standing up straight).

Have the athlete practice these movements on a flat surface, then on a board with no bindings, and finally while clipped into the board.



## Snowboard Set-up and Stance Adjustment

It is best to have the snowboard set up by a qualified technician at a reputable shop; however, it can be done by a coach.

Start by inspecting all of the equipment for loose screws, missing parts, etc. Next, determine the athlete's stance.



### **Determining Stance**

While many boards are made to be ridden forward and backward (fakie), each athlete will have a dominant foot that will remain forward in most situations.

Most people have their left foot forward when riding a board. This is known as a *Regular Stance*.

Some athletes will prefer to ride with their right foot forward. This is known as a *Goofy-foot Stance*.

It is not safe to assume that all of your athletes will ride with the same foot forward. Each rider has an individual preference that is not related to hand dominance. A good way to check your athlete for foot preference is to ask if they have engaged in similar board-sport activities (i.e., wake boarding, skateboarding and slalom skiing). If they have, they will most likely ride a snowboard in the same way. Another quick way to check stance is to use one of the following simple tests:

#### **Method 1: Push Test**

1. Have your athlete stand up straight with both feet placed together.
2. Gently push your athlete forward from behind until he or she is forced to put a foot out to maintain balance.
3. In most cases, the foot that is used by the athlete to catch himself or herself will be the forward foot when riding

For uncomfortable athletes or those with balance problems, have another coach stand in front to prevent falls.

#### **Method 2: Ball Kick Test**

1. Have your athlete kick a ball for you.
2. In most cases the foot used for kicking will be the preferred front foot for your athlete.
3. The final check will be to communicate constantly with your athlete as he or she learns to snowboard.

It may take some time for your athlete to get comfortable with the equipment, and some measure of trial and error to be sure which foot should be forward.



### **Method 3: Push-up Test**

1. Have your athlete get down in the push-up position.
2. Ask the athlete to stand up out of the push-up position; the foot that steps forward first will be the dominant leg.

### **Method 4: Slide Test**

1. Have your athlete, while wearing socks, take a few steps and slide on a gymnasium floor.

In most cases, the foot that is the dominant leg will be the forward foot when sliding.

### **Method 5: Skateboarding Test**

1. If available, have your athlete ride a skateboard. Assistance with support may be necessary from the coach.

The stance that the athlete finds most comfortable will be their stance.

### **Determining Stance Angles**

Modern bindings have marks on the mounting pieces to help you determine the binding angle. In simple terms, you want both feet angled toward the front of the board with the front foot angle slightly more.

Snowboarders riding racing boards may use stance angles of up to 60 degrees, while freestyle riders may use a more neutral stance. Start your athletes with a stance angle of 3-12 degrees for the back foot and 12-24 degrees for the front foot, as determined by what feels comfortable for the athlete.

If, while riding, the athletes' toes drag in the snow, the stance angle should be increased. Once the basics have been learned, stance angles can be changed according to comfort and preference. As with stance, a certain amount of trial and error may be necessary.

### **On-snow Training**

One word of caution before you begin practicing skills on the snow: Snowboarding is more difficult than it looks at the beginning stages. The natural assumption of most students is that the on-hill movements will be as easy to perform on the snow as they



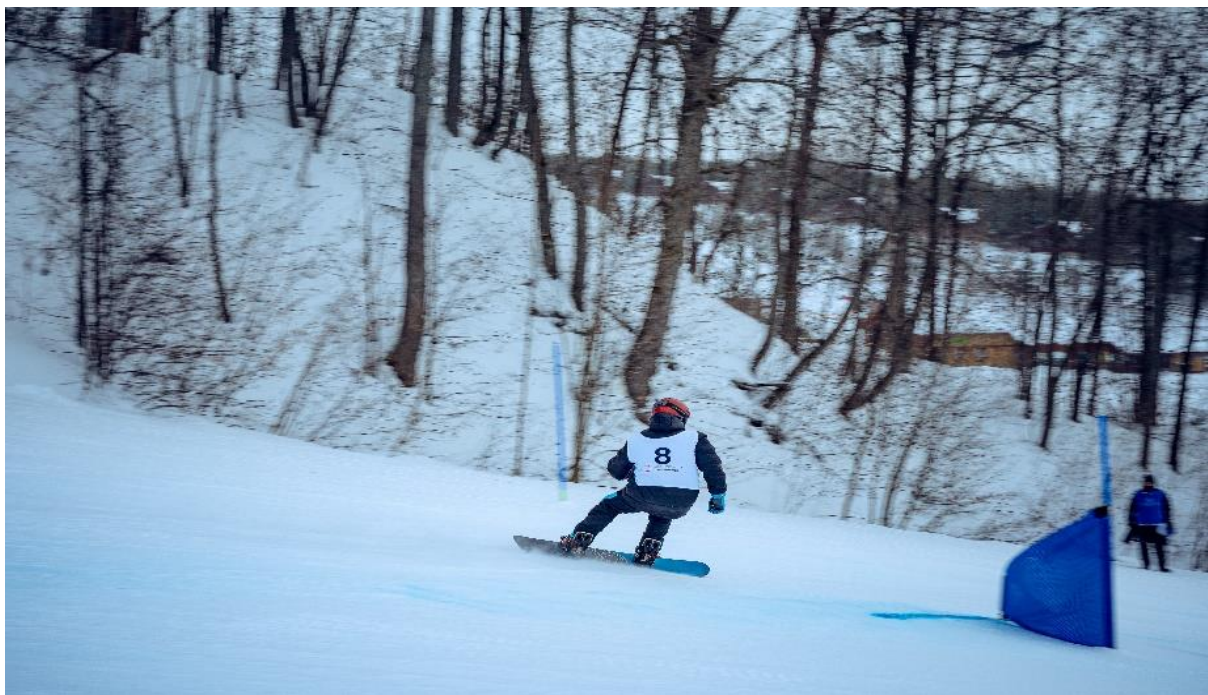


are on dry land. This is simply not true. Almost every student will be tempted to start out by going straight to the top of the hill, and our athletes are no different.

**RESIST THIS TEMPTATION!**

If there is one piece of advice that should be followed when learning to snowboard, it is that snowboarding skills are best learned at slow speeds on shallow terrain. If you progress up the hill too soon, you will only increase the likelihood and severity of falls. Please remember that one bad fall can end your lesson, and in some cases can cause an athlete to quit snowboarding!

The teaching progression that has been outlined here has been designed with the safety (and success) of the athlete in mind. Learning to snowboard safely can seem slow at first, but extra time taken to practice and master skills on shallow terrain will pay off by helping the athlete adjust more quickly later.





## Training Aids

1. **Magic Stic:** a kind of stick or pole about 50 to 70 cm (approximately 24 – 42 inches) in length (approximately one arm length). It should be made of an unbreakable material like wood or plastic (from a slalom pole). The ends of the stic should be taped and padded to avoid injury and give a good grip.

The stic can be used in many different ways:

- To pull the athlete (for example, from the ground to stand up and while gliding from one point to another)
- To support the athlete (for example, in learning new movements)
- Giving the athletes different kinds of movement experiences (for example, using the stic as a steering wheel or handle bar).



2. **Colored tape/ Stickers:** to be fixed on the front and backside of the board. If the athlete has problems with keeping in mind toeside and heelside, it is easier to have a blue and red edge. This helps the athlete react faster when you give advice such as, “Give pressure on the red edge!” while he or she is riding.

The frontside and nose of the board may also be marked with tape or stickers. In the beginning, many athletes may have difficulty keeping in mind which end is the front.

3. **Safety equipment:** It is a good idea for athletes to wear protective padding on the first few days, especially for their knees! (Use in-line skating/skateboarding/volleyball guards such as wrist, elbow and knee pads.)
4. **Hand assistance:** Keeping in mind that one hard fall can end a lesson and/or cause an athlete to quit, be available while teaching to offer assistance and support while the athlete learns new skills. In this way, you can help prevent falls. Also, be ready to re-position the athletes as necessary so that they can feel the skill performed in the correct way.



## Basic Guidelines

In addition to training aids, here are some teaching tips that can help:

### 1. Demonstrate:

- Most athletes learn best by seeing and imitating movements, and do not learn well from lengthy explanations.
- Show the important parts of a movement or skill in an exaggerated way.

### 2. Training Aids:

- Should be used as necessary to introduce new skills. The first priority should be to help the athlete feel safe.
- If you use training aids such as a magic stick or just holding a hand while making a new movement, it is very important to urge the athlete to perform the task without training aids as soon as possible (for example, offering hand assistance during the first two attempts and then having the athlete perform the movement without).
- The coach should evaluate each athlete as he or she develops new skills, and use the training aids where appropriate depending on the movement and the skill level, anxiety level and safety of the athlete.

### 3. Variety:

- The main target is to give the athlete many different movement experiences.
- Be creative and find as many different drills as possible for every new movement.





## **Lift Riding**

There are several types of ski lift to help transport skiers and snowboarders up the hill. Before using any type of lift, it is important to be comfortable with how the lift works and how to use it safely.

### **Types of Lifts**

There are two major types of lifts that are used at most ski areas: **Surface Lifts** and **Chairlifts**.

Surface lifts are generally used for smaller hills and more gentle slopes, and chair lifts are used for bigger hills and higher slopes.

### **Surface Lifts**

A surface lift is any lift that takes a skier or snowboarder up the hill while the person is standing on the snow under their own power. There are several types of surface lifts. The most common lifts are the rope tow, magic carpet, T-bar, poma lift and paddle or cable tow.

One advantage to surface lifts is that they often (although not always) give the rider the opportunity to unload before arriving at the top. This gives an athlete the opportunity to start their run on more gentle terrain.

As the athlete prepares to unload, remind him or her to maintain a relaxed position and begin to steer the board away from the lift. Once the athlete is moving away, they can let go of the rope or paddle and ride the board and begin to skate to the desired starting point.

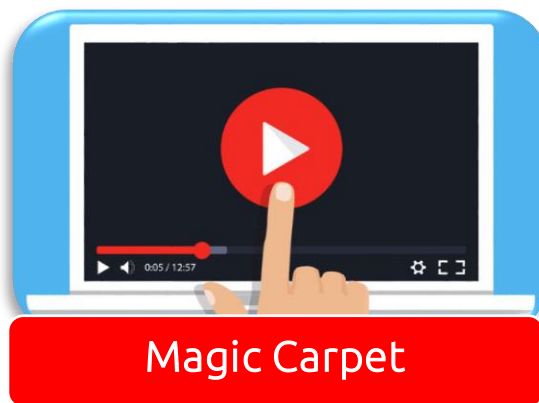
### **Magic Carpet**

The magic carpet is similar to a conveyor belt. People stand on the belt and are moved uphill. Magic carpets generally move slowly; however, there are a few tips to make riding easier. As the athlete moves into position at the bottom of the belt, have them step onto the belt with the free foot and place the board alongside the free foot using small steps. As the belt approaches the top, have the athlete begin by placing the free



foot on the snow and follow with the board. Once the athlete has regained their balance, have them skate with the board to an area that is out of the flow of traffic to strap in.

The magic carpet is very useful for the first beginners' lessons. Most of the time, these are conducted near gentle slopes, where the first drills can be done with less chance of falling. The magic carpet can be used by the athlete with very little experience. The design of the magic carpet also allows the athlete to save a lot of energy, because they do not have to walk up the hill.



## Towing lifts

Other types of surface lifts move people up the hill by towing them. Lifts that tow can be difficult for snowboarders because they must ride with one foot strapped in while the other rests on the stomp pad. Rope tows and paddle tows are looped systems that run continually uphill. Athletes are towed to the top by grabbing onto the rope or paddle.

## Rope tows and paddle tows

Rope tows and paddle tows have a loop of rope or cable that the athlete must hold onto to move uphill.





- When your turn arrives, move forward and place the board in the track pointing uphill with the free foot placed on the stomp pad.
- The body should be in a relaxed position with the knees bent. As you prepare to load, look downhill over the shoulder next to the lift.
- Rope tows do not require a specific hand placement.
- While the rope is running, gently lift it to waist height, allowing it to run through your hand.
- Then squeeze the rope using both hands until it is held firmly in your grip (the rope is not slipping through your hands).
  - As your grip tightens, you will begin to move forward.
- Look straight ahead and maintain a relaxed position.

The preparation for riding a paddle tow is similar to that used for the rope tow.

- Once in position, have the athlete reach backward down hill as the paddle approaches.
- The athlete should then guide the paddle into position as it passes and grasp the handle with both hands.
- Remind the athlete to keep their weight shifted slightly toward the back and the knees bent, because once the athlete had grasped the handle, the lift will pull them forward abruptly.
- If relaxed and ready, the athlete will be more prepared for the sudden pull.

**Tip:** If the athlete is unloading at any point other than the top of the hill, have them immediately move the board so that it is not pointing down the hill (the board should be across the fall line). This will help prevent sliding backward downhill or into the lift.



**Practice Tip:** To give the athletes practice with the balance and body position required for riding a rope tow, you can tow them using a magic stick or a ski pole (see below) before having them attempt to ride the lift.





## T-bars and Poma Lifts

T-bars and poma lifts are similar in that they pull one or two persons while they stand on the board. However, these lifts are slightly different because rather than the person holding on, they are towed by a piece of the lift that is positioned behind the legs.

It is important to note that with these types of lifts, the person being towed does not sit on the seat, but rather is pulled by it.

- As you approach the loading area, you will be signaled by the attendant when it is time to move forward.
- When signalled, skate forward and position the board so that it is pointed uphill.
- The attendant will guide the T-bar or poma seat so that it is behind the legs of the person being towed.
- As the lift begins to tow, remind the athlete to maintain a relaxed stance with the knees bent, maintain the same pressure on both feet, and allow the lift to do the work.
  - Because of the unevenness of the terrain, it may be necessary to constantly adjust your balance to keep from moving off track.
- As the lift approaches the top, a sign will indicate when it is time to unload.
  - Unloading usually takes place in a flat area.
- Firmly hold seat pole and, as you are moving forward, slowly release it.
  - The spring on the seat will move it ahead and away from you.
- When it is clear, move off to an area out of the flow of traffic to strap in.

For the first time using a t-bar lift, it is easier for the athletes if they are accompanied by a good skier or snowboarder who can ride in a straight line and offer support if necessary. For practice in using the t-bar lift, most lift stations have a t-bar without a towline to give beginners practice before attempting to ride.





## Chairlifts

All chairlifts function in a similar way, although they may vary in size, speed and the number of people carried by each chair. Chairlifts vary in size from lifts carrying two people to lifts carrying up to six. High-speed detachable chairlifts perform similarly to regular chairlifts, but the chairs detach at the loading and unloading points, making it easier to get on and off. Each chairlift has an attendant at the top and bottom to assist with loading and unloading. The attendant is also available to either slow or stop the lift if there is a problem. If you are unsure about how to proceed, ask the attendant for help!



## Lift Loading

Most lifts will have a system of ropes to keep the waiting line moving in an orderly fashion. At the end of the waiting line and prior to the loading area, each lift has a line to mark the position of the riders who will load next. As the people ahead of you are loading, it is important to pay attention and be at the line and ready to move to the loading area as soon as the previous chair is loaded. Once the previous chair has been loaded, the attendant will give a signal for the next group of riders to move forward and prepare to load.



**Tip:** Lifts normally run at a faster speed, but you can ask the attendant to slow the lift down to make loading easier and safer for beginning snowboarders.

- Have the athlete skate forward to the line indicating where the chair will load. Make sure that their snowboard is pointing straight forward uphill.
- Have the athlete assume a relaxed stance with the knees slightly bent.
- Have the athlete look over their shoulder as the chair approaches, and sit as it reaches the loading line.
- Once aboard the chair, remind the athlete to keep their snowboard pointed forward until the chair is completely off the ground.
- Make sure that the athlete is seated completely on the chair with their back firmly against the backrest.
- Once the chair has left the loading area, lower the safety bar and enjoy the ride.

### **Lift Unloading**

As the chair approaches the unloading area, raise the safety bar and prepare to unload. Remind the athlete to keep the tip of the board up and to point it straight forward. The unloading point will be marked so that you will know when to stand.

**Tip:** You can signal the attendant to slow the lift to make unloading safer and easier.

- As you approach the unloading point, have the athlete place the board onto the snow, with their free foot on the stomp pad, and slowly begin to stand.
- The momentum of the chair will push you forward and down a ramp into the unloading area.
  - You can remind the athlete that the movement used to ride down the unloading ramp is the same movement used in skating with one foot in.
- Have the athlete remain in a relaxed stance and ride the board until it stops.
- Point out that the board can be steered, if necessary, just as it was during the skating drills.
- Once at the bottom of the ramp, skate to an area that is near the run that you will be using and out of the flow of traffic, and strap in.



## Falling (To be done on a flat surface with soft snow)

Before you begin the on-snow portion, it is important to teach your athletes the proper way to fall. Falls are a natural part of snowboarding, and falling in the correct way can prevent injury. Take some time to talk to your athletes, letting them know that it is OK for a fall to occur. By practicing falling, an athlete will become less apprehensive if a fall does occur. Be sure that the athlete also has all of the proper protective equipment prior to practicing falls.



### Forward Fall

Ninety percent of the injuries in snowboarding are to the wrist and shoulder. Most of these injuries happen when a snowboarder falls forward in the incorrect way. Practice these movements side by side with your athlete.

- Start on your knees and let yourself fall forward onto your forearms.
- Catch your weight with the forearms slightly away from the body, with the elbows bent.
- Allow your forearms to touch the ground first.
- Try to resist reaching out toward the ground or placing the hands out in front.
- As contact is made, absorb the fall with your arms.
- You may want to practice this movement with your athlete until they are completely comfortable with it.

### Rear Fall

The rear fall is generally the most painful because athletes tend to tense up, causing them to land flat. Most injuries during rear falls occur to the head.

- Start in a crouched position with your athlete.
- Gently rock backward until your balance is lost.
- As you fall, curl your body into a ball, making sure to keep the head tucked forward.
- A good visualization is to have the athlete pretend that they are a turtle going into its shell.



- As you fall, remember to bend the knees and bring the board up off the ground. This will prevent the board from catching while sliding downhill and causing a potential flip.

It is important to have the athlete work without a board until falling is comfortable. Once comfortable, have the athlete practice falling while clipped into the board. When this practice is approached the right way, the athlete will become less fearful of falling (and may even find it fun). Reducing fear will help the athlete perform better. Everyone learning a skill will be much more tentative if they are afraid of being hurt.





## Getting Up (To be done on a flat surface with soft snow)

Because falling is common, it is important to teach the athlete how to get up from the snow. Many times this can be more frustrating than the fall itself, especially on an incline.

- The easiest way for a snowboarder to get up is to rise from a kneeling position.
- The kneeling athlete can dig the toe-edge of the board into the snow, support their weight on the hands, and rock the board back until the base is flat on the snow.
- The athlete can then slowly rise to a standing position.

If the fall has been to the back, the athlete will need to do a turtle roll in order to get to the kneeling position.

- A turtle roll begins with the athlete sitting on the snow, then rocking backward while lifting the board off the snow.
- Once the board is off the ground, the athlete can roll to one side, bringing the board around and under the legs.
- From this position, the athlete can stand from the kneeling position as described above.

Even an athlete in good condition may have problems getting up from a fall. It is important to work until the athlete is comfortable before going uphill. During lessons, it is a good idea to have the athlete practice getting up without assistance if they fall. It is also important to make sure that the athlete isn't becoming overtired from having to get up too often. In this case you may want to offer more assistance.







## Teaching Points – Getting Up

1. If athlete falls completely to ground, roll onto side.
2. Position snowboard so that it is across the fall line (not facing downhill).
3. Get up to the hands and knees.
4. Dig toe edge into the snow close to hand placement.
5. Slowly rise to a standing position while maintaining pressure on toe edge.
6. Make sure the athlete is not physically injured.

## Falling and Getting Up Drills

### 1. Circle Drill

Have the athletes stand in a circle. Randomly call out athletes by name, jacket color, etc., and have athletes practice falling when called out.

### 2. Line Drill

Have the athletes stand in a line. Begin by tossing a hat or other object to an athlete, who must then demonstrate a proper fall. The athlete then tosses the object back to the coach, who then throws the object to another athlete in the line. While practicing falling, athletes can help encourage proper form of teammates.





## Skating (To be done on a flat surface)

Skating is a skill that will be used to manoeuvre around at the bottom of the hill, in the lift lines and in other situations when the snowboarders' momentum has stopped in a flat area. At this point, the skill of skating will be used to introduce the athlete to gliding on the snow surface.

- Begin by having the athlete stand in a snowboard stance on the board on flat ground, with the front foot clipped in.
- The athlete will then push forward with the free foot.
- Following the push, the free foot should be placed on the stomp pad between the bindings.
- The athlete will then ride the board as it glides to a stop.
  - The coach should remain close to the athlete in case of loss of balance or a fall.

In the case of an apprehensive athlete, or an athlete with balance problems, the coach can assist by holding both of the athlete's hands during the glide. It is important to remember that this assistance is only to prevent falling and to provide security. The athlete should be supporting their own weight as much as possible.

Continue to work on skating until the athlete is able to glide with good balance. Stay on a relatively flat surface to begin. As the athlete becomes more comfortable, the terrain can be varied by introducing a SLIGHT grade, allowing the athlete to experience the sensation of skating uphill. Also, the athlete can begin gliding for longer distances.

**NOTE:** Be very conservative when choosing terrain, especially during the beginning phases of learning. Many athletes experience unnecessary injury by trying to negotiate terrain that is too steep too early. Stay on flatter terrain until you are sure that the athlete has become comfortable with the skills you have been teaching.



## Skating Drills

All the following drills may be introduced first by using the magic stick or giving support with hands if necessary. Please keep in mind that the goal is to reduce the use of aids and have the athlete perform the drills without assistance as soon as possible!

### 1. Board Slide Drill

Have the athletes sit on their boards (between the bindings) on even terrain. Have the athletes push with their hands and glide a bit. This can be performed on a gentle slope. Let the athletes glide to a certain point and get used to the feeling of gliding and movement. Keep safety in mind, and do not let the boards get too far away. Be sure to have the athletes hold the leashes in their hands.

### 2. Skate to Object Drill

Choose an object on the hill such as a sign post, cone, coach, etc. Have the athlete practice skating skills toward the object. Remember to stress maintaining balance and keeping eye contact with the object.

### 3. Skate Over Uneven Terrain Drill

Choose an area on the hill with uneven terrain, such as small mounds of snow, indentations, etc. Have the athlete practice skating skills over the uneven terrain while maintaining proper balance and body position.

### 4. Obstacle Course Drill

A good method for practicing skating is to set up a short obstacle course requiring the athlete to negotiate from one location to another. Small cones or flags can be used to form a course. Have the athlete practice pushing on the toeside and on the heelside.



### 5. Skating Competition Drill

Be careful with practicing skating in competition mode, because having just one foot attached to the board can cause injuries. If the athletes are secure in skating, you can have them compete in small races or relays.



## Skate to Glide (To be done on a flat surface)

As the athletes demonstrate better balance and become less fearful, have them experiment with movement during the glide portion. Begin by having the athletes rise and lower slightly while the board is gliding. This can be followed by shifting weight forward and back, and then finding a centered balance. These experiments will help the athlete to realize the correct position for boarding, and will show how constant movement is required in order to maintain balance.

### Teaching Points – Skate to Glide

1. Begin with free foot next to the board on the toeside.
2. Only take small steps, to avoid slipping.
3. Keep head up with eyes facing forward.
4. Maintain most of the weight on the strapped-in foot.
5. Practice placing the free foot on the board, between the bindings.
6. Maintain proper stance.
7. Have the athlete start with short glides, then progress to slightly longer glides.



### Skate to Glide Drills

All the following drills may be introduced first by using the magic stic or giving support with hands if necessary. Please keep in mind that the goal is to reduce the use of aids and have the athlete perform the drills without assistance as soon as possible!

#### 1. Glide Along a Line Drill

Have the athletes glide along a line made out of cones or a line in the snow. It helps them to maintain their direction.

#### 2. Glide to Object Drill

Choose an object on the hill such as a sign post, cone, coach, etc. Have the athlete practice skating to a glide while aiming toward the object. Remember to stress maintaining balance and eye contact with the object. Begin with gliding short distances and gradually work toward gliding greater distances.



### **3. Glide While Rising and Sinking Drill**

As the athletes demonstrate better balance and become less fearful, have them experiment with movement during the glide portion. Begin by having the athletes rise and lower slightly by bending at the knees (not at the waist) while the board is gliding. You can name this drill “small and tall” to make it more creative and fun for the athletes.

### **4. Glide with Weight Shift Drill**

Once the athlete has mastered rising and sinking, begin having the athlete glide while shifting his or her weight forward and back (toward the nose or tail), and then finding a centered balance. These experiments will help the athlete to realize the correct position for boarding, and will show how constant movement is required in order to maintain balance.

### **5. Gliding Contest Drill**

“Who can glide farthest?” Have the athletes push three times from a certain point, then have them stand with the back foot between the bindings to see who can glide farthest.

### **6. Skate and Glide “Backside” Drill**

Although it may be a difficult movement, have the athletes attempt to skate their board while pushing with their back foot on the backside (heelside) of the board.

## **Climbing (To be done on a gentle slope)**

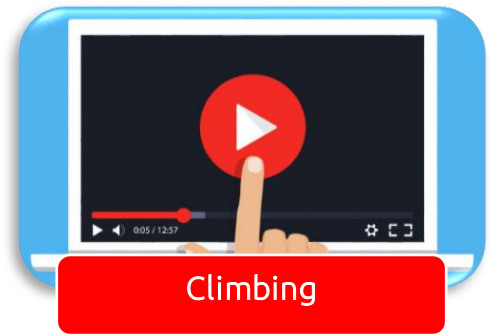
During the course of snowboarding, it may become necessary for the athlete to skate uphill, or even to climb. Begin by having the athlete skate uphill on a slight grade. On steeper terrain, it may become necessary for the athlete to use the step and drag method. To prevent the board from sliding downhill, the athlete should place the free foot on the toeside of the board while facing uphill.

The board is then turned, placed across the hill and rested on the toe-edge. The athlete begins by putting weight on the board foot, stepping out with the free foot and then dragging the board forward. The process is then repeated in order to climb.



## Teaching Points – Climbing

1. Practice stepping over the board toward the toeside.
2. Tip the board onto the toe edge, across the fall line.
3. Practice pushing against the toe edge without the board slipping.
4. Begin taking small steps.



## Climbing Drills

### 1. Walking Up and Down the Hill (without board) Drill

Have the athletes practice walking, running or jumping on their toes while moving uphill. Most of the athletes may have problems staying in good riding position while standing on the toes. Practicing the movements without a board can give them a feeling for the movement in a safe way.

### 2. Climb to a Point Drill

Have the athlete stand at the bottom of a relatively shallow slope. Place the athlete in the correct position. Climb the hill ahead of the athlete and turn around. Have the athlete practice climbing toward you.







## One Foot Straight Glide (To be done on a gentle slope)

Once the athlete has become comfortable with the previous skills, it is time to move uphill.

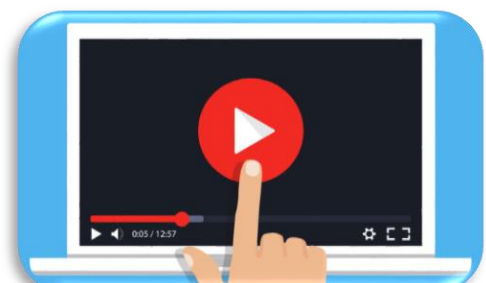
- Have the athlete skate or climb up a slight incline.
- Resist the temptation to go too high too fast.
- The incline should be low enough that the athlete will be able to glide to a stop (remember that he or she does not yet know how to turn or stop).
- Be sure that the finish area is clear of obstacles or other people.
- It may be a good idea to have an assistant stand at the bottom to act as an emergency “catcher” should the athlete get out of control.

Once the athlete has reached the start position, have them clip into the front binding while facing uphill. The coach should offer assistance by standing below athlete and taking the athlete’s hands. As the coach, you will need to make sure that the athlete does not start before they are ready. Once the athlete is standing, have them place the free foot on the stomp pad between the bindings, and allow the board to glide downhill.

Before beginning the glide, review with the athlete the proper stance (eyes facing downhill, knees and hips bent slightly, athlete in a relaxed position). Remind the athlete to stay relaxed until the end of the glide.

### Teaching Points – One Foot Straight Glide

1. Start by securing the board so that it does not move before the athlete is ready.
2. Have the athlete begin in the correct snowboard stance.
3. Keep knees flexed and stay in a relaxed position.
4. Keep feet flat and weight centered (over both feet, front to back and side to side).
5. Keep eyes forward, looking ahead.



One Foot Straight Glide



## One Foot Straight Glide Drills

All the following drills may be introduced first by using the magic stic or giving support with hands if necessary. Please keep in mind that the goal is to reduce the use of aids and have the athlete perform the drills without assistance as soon as possible!

### 1. Glide to a Stop Drill

Begin by having the athlete climb a short, gentle slope. Once the athlete has reached the start position, have them clip into the front binding while facing uphill. The coach should offer assistance by standing below athlete and taking the athlete's hands.

As the coach, you will need to make sure that the athlete does not start before they are ready. Once the athlete is standing, have them place the free foot on the stomp pad between the bindings, and allow the board to glide downhill.

When ready, release the athlete to complete the glide. The athlete should ride the board in a relaxed position until it stops completely. It will be necessary to spend some time repeating this drill until the athlete has shown good balance throughout.

### 2. Glide with Movement Drill

Once the athlete has become comfortable with the glide, movement can be introduced. Start by using the following drills:

1. Rising and lowering stance while gliding ("small and tall").
2. Adjusting weight forward, back and to center during glide.



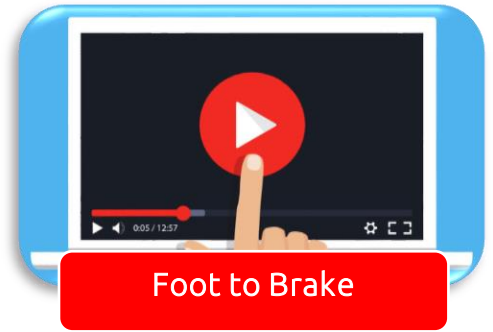
### 3. Glide to Object Drill

Choose an object on the hill such as a sign post, cone, coach, etc. Have the athlete practice skating to a glide while aiming toward the object. Remember to stress maintaining balance and eye contact with the object.



## 4. Glide with Brake Drill

Have the athletes glide to a certain point (to a flat area) and have them brake with the back foot in front of the frontside edge.



## 5. Glide with Rotation Drill

Have the athletes rotate the shoulder with arms spread wide while gliding.

## Direction Changes

Turning is actually accomplished using rotation, edging and pressure (with balance maintained throughout) at the same time. A proper stance should be maintained with the hands up in front.

## Introducing Direction Changes (To be done on a flat surface)

At this point, it is a good idea to return to the flat surface to work on the movements that will be used when making a turn.

**NOTE:** Extra time should be spent at this level to be sure that the athlete is comfortable before progressing.

### Teaching Points – Direction Changes

1. Start the athlete in a centered neutral stance.
2. Flex the knees and put pressure on the toes.
3. Return to the centered neutral stance.
4. Flex the knees and put pressure on the heels.
5. Return to the centered neutral stance.

Once the athlete has mastered the movements, introduce the idea of turning rhythm. The athlete will start in a neutral stance, go to a toeside position (count to 2), then back to center (count to 2), to a heelside position (count to 2) and back to center (count to 2, then repeat cycle).



## Toeside Turn

A toeside turn will be in a different direction depending on the athlete's front foot preference. Those who prefer their left foot forward will be making a turn to the right, while the goofy-footed (right foot forward) will make a toeside turn to the left.

1. The athlete begins in a centered balance stance.
2. To initiate a toeside turn, the athlete will begin to apply pressure to the balls of the feet, and will begin to lower their body as the hips are turned slightly in the direction of the turn.

**NOTE:** Turning rotation happens at the hips, NOT the shoulders. The shoulders should remain relatively still when a turn is initiated. Rotation is provided by equal movement of the ankles, knees and hips.

## Heelside Turn

A heelside turn will be to the left for regular-footed (left foot forward) riders, while the goofy-footed rider will turn to the right. A heelside turn can be slightly more difficult because movement is hampered by the feet being locked into the bindings (there is less range of movement), and because an athlete will have more of a tendency to lose balance to the rear.

1. The heelside turn begins in a balanced, centered position.
2. The turn occurs as pressure is placed on the heels, the body is lowered, and the hips turn slightly in the direction of the turn.





### One Foot In – Direction Changes (To be done on a gentle slope)

At this point, have the athlete skate or climb uphill to the starting point used earlier. The process for beginning a glide with a direction change is the same as the straight glide.

As the athlete is gliding, they will sink into the position for a heelside turn and hold it until the board has changed direction, finishing by gliding to a stop. This process should be repeated until the direction change can be made with good control and balance.

As the athlete becomes more comfortable, they can move to the heelside turn position until the board changes direction, and then return to the neutral position (the board should straighten out in the downhill direction).

The process is then repeated for the toeside direction change. Begin by introducing the single direction change and then advance to having the athlete return to a neutral position.

The final step is to have the athlete make a toeside direction change, followed by a return to the neutral position, and then into a heelside direction change.



### Teaching Points – Directional Changes

1. Start by securing the board so that it does not move before the athlete is ready.
2. Have the athlete begin in the correct snowboard stance.
3. Keep knees flexed and stay in a relaxed position.
4. Athlete begins with a straight glide.
5. While the snowboard is moving, athlete begins to put pressure on toes.
6. As the athlete puts pressure on the toes, the snowboard should make a gradual direction change.
7. Once the athlete is comfortable making a toeside direction change, repeat for the heelside direction change:
8. Have the athlete put pressure on the heels while lifting the toes.



## Direction Changes Drills

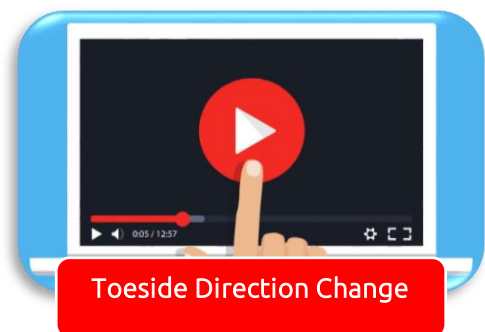
All the following drills may be introduced first by using the magic stick or giving support with hands if necessary. Please keep in mind that the goal is to reduce the use of aids and have the athlete perform the drills without assistance as soon as possible!

### 1. Complete Toeside/ Heelside Direction Change to a Stop Using Pressure Drill

- Begin by having the athlete climb a short, gentle slope.
- Once they have reached the start position, have them clip into the front binding while facing uphill.
- The coach should offer assistance by standing below athlete and taking the athlete's hands.
- As the coach, you will need to make sure that the athlete does not start before they are ready.
- Once the athlete is standing, have them place the free foot on the stomp pad between the bindings, and allow the board to glide downhill. When ready, release the athlete to complete the glide.

### 2. Toeside direction change

- Have the athlete begin in a straight glide.
- When moving, have the athlete apply pressure with the toes (pressing the gas pedal).
- The board will gradually begin to change direction toward the toeside. Complete the glide to a stop. It will be necessary to spend some time repeating this drill until the athlete has shown good balance throughout.

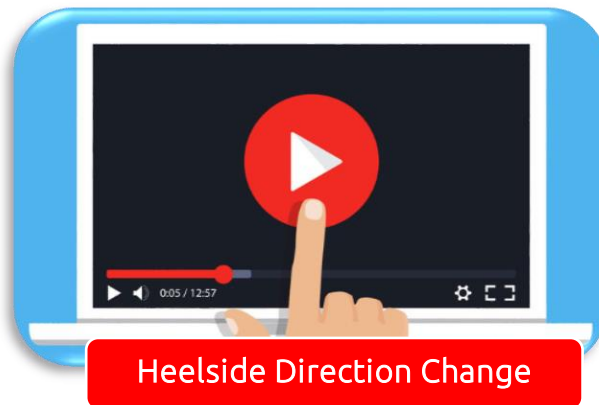






### 3. Heelside direction change

- Have the athlete begin in a straight glide.
- When moving, have the athlete apply pressure with the heels (digging heels in).
- The board should begin to change direction gradually toward the heelside.
- Complete the glide to a stop.
- It will be necessary to spend some time repeating this drill until the athlete has shown good balance throughout.





### Complete Toeside/ Heelside Direction Change Adding Rotation Drill

Once the athlete can complete a direction change while maintaining good balance and body position, rotation can be introduced. This will help make the direction change more dramatic.

- Begin by having the athlete execute a direction change using either toeside or heelside pressure as described above.
- When the board begins to change direction, have the athlete experiment by slightly rotating the upper body while gliding (watch what happens).
- When the upper body is rotated in the direction of the turn, the board should begin to make a slightly more dramatic direction change.
- Stress that the rotation should be a slight movement to avoid catching an edge and falling.
- Continue to experiment until the athlete can complete the movement comfortably and with good balance.

### Complete Toeside/ Heelside Direction Change Toward an Object Drill

- Choose an object on the hill such as a sign post, cone, coach, etc.
- Have the athlete practice turning toward the object using the skills described above.
- Remember to stress maintaining balance and eye contact with the object.
- Begin with gliding short distances and gradually work toward gliding greater distances and utilizing turn shapes.
- Be sure to have the athlete practice turning on both the toeside and heelside, making turns in both directions.





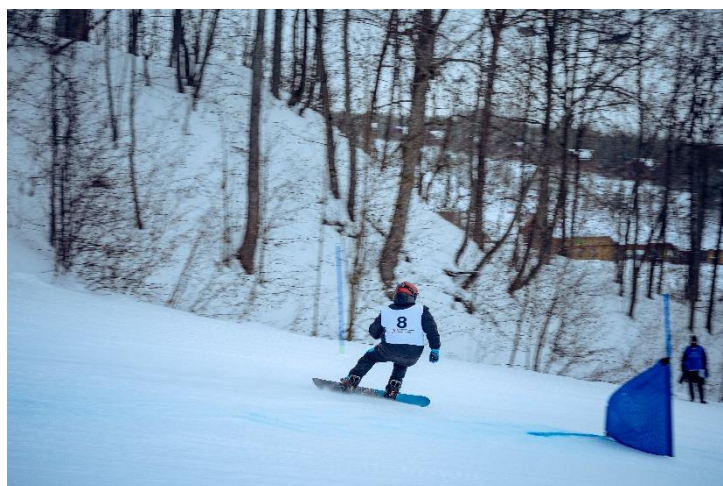
## Side Slip

Up until this time, the athlete has been working with only the front foot clipped into the binding. The free foot has allowed the athlete to learn with a measure of safety. Before attempting turns and direction changes with both feet clipped in, the athlete must be introduced to the side slip.

Speed adjustments and stopping are accomplished with either a turn or a side slip. It is important to introduce the side slip before going any further in the learning sequence.

The side slip position may seem to be the opposite of what you have been teaching so far; however, it will become a useful tool for reducing speed and even stopping. The side slip position is similar to the neutral riding position except that the body is not countered. The feet, hips and shoulders all face in the same forward direction, with the board perpendicular to the direction moved. This position can be introduced and reviewed on a flat area, and then moved uphill.

The side slip, garlands and the J Turn are decisive parts in learning more advanced snowboarding techniques. They also are an important part of snowboarding safely. These techniques allow the athletes to slow their speed and even stop, making it possible to safely handle nearly every slope. The more secure the athletes are in these techniques (especially braking and feeling comfortable with sliding on one edge), the faster they will learn further techniques such as linking or carving turns. More time spent with these basic exercises and drills can save much time later due to falls (catching the wrong edge, for example).





## Heelside Side Slip (To be done on a gentle slope)

- Begin by having the athlete return to the glide starting point on the hill.
- Learning to side slip on the heelside is easiest for most people.
- Have the athlete sit on the snow facing downhill and clip into both bindings.
- Place yourself on the downhill side facing the athlete.
- When ready, take both hands and help the athlete into a standing position.
- Remind the athlete of the proper stance (knees bent, relaxed position, etc).
- When the athlete is stable, begin to move backward down the hill, bringing the athlete with you.
- Tell the athlete to lift his or her toes off of the snow.
- The athlete's snowboard should be riding on the heel-edge as the athlete moves forward.

It is important to stress that the toeside edge should be kept up to avoid having it catch on the snow causing a forward fall. The movement of the side slip should be a smooth, flowing motion.

The athlete may require some practice until jerky movements can be eliminated. A good visualization is to have the athlete pretend that the board is spreading butter in a smooth motion. Repeat this exercise several times until the athlete can move forward (with minor assistance) smoothly without falling.

Once the athlete can side slip smoothly with assistance, it is time to try without. The first few times the athlete attempts to side slip unassisted, the coach should stand downhill facing the athlete, moving backward as the athlete moves forward. This will place the coach in the best place to offer assistance should the athlete need it. This also will offer the athlete a measure of comfort seeing the coach nearby. Monitor the athlete's progress until he or she can side slip without assistance and without falling.





### Toeside Side Slip (To be done on a gentle slope)

The toeside side slip is more difficult than the heelside for two reasons: The toeside side slip is done in reverse with the athlete's back facing downhill, and typically balance is easier to maintain when standing on the heels.

- Begin at the same starting point used previously.
- Have the athlete clip into the board, then turtle roll into a kneeling position facing uphill.
- Stand above the athlete and take both hands.
- Assist the athlete into a standing position.
- Take a moment to remind the athlete of the correct body position.
- Tell the athlete to raise his or her heels off of the snow.
- When ready, assist the athlete downhill, with athlete moving backward as you move forward.
- The snowboard should be riding on the toeside edge while the heelside edge is up off the snow.
- Repeat this exercise until the athlete can perform the side slip smoothly and with good balance.

Once the athlete has shown good balance, it is time to try the side slip unassisted. As the athlete performs the toeside side slip, walk behind (uphill) to offer assistance if necessary.

**Note:** Both side slips should be practiced until the athlete can perform them smoothly and without assistance.





## Side Slip Drills

### Elevator Drill

Place a line of cones or other markers in two vertical lines approximately six to eight feet apart, creating a corridor down the slope. Have the athlete practice maintaining a side slip within the corridor (like an elevator moving up and down). Have the athlete practice with both the heelside and toeside until each can be completed with good balance and body position.

### Side Slip with Foot Movement Drill

When the athlete can complete the side slip with good balance and body position, introduce foot movement.

- While hand-assisting the athlete, have them initiate the side slip as described above.
- When the board is moving downhill, have the athlete experiment by pressuring first one foot, then the other.
- Always remind the athlete to return to a balanced and centered position before pressuring the other foot.
- Unequal amounts of pressure will cause the board to begin to change direction and will affect how the athlete maintains his or her balance.
- Have the athlete experiment with varying amounts of foot pressure while maintaining proper body position. Be sure to practice on both the heelside and toeside.



### Side Slip with Changing Speeds Drill

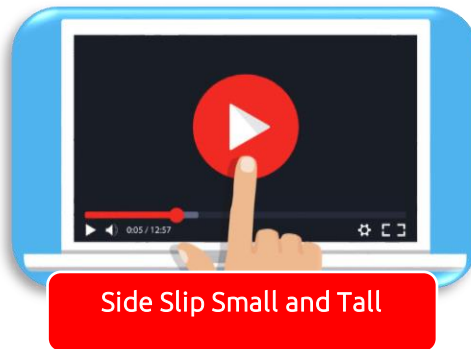
Have the athlete slip down the slope while consciously changing velocities by varying the amount of edge used. This should be done in a rhythmical order in response to commands given by the coach.





## Side Slip in a Small and Tall Position Drill

Have the athlete do some side slips in “small and tall” position.



## Side Slip to Falling Leaf Drill

Place a line of cones in two vertical lines to make a course that moves down the hill in both directions (not in a straight downhill as in the Elevator Drill). The cone line should look like a snake, forcing the athletes to side slip to the side as well as vertically. The cones should be placed in such a way that it is still possible for the athlete to move vertically if necessary.

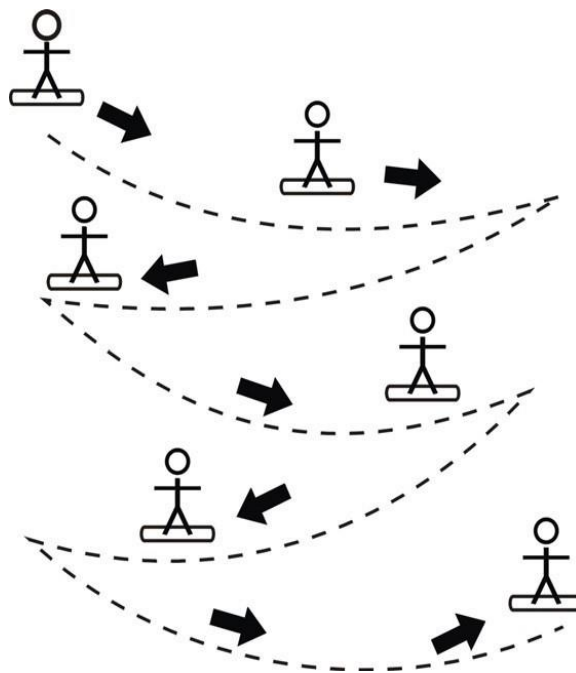
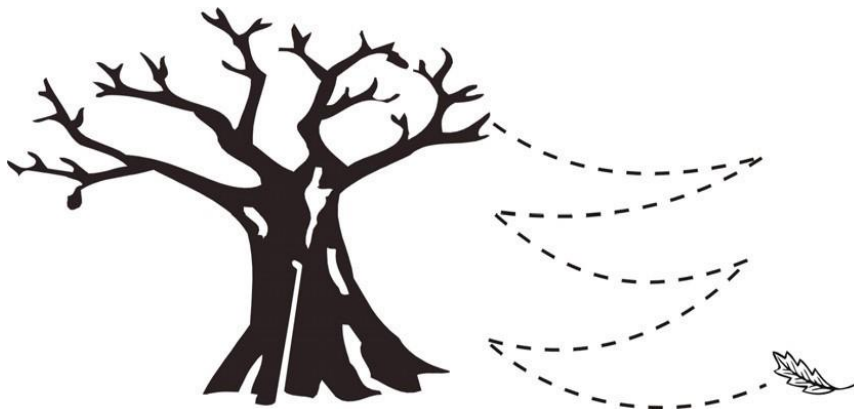




### **Falling Leaf (To be done on a gentle slope)**

The Falling Leaf is named because the movement of the boarder will resemble the movement of a leaf as it falls from a tree. The objective of this drill is to introduce movements that will allow the athlete to begin changing direction while controlling his or her speed.

**SAFETY NOTE:** This skill involves movement across the hill. Be sure to check for other snowboarders and/or skiers that may be on the slope.





### Heelside Falling Leaf

Do not introduce this skill until the athlete has developed the ability to perform both the heelside and toeside side slips with good balance. Before initiating the drill, review a properly balanced and centered stance as well as how speed can be controlled by utilizing the edge of the board.

- Begin by hand-assisting the athlete as he or she performs a heelside side slip.
- As the athlete moves forward, begin to have him or her apply more pressure to one foot.
- Remind the athlete to use the edge of the board to keep from picking up too much speed. Ask them to notice what happens.
- As more pressure is applied, the board will begin to move in that direction. When the athlete's stance is returned to the center with weight equally distributed, the board will begin to travel in a straighter line forward down the hill.

While hand-assisting the athlete performing a side slip, have them apply slight pressure to one foot. As the board begins to change direction (the board will begin to move across the hill rather than down), ask the athlete to return to a centered stance with balance equally distributed on both feet. Once the board is centered and moving straight downhill, have the athlete apply pressure to the opposite foot, followed by returning to center. By alternating pressure to each side and back to center, the athlete's board will begin to follow the "falling leaf" pattern down the hill.

As the athlete becomes comfortable with the movement, ask them to begin experimenting with the amount of pressure used, each time returning to center. Offer progressively less hand assistance as the athlete becomes more proficient with the movement, but walk in front of the athlete so that assistance can be offered if necessary and to help slow the athlete if they begin to lose control. Be sure to practice pressuring in both directions across the hill.





## Toeside Falling Leaf

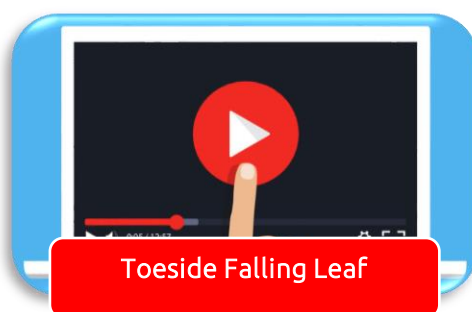
Once the athlete has become familiar with the falling leaf movement utilizing the heelside edge, begin to practice the movement utilizing the toeside edge.

**Important!** Please remember to take extra care when teaching the toeside falling leaf. While performing the toeside falling leaf, the athlete will be traveling with his or her back facing downhill, increasing the risk of potential injury. Achieving success with the heelside falling leaf may make the athlete anxious to rush into trying the same movement on the toeside. Be careful to start slowly and progress as the athlete becomes more comfortable with the movement.

Begin with a review of the balance progression, and practice with a straight toeside side slip. When the athlete has re-familiarized himself or herself with the side slip motion, begin to have him or her experiment with applying pressure in the same manner that was used while performing the falling leaf on the heelside.

## Teaching Points – Toeside Falling Leaf

1. Start with knees flexed, eyes up.
2. Begin with pressure on the toeside edge, equally with both feet.
3. Have the athlete slowly shift the weight toward the nose or the tail of the snowboard, looking in the direction of travel.
4. Release heel pressure SLOWLY; snowboard will begin to move downhill in a diagonal direction.
5. The movement of the snowboard should be a smooth, flowing motion.
6. Once the athlete is comfortable, have them move in the opposite direction.
7. Continue alternating directions down the hill.





## Falling Leaf Drills

All the following drills may be introduced first by using the magic stick or giving support with hands if necessary. Please keep in mind that the goal is to reduce the use of aids and have the athlete perform the drills without assistance as soon as possible!

### 1. Snake Drill

Place cones in two vertical lines to make a course that traverses down the hill in both directions. The cone line should look like a snake, forcing the athlete start to side slip to the side as well as vertically. The cones should be placed in such a way that it is not possible for the athlete to move vertically.



### 2. Slide to a Point Drill

Set different points (cones) on the slope the athletes should slide to.

### 3. Up and Down Drill

Have the athletes rise and sink (small and tall) while sliding to one side.

### 4. Slide after the Leader Drill

Have the athletes slide after the coach or after each other.

### 5. Slide Along a Line of Cones Drill

Have the athletes slide along a line of cones to a certain point and then back along the other side.

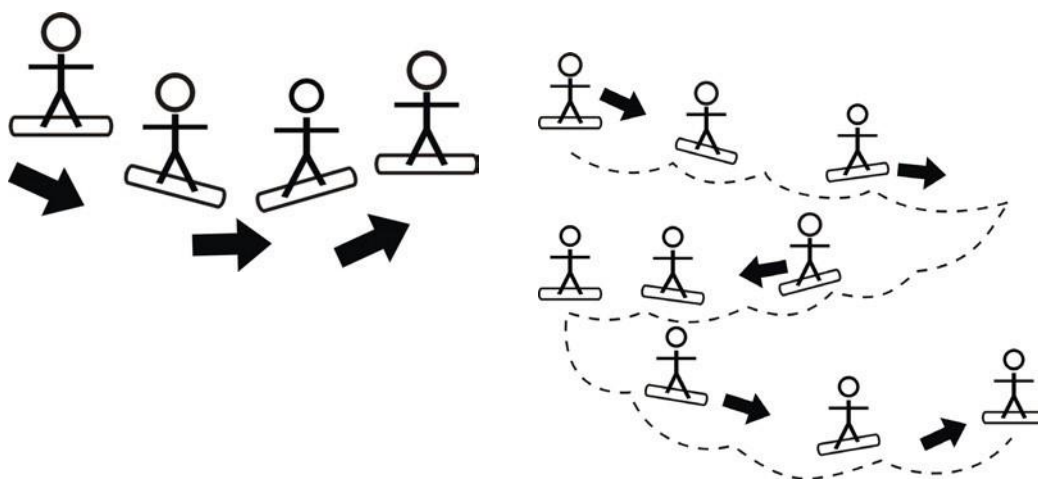




## Garlands (To be done on a gentle slope)

Garlands are named after the pattern that they make in the snow resembling a garland on a Christmas tree. The purpose of the garland is to teach the athlete board control: edge control, balance, speed control by releasing and engaging the edge while traveling across the hill in the same direction.

**SAFETY NOTE:** This skill involves movement across the hill. Be sure to check for other snowboarders and/or skiers who may be on the slope.



### Assisted Garlands

**Important!** The garland should first be taught with some assistance from the instructor. This can be done similar to the falling leaf, with the instructor standing slightly in front of and down the hill from the athlete, with hands outstretched toward the athlete for the heelside turn and slightly in front of and uphill from the athlete for the toeside turn. The athlete should have the hands outstretched in front, reaching for and/or touching your hands.

### Heelside Garlands

- Explain to the athlete that a garland is started with the same shifting of weight to the front foot as in the falling leaf.





- Remind the athlete how speed can be controlled by using different amounts of edge pressure.
- As the board begins to slide to the side and down the hill, have the athlete move the weight back to the center of the board and look up the hill to a spot.
- This will cause the athlete to rotate slightly, and the board will turn up the hill and slow to a stop.
- When the momentum of the snowboard has stopped, the athlete should move the weight over the front foot and let the nose of the board slide back down the hill, starting the process over again.
- This cycle should be repeated until the athlete is all the way across the hill.
- At this point the same skill should be practiced moving across the hill in the opposite direction.
- As the athlete becomes more familiar with the skill, provide less support until the athlete can complete the skill with no assistance.



## Toeside Garlands

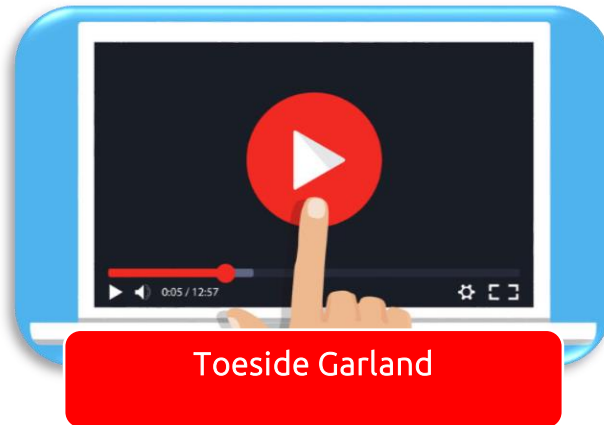
This drill is done in the same way as the heelside garland but on the toeside of the board.

**Important!** Please remember to take extra care when teaching the toeside garland. While performing the toeside garland, the athlete will be traveling with his or her back facing downhill, increasing the risk of potential injury. Achieving success with the heelside garland may make the athlete anxious to rush into trying the same movement on the toeside. Be careful to start slowly and progress as the athlete becomes more comfortable with the movement.

Begin with a review of the balance progression, and practice with a straight toeside side slip. When the athlete has re-familiarized themselves with the side slip motion, begin to have them experiment with applying pressure in the same manner that was used while performing the garland on the heelside. As the athlete becomes more



familiar with the skill, provide less support until the athlete can complete the skill with no assistance.



## Garland Drills

### 1. Garland after the Coach Drill

Have the athlete perform garlands while following the coach. The coach can give advice and encouragement during this.

### 2. Garland with Rotation Drill

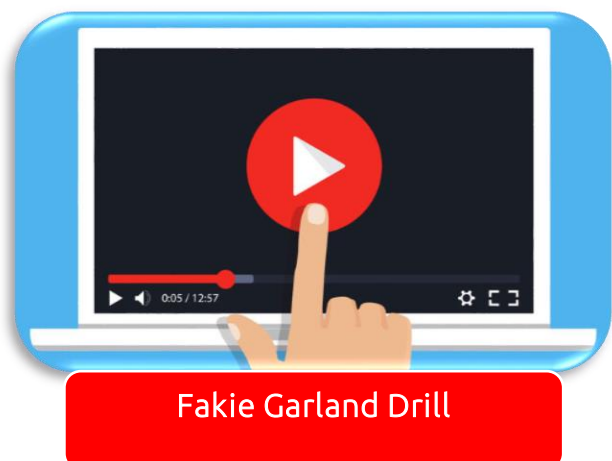
Adding shoulder rotation to the new direction will help the athlete to change to a new direction. For safety, have the athlete practice shoulder rotation first and then add it to the garland. This will help the athlete to finish the first garland movements.

### 3. Garland on Command Drill

Have the athletes practice some garland turns on command.

### 4. Fakie Garland Drill

Have the athletes try making garlands while riding fakie (backward). They already should have some practice riding fakie from the falling leaf drills. Practicing while riding fakie will help with practicing balance, and will help them when learning to ride fakie later.





### **Straight Glide Review, with Both Feet Clipped In (To be done on a gentle slope)**

Up to this point the athlete has been learning to control the speed and move across the hill. They will now have to get comfortable once again with moving straight down the hill with both feet buckled.

The following drills should be performed at the bottom of a hill where there is a large flat area that the athlete can use to coast to a stop before picking up too much speed.

- Have the athlete buckle in both of the feet, and assist with pointing the board straight down the fall line.
- Use your foot as a stop in front of the nose to keep the athlete from sliding down the hill.
- Once they are in the proper stance you can move your foot and allow the athlete to coast down the hill to a stop while maintaining balance and athletic position.
- Once the athlete is comfortable going straight, the coach can start the drill with the athlete standing across the fall line instead of pointing down the fall line.
- Have the athlete start the downhill straight glide by moving the weight over the front foot and letting the nose of the board slide down the hill until moving in a straight line down the hill.
- Have the athlete do this numerous times until comfortable going from a standing position on the hill to a gliding run down the hill on their own.

### **Straight Glide to Turn, or J-Turn (To be done on a gentle slope)**

Once the athlete is comfortable with the straight glide with both feet attached to the board, turns can be introduced again.

The following skills should be performed on the lower slope of a hill where there is a large flat area that the athlete can use to coast to a stop before picking up too much speed.

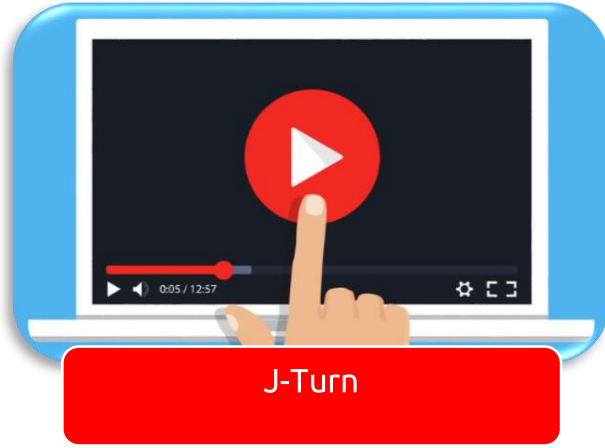
- Use your foot as a stop in front of the nose to keep the athlete from sliding down the hill.
- Once they are in the proper stance, you can move your foot and allow the athlete to coast down the hill while maintaining balance and athletic position.



- Once the board is going straight down the fall line, the athlete should press gently on the toes and look up the hill in the direction they want to go.
  - This will cause the board to edge and turn slightly.
- As the board begins to turn, the athlete should sink down by flexing the knees while progressing through the turn.
- The athlete should hold this position until they have turned back up the hill and come to a complete stop.
- During this skill, the coach should stay in front of the athlete and to the side toward which the athlete is expected to turn.
  - This allows the coach to continue talking to the athlete and helps to have the athlete focus on the direction that they are trying to turn.
- Once the athlete has come to a complete stop, the process can be repeated with a turn in the opposite direction (heelside) to go back across the hill to the other side.
- As the athlete gets more comfortable and proficient at controlling speed and stopping, the skill can be started higher up the hill on a steeper slope.
- It is also a good idea to do several J-turns in a row without stopping between each one, allowing the snowboard to point straighter down the fall line each time (which will result in faster speeds).
- When the athlete has become comfortable making a J-turn from a straight slide, have the athlete do a J-turn following a slow traverse across the hill.

### Teaching Points – Straight Glide to Turn (J-Turn)

1. Start by securing the board so that it does not move before the athlete is ready.
2. Have the athlete begin in the correct snowboard stance.
3. Keep knees flexed and stay in a relaxed position.
4. Keep feet flat and weight centered (over both feet, front to back and side to side).
5. Keep eyes forward, while looking ahead.
6. While the snowboard is traveling down the hill, pressure the toese (or heelside) edge, equally with both feet, while flexing the knees.
7. The athlete should continue the turn until the board stops.





## **Straight Glide to Turn (J-Turn) Drills**

All the following drills may be introduced first by using the magic stic or giving support with hands if necessary. Please keep in mind that the goal is to reduce the use of aids and have the athlete perform the drills without assistance as soon as possible!

### **1. Make J-turn to an Object Drill**

After moving in a straight line, have the athlete practice a J-turn toward a person. (This is important, because a person can change position!) It is often necessary to give advice in these moments. Remind the athlete to look and also point at the person toward whom they are moving. Later the athlete can make the J-turn toward a cone or other object.

### **2. J-turns on Command Drill**

Have the athlete ride straight and start initializing the J-turn on command when you call out "Now!"

### **3. J-turns by Signal Drill**

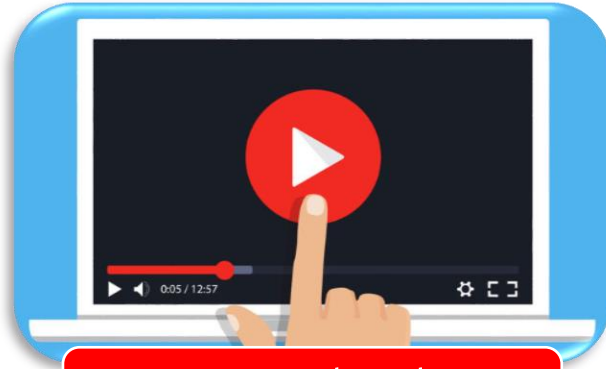
Have the athlete ride straight and start initializing the J-turn by when you give a non-verbal signal with the hands or a magic stic. This drill will help athletes who still look at their boards while riding.

When the athlete feels comfortable with both sides of J-turns, you can give non-verbal signals to the different sides. The athlete should make the J-turn in the direction the coach points.

### **4. Complete Toeside/ Heelside J-turn around an Object Drill**

Choose an object on the hill such as a sign post, cone, coach, etc. Have the athlete practice moving downhill, then turning around the object using the skills described above. Remember to stress maintaining balance and looking in the direction of the movement (not at the board or the object). Begin by placing the object a short distance down the hill and gradually begin experimenting with the placement of the object – placing it farther downhill, farther left or right, etc. Placing the object in different locations will force the athlete to complete the drill by varying the size and shape of the turn. Be sure to have the athlete practice turning on both the toeside and heelside edges, making turns in both directions until good balance and proper body position can be maintained throughout.





J-Turn around an Object





### Linking Turns (To be done on a gentle to moderate slope)

Once the athlete is comfortable and proficient making J-turns on toesides and heelsides, they are ready to learn how to link these turns together. The athlete has already learned all of the skills needed to make turns. In this process, the athlete is learning to combine the skills they already have in order to make continuous toeside and heelside turns down the hill.

- The athlete should begin by making a J-turn from a traverse.
- As the athlete finishes the turn and begins to slow to a stop, they should rise by straightening the legs and shift some weight to the front foot while reducing the pressure on the edge.
  - At this point the snowboard will point down the fall line and increase speed.
- The coach should be aware that as the board picks up speed, the athlete may have a tendency to lean back or to get frightened, so be sure to do this in an area where the athlete will not pick up excessive speed.
- The coach should be downhill and close enough to the athlete during this skill to provide support as necessary.
- When the snowboard is traveling down the fall line, the athlete should then gently pressure the edge on the opposite side of the board from the turn just completed, i.e., if the first turn was toeside, the athlete should gently pressure the heelside edge for the second turn.
- It is best to link one set of turns (one in each direction) together and then come to a stop. This will allow the athlete to practice the skill without building up excessive speed.
- As the athlete becomes more proficient, they can link several sets of turns together.
- To practice speed control, have the athlete make large turns that cross the entire run, placing the snowboard across the fall line for a long period of time.
- Making larger turns will help the athlete to slow down and be more able to control the speed.





## Linking Turns Drills

### 1. Approach to the Fall Line Drill

Have the athlete ride in garlands and gradually approach the fall line. They may become afraid when performing the first movements through the fall line because the board will have a tendency to speed up. Fear can cause the athlete to get out of position because of the tendency to lean back, etc. By introducing the skill gradually, fear can be reduced because the athlete will feel that he or she can always stop the movement. Practice this on both the heelside and toeside.

### 2. Linking Turn with Rotation Drill 1

The athlete is already comfortable making garlands. Shoulder rotation to the new direction will help him or her change to the new direction. Have the athlete practice turns using a big shoulder rotation. This will also help him or her to finish the first linked turns.

### 3. Linking Turn with Rotation Drill 2

Begin by having the athlete rotate as described in Drill 1. You can offer support by letting the athlete point to the new direction with the front hand. You can also use the magic stic or other training aid as a steering wheel, steering to the new direction. You can also have the athlete practice lifting an object (magic stic, etc.) from one side to the new side, pretend to play baseball or golf to the new direction, etc.

### 4. Up and Down while Linking Turns Drill

While preparing for the next turn by riding on heelside or toeside, have the athlete move up and down (small and tall). Rising causes the board to un-weight, releasing the edge. The rising and sinking movements will also help the turns become more automatic.

### 5. Cone Drill

Place a series of cones in a line moving downhill approximately 15 to 20 feet apart and in a path approximately 20 to 30 feet wide (see picture). Have the athlete practice linking turns by moving around the cones as he or she moves downhill. Begin with one turn in each direction and then increase.

### 6. Follow the Leader Drill

Have the athlete practice following in your track as you make a variety of turns while moving downhill. Show the athlete how your snowboard leaves a track in the snow, and ask the athlete to follow in your tracks. Begin with wide slow turns moving across



the fall line, and then begin making turns in a variety of shapes and sizes. At the end of each run, ask the athlete how each turn felt and to describe which turns were the fastest or slowest and which felt the most stable. After a few runs, ask the athlete to act as the leader making large turns and controlling his or her speed.

Training aids can also be used during this drill. The use of training aids can have many positive effects:

- Most athletes learn new movements by imitating; they can watch the coach while riding and imitate directly.
- The coach can advise directly during riding.
- The coach can demonstrate good and bad riding examples to show the correct/incorrect movements.
- The athletes learn to turn on purpose (when they have to vs. when it is convenient).
- The athletes learn to ride on a given course (good for race practice).
- The athletes can concentrate on their techniques rather than finding their own way down the slope.
- While riding as a snake, the athletes make each other aware of the rest of the group.





## Turning on Purpose (To be done on a gentle to moderate slope)

As the athlete develops the skills that allow him or her to be able to link turns together, the coach should begin to think about introducing racing skills. Turning on purpose is the first step in this sequence. On the race course, an athlete will need to change direction based on the shape of the course and the terrain. Turning on Purpose is just one of the skills that racing skills involves; these can be found in the Racing Skills Section of this guide.

## Turning on Purpose Drills

### 1. Modified Cone Drill

Set up a series of cones as described in the previous Cone Drill. When the athlete has mastered turning in both directions, vary the size and shape of the course by increasing or decreasing the number of cones, and by varying the distance and/ or width between them. Changes in cone placement will help the athlete learn to make turns of various shapes and sizes, and will teach the athlete to make a turn when needed. Varying the course through which the athlete must turn will help the athlete learn to turn based on the demands of the course rather than simply making turns at random while moving downhill.

Training aids can be used for all of the following drills and offer many positive effects:

- Most athletes learn new movements by imitating; they can watch the coach while riding and imitate directly.
- The coach can advise directly during riding.
- The coach can give good and also bad riding examples to show the correct/incorrect movements.
- The athletes learn to turn on purpose.
- The athletes learn to ride on a given course (good for race practice).
- The athletes can concentrate on their techniques rather than finding their own way down the slope;
  - While riding as a snake, the athletes make each other aware of the rest of the group.



## 2. Turns into a Funnel Drill

Before setting a slalom course, create funnels out of cones. Have the athlete practice riding into the cone while making a turn.

## 3. Turn on Command Drill

Begin by standing downhill from where the athlete will be starting, facing uphill. Have the athlete begin by moving in a straight line downhill. When the athlete is moving, signal or point to the left or right, asking the athlete to turn toward the direction indicated. Repeat this process until the athlete has completed a series of turns of varying shapes and sizes down the hill. As the athlete increases in confidence and skill, change the speed and interval of the commands.

## 4. Turns by Signal Drill

Have the athlete begin by riding down the slope while the coach is standing at the bottom. Have the athlete make turns when the coach gives a non-verbal command or signal (hands, magic stick, etc.). This drill is more difficult than the Turn into a Funnel Drill, because the athlete must look up and has to react fast while adjusting to the slope.







## **Snowboarding Skills Progression**

### **Racing Skills**

#### **Course Definitions**

##### **Slalom**

A slalom course will be set up such that the athlete needs to make a series of quick, short- to medium-radius turns while avoiding side slipping. The gates will be fairly close to each other, making edge control very important. Due to the technical difficulty of slalom, it will often take longer to complete than the other races, even when it is a shorter course.

##### **Giant Slalom (GS)**

A giant slalom course will be set up such that the athlete needs to make a series of flowing, medium- to long-radius turns. The gates will be spaced farther apart than the slalom course with slower, more fluid edge changes required.

##### **Super Giant Slalom**

A super giant slalom course will be set up such that the athlete will need to make a minimal number of turns, taking them slowly across the entire width of the course. The gates will be spaced very far apart with slow, smooth longradius turns needed.

### **How to Read a Course**

#### **Dry Land**

There are a few things that a rider needs to be aware of when looking at a course. They include:

1. Slope of the Hill,
2. Terrain Features
3. Placement of the Gates

Before “slipping the course,” detailed below, the coach should discuss with the athlete how these factors can affect the course.



### **On-Snow**

Before the beginning of each event, the athletes and coaches are allowed to “slip” the course. This means that both athletes and coaches may travel the course but must remain in a sideslip throughout the entire course. Edge changes are permitted, but any race-style practicing will result in a disqualification.

The purpose of slipping the course is to let the riders get a feel for the course and decide how they want to approach each turn.

As the athlete and coach progress down the course, they should be looking for a couple of things.

#### **1. The rhythm of the gates.**

This is the downhill distance between the gates and the horizontal offset between the gates. Some may be closer together in one or both of the above aspects, and the rider needs to be aware of these changes to plan turns.

#### **2. The terrain on the hill as the course progresses.**

For example, there may be a small roller or hump in the course. If this is present between the gates, it may not affect the shape or timing of the turn. However, if there is a gate on the top of it, the rider may pick up more speed on the down side of the gate and roller, making it harder to complete the turn and get to the next gate. Therefore, the rider may have to adjust the timing of the turn and start it earlier than when going around a gate with no roller.

The athlete should become familiar with each part of the course and should have a strategy for finishing the course. This means that the athlete will need to control the speed while navigating the gates. It may even be necessary to use a falling leaf or garland type of turn to make it through an especially steep section of the course.

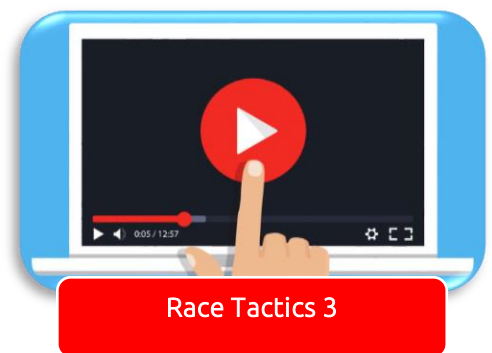
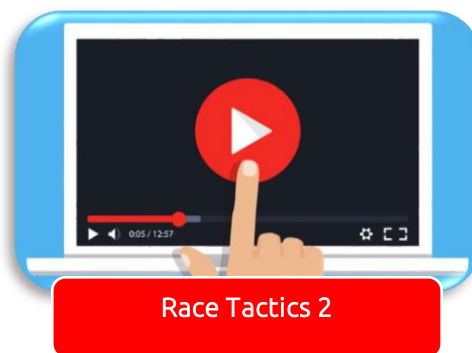
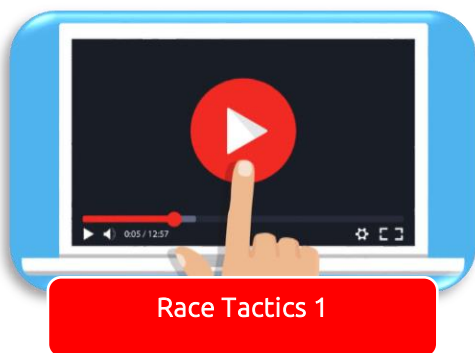


## Race Tactics

The coach and athlete should discuss how the rider approaches running the course.

- The rider should be in a flexed athletic stance with the arms in front of and close to the body.
  - This allows the rider the widest range of motion and makes it easier to keep in a balanced stance while negotiating the course.
- The eyes should always be up and focused on the course as opposed to looking down at the snowboard.
  - This will help the rider anticipate and prepare for what is ahead as opposed to reacting to things as they happen.
- It is very important that the rider knows that the turn should be started before reaching the gate and that the turn should be ending while passing the gate.
- It is actually advantageous to be in control at all times; speed is not always beneficial if it makes it too hard for the athlete to finish the course.
  - Due to this, there may be sections of the course where it is appropriate to use a falling leaf or a skidded turn.

One last thing to keep in mind as the coach and athlete slip the course is that a snowboarder will take a different route through a course than a skier will. As a snowboarder changes direction, he or she moves out and down the fall line, taking less time and a more curved path to the next gate than a skier.





## Racing Skills Drills

All drills in the “Turning on Purpose Drills” may also be used as basic drills for practicing race tactics.

### 1. Cone Shuffling Drill

This drill can be done on the snow or during the summer on a grassy hill. The coach should set up a series of four to ten cones on a hill, similar to a race course. The coach should then help the athlete read the course while looking at it from the top. Discuss where the turns should be made and what size and shape they should be. The coach can then shuffle sideways down the hill through the course using the line that was discussed with the athlete. The athlete should then do the same thing, and the coach and athlete can discuss what they felt and saw during the drill. This can then be repeated several times, and the course can be changed as needed. The coach should be reminding the athlete to have bent knees, hands up and eyes forward while shuffling through the course.

### 2. Practicing in a Race Course Drill

The best way to practice racing is to race. Practicing and refining general snowboard skills is important, but whenever possible it is important to practice those skills under the same conditions an athlete will face in competition. Allowing the athlete to practice making turns under race conditions is the best way to improve times. The best practice is to race in various courses using the same gates, timing system, etc., used in competition; however, access to such equipment is often limited. For those with limited access to equipment, there are some options to help offer a similar experience to athletes.





### 3. Practice Course Drill

If you do not have access to regular racing gates and other equipment, you can set up a practice course using orange cones, ski poles, etc. The advantage is that you can re-create an environment where the athlete can practice their turning skills in a race-type setting without spending a lot of money. Practice courses are also much more portable and do not take as much time and effort to set up.

When setting up practice courses, it is important to try to re-create the type of course that the athlete will be facing in competition. Try to give the athlete experience practicing small (slalom) turns, medium (giant slalom) turns and large (downhill) turns. The best way to measure improvement is to time the athlete in each of a series of 6-10 runs on the same course. When the athlete has completed the course, take a few minutes to share their time and talk about how it felt. You can also share helpful hints for improvement that the athlete can then practice on the next run. Comparison of times between runs can help an athlete see whether or not they are improving.



### 4. Public NASTAR Racing Drill

Many ski hills offer public NASTAR racing. NASTAR is a system where the general public can sign up and race timed runs in a giant slalom format. While NASTAR only offers giant slalom, it is a good way to give athletes an opportunity to race using the same racing gates, timing system, etc., used in regular competition.

### 5. Follow the Leader Drill

The coach should ride a few meters in front of the athletes through the course (best in a giant slalom course). In this way the athlete can see and imitate the best point to change the edges and begin a new turn early, which is most important in racing through poles. Please note that this should be used only to introduce movement through gates, and the athletes should learn to navigate a course on their own as soon as possible.

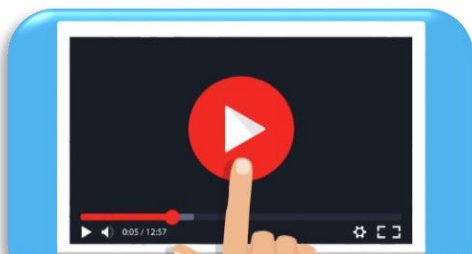


## 6. Turning in the Poles on Command Drill

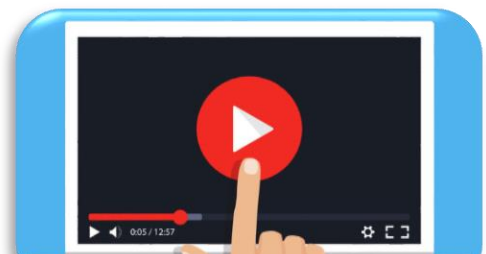
The coach may practice riding parallel to the course and giving the athlete advice on when to turn (“NOW!”). In this way the athlete can more easily determine the proper time to initiate their turns. Please note as mentioned above that this should be used only to introduce movement through gates, and the athletes should learn to navigate a course on their own as soon as possible.



## 7. Human Slalom Drill



Human Slalom 1



Human Slalom 2

## 8. Simulation Competition Drill

Many athletes have a tendency to become nervous in competition and make unforced mistakes. Simulate competition mode as often as possible in training racing skills to allow the athletes to get used to competition moments and pressure.







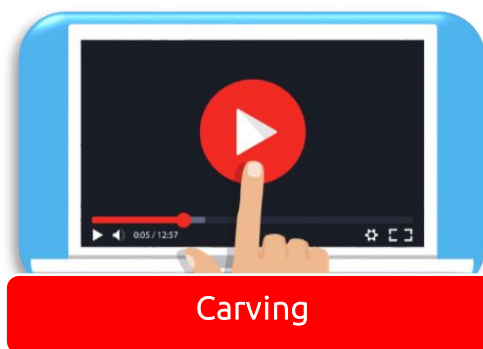
## Carving

The turns that an athlete will have learned to this point will most likely be “skidded turns”. This is where the snowboard slides perpendicular to the fall line as the turn progresses. This type of turn is good for controlling speed and is often very comfortable for the athlete to complete. However, a “carved turn” is the most efficient and fast way to come down the hill.

In a carved turn, the snowboard remains on its edge throughout the whole turn, and the tail of the board follows the same path through the turn as the nose of the board – as opposed to sliding down the fall line on a lower path than the nose of the board.

To make a carved turn, the athlete will need to put more pressure on the edge for a longer amount of time through the turn. A carved turn will be easy to recognize because the snowboard will leave one track in the snow that is a single thin line.

Once the athlete is able to make a single turn like this in both directions, he or she can try to link several carved turns together. To do this, the athlete will have to switch from one edge to the other in a single faster movement.



### Teaching Points – Carving

1. Have the athlete begin by assuming the correct snowboard stance with eyes looking straight forward.
2. Make sure the athlete remains loose, keeping the knees flexed.
3. Begin by moving down the hill and initiating a turn.
4. As the board begins to turn, have the athlete tilt the board on edge by applying pressure with both feet.
5. Have the athlete experiment with different amounts of pressure. Explain how different amounts of pressure add different amounts of emphasis to the turn.
6. Maintain constant pressure on the edge throughout the entire turn to completion.



7. While moving through the turn, concentrate on keeping the board on edge with no sliding.
8. Once this can be done consistently for a single turn on the toeside and the heelside, begin linking several turns together.

## Carving Drills

### 1. Hold the Line Drill

This drill should be performed on a moderately pitched run with plenty of open space. Begin with a toeside turn. Have the athlete start on the side of the run, with the tip of the board pointing across the slope. Have the athlete begin by allowing the board to start moving downhill and performing one large turn across the hill. While turning, have the athlete tip the board up onto its edge and hold it throughout the turn. Repeat the drill until they can complete the turn, making one line across the hill without sliding sideways and making a track in one thin line. When the athlete can complete the drill at slower speeds with no skidding, have him or her practice the drill with more emphasis, allowing the board to move faster before making the large turn. When the athlete has mastered the drill on the toeside, repeat on the heelside.



### 2. Show Me the Board Drill

Begin by positioning the athlete as if they are making a toeside turn. While offering assistance with balance, have the athlete tip the board up onto its edge, “showing” it to the people at the bottom of the hill. Repeat the same process for the heelside. When the athlete is comfortable tipping the board on both the toeside and heelside, stand at the bottom of the hill and watch the athlete make lined turns. During the



deep part of the turn, have the athlete show you the bottom of the board while turning, by tipping the board uphill. Tipping the board will help ensure that it is firmly on edge and will add extra emphasis and authority to the turns.

### **3. Making Garlands while Carving Drill**

To help the athlete become familiar with his or her first experiences while riding on the edge, have the athlete make garlands again while practicing carving. Emphasize the importance of using the edge. Remind the athletes to ride in a position with knees bent and body compact. Start with toeside garlands. Later, while practicing linked carved turns, have the athlete do big turns and long traverses to emphasize standing on the edge.

### **4. Kinetic Chain Drill**

When an athlete is snowboarding and making turns, the entire body works together in what is referred to as a Kinetic Chain. Each body part is connected to another, forming a chain. All of the body parts are connected to each other, and movement in one body part affects other parts linked by the kinetic chain. This drill is designed to isolate the body parts to show the athlete how each part affects the others, and then puts all of the movements back together to perform turns.

This drill should be performed on a moderately pitched slope with plenty of open space. The idea is to add emphasis to turns while isolating different body parts individually and examining their effect on the turn.

- Begin by having the athlete move down the hill making turns, while keeping the body stiff and maintaining a strong edge with as little skidding as possible.
- After completing several linked turns, have the athlete complete several turns while flexing at the ankles.
  - After several turns, stop and discuss the difference and how the turns felt.
- Repeat if necessary until the athlete can feel the difference made by flexing the ankles.
- Have the athlete complete several linked turns while flexing only at the knees.
  - When the athlete has completed several turns, discuss how the turns felt and how they were different than those made when just the ankles were flexed.



- Finally, have the athlete make a series of turns using the knees and ankles together, and discuss how they felt.

Making turns with body parts isolated will demonstrate how much more effective turning is when all of the body parts work together. Spend some time afterward making several runs and experimenting with putting emphasis on different body parts. Experimenting on their own will allow the athletes to find out what works for them and to complete turns using all of their body parts together. This will facilitate making stronger, more defined turns in a smooth and relaxed way.

### **Additional Advice**

Athletes who reach this level in snowboarding may require special advice. Here are some tips to emphasize when teaching carving:

- Bend your knees and ride in a compact body position.
- While doing a toeside turn, press your knees to the snow.
- While doing toeside turn, grasp or claw your toes in the snow.
- While doing a heelside turn, pull up your toes to the top of your boot.
- While doing a heelside turn, feel the pressure on the high back of the binding.
- While riding on the edge when making traverses, jump up and practice landing on the edge.
- Emphasize leaning and tipping the board onto the edge during the turn.



# Snowboarding Fitness Section

## Fit 5 + Other Special Olympics Resources

Special Olympics provides a range of fantastic fitness resources that coaches and athletes can use to educate themselves on best practice around physical activity, nutrition and hydration.

There are many health-related and performance-related benefits of fitness for Special Olympics athletes.

### Benefits of Fitness for Athletes

- Enhanced sport performance through improved
  - Endurance/stamina.
  - Speed and agility.
  - Strength and power.
  - Flexibility.
  - Healthy weight.
- Increased energy level, improved focus, and better recovery after practices & games.
- Reduced risk for sport-related injuries.
- Decreased risk for illnesses and chronic diseases.
- Improved quality of life.

### Physical Activity Outside of Special Olympics

It is vital that Special Olympics programs are not the only source of physical activity and exercise for athletes. As a coach, you should be encouraging your athletes to exercise every day and educate them on ways to stay active outside of organized sport practice.

There are numerous ways that athletes can exercise to stay healthy when they are at home. Walking, running, and biking are simple ways an athlete can exercise on their own and work on their cardiovascular fitness. Fitness classes like yoga, core strength,



HIIT and many others are great ways for athlete to work on their fitness and physical health outside of organized sports practice.

Special Olympics offers the Fit 5 Guide for athletes and coaches to use. As a coach it is a great resource to use when educating your athletes on the benefits of physical activity to their overall health and to their sports performance.

## Fit 5

The [Fit 5 Guide](#) is a plan for physical activity, nutrition and hydration that can help to improve athletes' health and fitness and make them the best athlete they can be. The Fit 5 Guide and accompanying [Fitness Cards](#) provide a fantastic collection of exercises that athletes should do to assist them to improve the skills needed for their sport. The exercises included focus on Endurance, Strength, Flexibility and Balance.



Figure 7: Fit 5 Fitness Cards

In addition to these resources, there are a number of videos available [here](#) for athletes and coaches to view and use when performing these exercises as part of their training plans.

## Nutrition

Eating right is important to your health and your sports performance. Nutrition and hydration are key points of athlete preparation and recovery for all forms of exercise. However, most athletes don't understand the connection between nutrition/hydration and sports performance. As a coach, it is important that you emphasize this connection and educate your athletes on correct habits. This is especially important for Special Olympics athletes, as they are at a higher risk for obesity.





It is vital to educate snowboarders about the importance of timing their meals or snacks prior to training or competition. Inform your athletes of the risk of eating too close to the time they are to train or compete, and educate them on the best times and foods to eat to ensure they are efficiently fuelled to perform.

Specifically, snowboarders should be aware of the effects of climate and altitude on their nutritional needs. It is recommended to eat higher amounts of carbohydrates (e.g. sweet potatoes, apples, whole grain rice) and iron-rich foods. At elevation, there is an increased need for iron in the body because of the blood cell adaptations that occur in a lower oxygen environment. As a result, iron deficiency is the most common nutritional deficiency in winter sport. Some great sources of iron are spinach, red meats, seafood and beans.

It is recommended to have your last meal or snack at least 90 minutes before completing any exercise. This ensures the athlete can digest the food and it will be available as a fuel source for them when training or competing.

You can utilize the nutrition and hydration section in the [Fit 5 Guide](#) to educate your athletes on basic principles. The nutrition, hydration and exercise tracker can help your athletes to pay more attention to these elements at home.

**Task:** Consider taking 5 minutes at the end of practice to cover nutrition and hydration tips. Educate parents and carers on the information that's shared with athletes so they can help athletes eat healthy at home.



Figure 8: Nutrition Section - Fit 5 Guide



## Hydration

Water is another important fuel for sports and for life. Drinking the right amount of water is important for your health and can also help your athletic performance. Coaches should be educating their athletes about the benefits of drinking enough water every day.

The [Fit 5 Guide](#) has a hydration section which provides information for coaches about quantities of water that athletes should be consuming, signs of dehydration in athletes, and the best choice athletes can make when looking for a drink.

As a snowboarding coach it is important to help you athletes keep on track with their hydration. Coaches should encourage athletes to take responsibility for their own hydration before, during and after training.

The body's thirst signals may be a bit delayed in cold weather, but athletes will still be losing water through sweating and open mouth breathing. Higher altitudes also increase the need to be hydrated because of increased breathing rates that are experienced at higher elevations.

Encourage athletes to drink one bottle of water (16-20oz/500-600ml) an hour or two before practice so they show up fully hydrated. Remember to pause for drinks breaks during a training session. We would recommend **pausing every 15-20 minutes** to give your athletes the chance to rehydrate as they are losing water while exercising. Encourage your **athletes to drink one bottle of water** (16-20oz/500-600ml) during a training session to make sure they do not get dehydrated. When drinking, athletes should take many small sips of water instead of gulping it down as this can sit in their stomachs and cause discomfort when exercising! Encourage athletes to drink water after practice to help them recover from their workout.



Figure 9: Hydration Section - Fit 5 Guide



## **Snowboarding Warm-Up and Cool-Downs**

### **Warm-Up**

Before beginning any form of physical activity you should always carry out a warm-up. A warm-up should be designed to prepare the body and mind for physical activity and reduces the risk of injuries occurring.

#### Purpose of a warm-up

- Gradual increase in body temperature.
- Gradual increase in heart rate.
- Gradual increase in breathing rate.
- Increase in blood flow to working muscles.
- Increase in range of motion of primary muscle groups for their sport.
- Mental preparation.

As you can see, warm-ups are extremely important for athletes' preparation for physical activity. Increasing body temperature and blood flow to working muscles is key for athletes to prevent them from sustaining injuries while exercising. A gradual increase in body temperature reduces the chance of an athlete sustaining muscle and tendon injuries while an increase in blood flow to working muscles ensures a delivery of important fuels that are required for energy production. In addition to this, warming up helps athletes increase the range of motion they have in their muscles. This adequately prepares athletes' working muscles for the movements they will be performing (stretching, generating power, stabilizing the body, etc.). Finally, an adequate warm-up will mentally prepare the athlete for exercise, this includes increased focus at practice or in competition, positive self-talk, or improved motivation knowing they are physically prepared to exercise.

It is recommended to carry out a **comprehensive, sport specific** warm-up for **at-least 15 minutes** prior to starting training activities or competition.



**Comprehensive:** Warming up all parts of the body. Focus especially on the main muscle groups involved in snowboarding, including the abdominals, legs and shoulders.

**Sport Specific:** Performing movements your athlete will carry out during performance. For snowboarding, you might include jumping, squats, and balance exercises.

Warm-ups should include three specific components:

1. **Aerobic activity to raise heart rate**
  - This can be walking, jogging, jumping or skipping.
2. **Dynamic Stretching**
  - Dynamic stretching involves active, controlled movements that take body parts through a full range of motion,
3. **Sport Specific Movements**
  - Skills or movements which are core to your sport.
  - Movements that the athlete will complete in training or competition.

See our [Warm-Up and Cool-Down Supplement](#) to learn more information on the components of a warm-up. The [Dynamic Stretches Guide](#) also provides a collection of exercises can be included in your warm-up.

Sample Warm-Up 1: 20mx25m area	
<b>Aerobic Activity:</b>  5-7 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ High Knees</li> <li>○ Side to Side Hops</li> <li>○ Broad Jumps</li> <li>○ Forward Jacks</li> </ul>
<b>Dynamic Stretching:</b>  15-20 repetitions of each	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Walking Lunges</li> <li>○ Walking High Kicks</li> <li>○ Toe Walks</li> <li>○ Forward and Lateral Leg Swings</li> <li>○ Torso Twists</li> <li>○ Arm Circles</li> </ul>
<b>Sport Specific Movements:</b>  5-10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Squat Jumps</li> <li>○ Single Leg Line Hops</li> <li>○ Back and Forth – nose to tail hops on snowboard</li> <li>○ Directed Snowboarding on Open Terrain</li> </ul>



**Sample Warm-Up 2: 25mx30m area**

<p><b>Aerobic Activity:</b></p> <p>5-7 minutes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Light jog – 2 minutes</li> <li>○ Butt Kicks</li> <li>○ Side-to-Side Hops</li> </ul>
<p><b>Dynamic Stretching:</b></p> <p>15-20 repetitions of each</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Walking Lunges</li> <li>○ Walking High Kicks</li> <li>○ Toe Walks</li> <li>○ Forward and Lateral Leg Swings</li> <li>○ Windmill Toe Touches</li> <li>○ Standing Side Reaches</li> <li>○ Arm Swings</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sport Specific Movements:</b></p> <p>5-10 minutes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Jump in Place with Snowboard – land on both feet</li> <li>○ Tic-Tacs with snowboard</li> <li>○ Directed Snowboarding on Open Terrain</li> </ul>

**Competition Warm-Ups:**

Before any athletic competition, an effective warm-up needs to be completed. Warm-ups are essential to preparing the athletes’ bodies and minds for physical activity, which will improve their performance and reduce the risk of injury. Here are some tips for competition warm-ups:

- Have athletes do the same warm-up routine that they do during training sessions.
  - Athletes with intellectual disabilities do best when they follow consistent routines. Routines help athletes to build their confidence, skills and time on-task.
- If space is limited, encourage athletes to do aerobic activities in place, or go back and forth between the allotted space.
- Keep athletes active and moving during staging. If they are sedentary during this time, they will lose the benefits of their warm-ups, such as an increased body temperature and blood flow to working muscles
- It’s possible that the aerobic activity and dynamic stretching can be conducted inside a building or facility, if space permits. Make sure the athletes stay warm if they conduct their initial warm-up outside, especially during the dynamic stretching phase.



## Cool-Down

When your training, practice or sport session is complete, you should always cool-down. It is just as important to have a good cool-down as it is to have a good warm-up. A good cool-down allows the body to gradually return to a state of rest.

If space is available, it is a smart approach to bring the cool-down indoors. This will amplify your efforts to start the recovery process.

### Purpose of a cool-down:

- Decrease heart rate.
- Decrease breathing rate.
- Decrease body and muscle temperature.
- Returns rate of blood flow from the active muscles to resting level.
- Decrease muscle soreness.
- Improve flexibility.
- Increases the rate of recovery from exercise.
- Promote relaxation.

A typical cool-down includes light aerobic activity followed by stretching. The aerobic activity should gradually decrease in intensity/difficulty. It could be a short jog/walk at 50% intensity with some stretches, led by the athletes, at the end.

Cool-downs are perfect opportunities for coaches to carry-out a debrief session with their athletes and review the session they have just had. Ask your athletes some **open, informative** questions that will make them think about the session and what they would have learned. In addition to the athletes reinforcing the coaching points you have given them, it also gives you, as a coach, the opportunity to see what works for each athlete as an individual.





Coaches should also use this time at the end of practice to encourage healthy habits. Educate athletes on the importance of staying active and eating healthy outside of practice.

**Open Questions** – Questions that cannot be answered with ‘Yes’ or ‘No’, for example:

*“What part of the training session did you find challenging today?”*

**Informative Questions** – Questions that provide useful information for you, as a coach, and for the athlete.

*“What part (if any) of the training session did you enjoy most today?”*

### Sample Cool-Down 1:

<p><b>Low Intensity:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Long, easy slope for the last run</li> </ul>
<p><b>Stretching:</b>  (30 seconds each)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Side Stretch (Flexibility Level 4 – Fitness Cards)</li> <li>○ Chest Opener</li> <li>○ Shoulder Rotation Stretch (Flexibility Level 5 – Fitness Cards)</li> <li>○ Calf Stretch (Flexibility Level 1 – Fitness Cards)</li> <li>○ Quadriceps Stretch (Flexibility Level 2 – Fitness Cards)</li> <li>○ Kneeling Hamstring Stretch (Flexibility Level 4 – Fitness Cards)</li> <li>○ Seated Rotation Stretch (Flexibility Level 5 – Fitness Cards)</li> </ul>



## Sample Cool-Down 2:

**Low Intensity:**

- Walk 5-10 minutes on a flat area

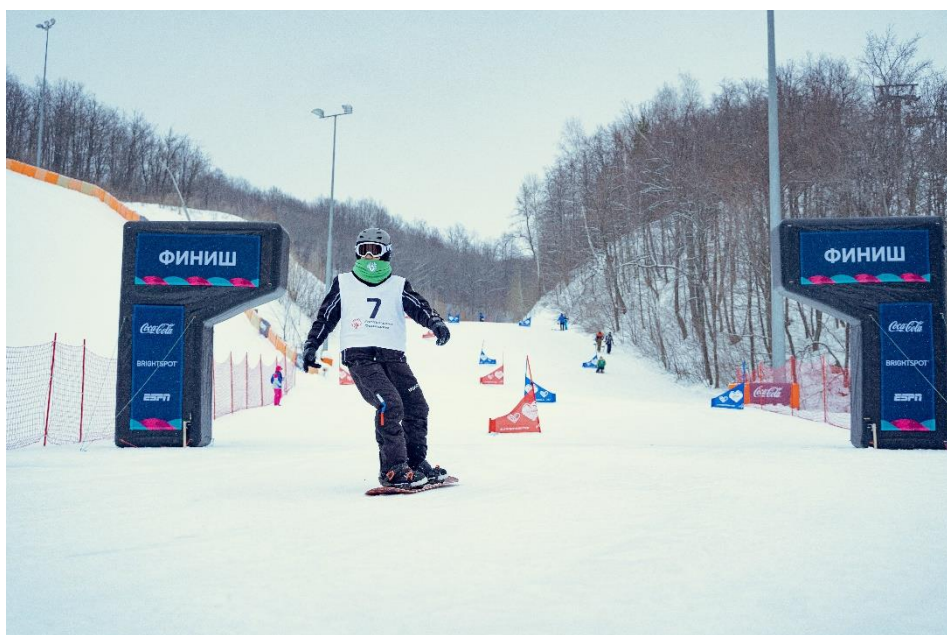
**Stretching:**

30 seconds each

- Standing Quadriceps Stretch
- Standing Hamstring Stretch
- Kneeling Hip Stretch (Flexibility Level 3 – Fitness Cards)
- Crossed Leg Hip Stretch (Flexibility Level 5 – Fitness Cards)
- Seated Rotation Stretch (Flexibility Level 5 – Fitness Cards)
- Chest Opener
- Butterfly Stretch (Flexibility Level 3 – Fitness Cards)
- Calf Stretch (Flexibility Level 1 – Fitness Cards)

**Coaches' Notes:**

- Think about the stretches that might be easier to do in your particular setting. There are modifications to most stretches in order to do them standing, seated or laying down.
- Develop a standard routine for your cool-down. Not only will it provide an opportunity for you to review the session or provide suggestions leading into the next practice, it will also create a routine you can suggest your athletes to do at home.
- Observe how your athletes are stretching. Ballistic or 'bouncing' movements while stretching can cause injury. Stretching may feel a bit uncomfortable but should not be painful.
- Use the time at the end of practice to encourage healthy habits at home.





## Possible Injuries in Snowboarding

Injuries are problems for athletes in all sports, at all levels. It is beneficial for coaches to be aware of common injuries that athletes could experience in their sport.

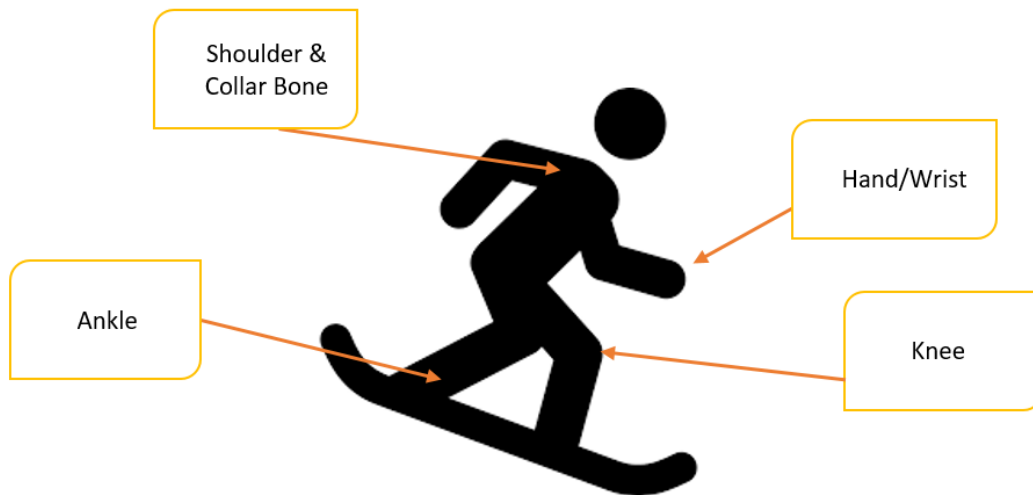


Figure 10: Common Snowboarder Injuries

The graphic above highlights 4 of the most common injury sites for snowboarders. Of these injury sites, the wrist is likely to be the most common site for beginners, ankle in intermediates, and shoulder/collar bone in advanced snowboarders. It is also important to note that snowboarding is a sport where environmental conditions and falls cause many injuries. Fall risks may also be higher when athletes are learning the sport and gaining balance. **Any injuries that athletes happen to obtain during SO training should be immediately tended to by a healthcare professional (doctor, nurse, and physiotherapist).** If an athlete reports to you with signs or symptoms of any form of injury it is recommended to send them to a healthcare professional.

Appropriate warm-ups and cool-downs can help to reduce the risk of both acute and overuse injuries specific to snowboarding. Additionally, strength and flexibility training either in practice or at home can further prevent injuries and improve performance. Specifically, core and quadriceps strength and robustness should be a main focus when trying to prevent injuries.

Balance and agility exercises should also be a priority in any snowboarder's training plan. Increased balance levels will allow athletes to be more comfortable and confident, and maintain the correct form even as they get fatigued. This may reduce fall risks and the injuries associated with falls. Similarly, improved agility will improve the athlete's ability to react to the fast shifts and changes of the slopes, decreasing their risk for falls.

## Snowboard Specific Physical Conditioning

Physical conditioning is the improvement of physical health through programmed exercises. Snowboard specific conditioning is the use of exercises specifically related to the movements used by players to develop snowboard specific fitness. The main components of physical conditioning are cardiovascular endurance, muscular strength and endurance, flexibility, and skill development. Conditioning training can be completed using just the athlete's bodyweight or by adding additional resistance through bands, weights, or any other resistance-based equipment.

In snowboard, these components can be developed **On-snow** or on **dry land** through various exercises, activities and drills. A combination of *On-snow* and *dry land* conditioning is optimal for a snowboarder's performance.

### On-Snow Conditioning:

*On-snow* conditioning is one conditioning option for coaches for their athletes as replicates what athletes will do while snowboarding. Examples of *On-Snow* conditioning are:

- Repetitive, Long Runs
- Downhill races

### Dry Land Conditioning:

*Dry Land* conditioning involves building up strength, endurance and flexibility in the muscles that will be used the most while snowboarding. This can be done through a variety of methods using bodyweight exercises, those with added resistance, or sport-specific movement patterns. Basic skills such as stance, balance and rotation should also be a focus of dry land conditioning.



Examples of *Dry Land* conditioning are:

- Core strength exercise
  - Plank Hold/side plank
  - Leg raises
  - Curl ups
- Bodyweight strength exercises
  - Push ups
  - Squats
  - Wall Sits
  - Lunges – Forward and Lateral
  - Calf Raises
  - Burpees
- Snowboarding Basic Skills
  - Stance and Weight Distribution
  - Balance, Rotation and Edging Movements
    - Single Leg Stance
    - Tandem Stance
    - Narrow Base Torso Twists
  - Agility
    - Side to Side Bouncing
    - Agility Ladders
  - Fall Techniques: Forward and Rear Falls



## Fitness Resources

Fitness for coaches [link](#).

In addition to the [Fit 5 Guide](#) and other resources available [online](#), Special Olympics also offers online Fitness specific courses where coaches can learn more about Fitness, SO athletes, and how the two work together!

The courses include:

- Fitness for the Sport Coach
  - This module is designed to provide Sport Coaches with information that will help them to introduce fitness into their ongoing sport program.
- Fitness Coach Online Training
  - This module is designed to provide volunteer Fitness Coaches with information that will help them to be effective at engaging our athletes in fitness.

Head coaches could consider bringing in a coach to work specifically on fitness relevant to their sport (fitness coach), or they could utilize their assistant coach and have them trained up on the online courses to gain a greater knowledge of fitness and take the lead on fitness training for their athletes. Either way, we would encourage head coaches to use the online learning modules as a way of improving their knowledge and understanding of fitness.

Check out [learn.specialolympics.org](https://learn.specialolympics.org) to find these courses, along with many other available courses, and get learning today!





# The Role of the Coach

For more information on your role as a coach, read our Special Olympics supplement available here:





# Sports Psychology

## What is Sports Psychology?

Sports Psychology is a name given to a topic that includes many different areas related to sports performance. These include (Association, American Psychological, 2021):

- Goal setting;
- Imagery and performance planning;
- Athlete motivation
- Handling disappointment and poor performance.

Ultimately, Sports Psychology relates to how an athlete's mindset assists or hinders their athletic performance, be that training, competition, or recreationally.

As a coach, your role is to assist an athlete to perform at their best – this includes psychologically as well as physically. This section will briefly discuss a number of Sports Psychology concepts that will assist you in your coaching of Special Olympics Athletes.

For further information on the topic, it is recommended that you explore expert research on the topic such as academic articles, online learning courses, podcasts, and books.

## Key Areas of Sports Psychology:

### Motivation:

What is motivation?

Often we consider motivation to be making that last lift in the gym, doing that last run up the hill, and going out to win in the final of a competition. However, these are only a select few examples. Most of the time motivation can be; going to training, sticking to your exercise routine, or drinking all of your water for the day.

Motivation is goal-dependent. This means that each person will have different motivation because each person will have different goals.

According to Burton and Raedeke in *Sport Psychology for Coaches* (2008), great coaches know that they don't give athletes motivation. Rather, they create the conditions or team climate in which athletes motivate themselves. Coaches do this by recognizing the importance of **intrinsic** and **extrinsic motivation**.



**Intrinsically Motivated Athletes** participate for the love of the sport. They enjoy the process of learning and mastering difficult sport skills and play for the pride they feel when working hard toward accomplishing a challenging goal.

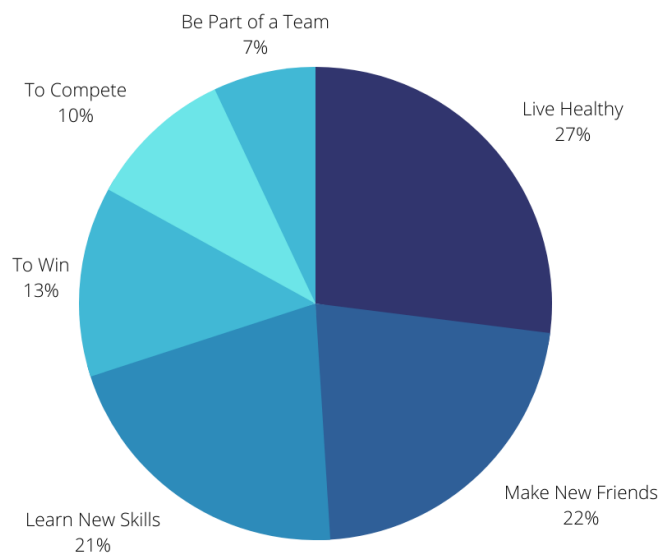
**Extrinsically Motivated Athletes** participate in sport in order to receive praise, to win, or to avoid punishment. The process is often not as enjoyable, they don't enjoy completing difficult tasks and often results in sport drop-out down the line.

Extrinsic motivation can also be useful in assisting athletes to learn a skill or try a new task. Using praise as a motivator can help to encourage athletes to explore or complete a task they normally would not attempt. However, extrinsic motivation should not be used long-term, and should be phased out over time if it is being used to help motivate athletes to complete tasks.

For example, a golfer does not like hitting the ball out of long grass and is willing to take a shot penalty to move the ball. Encourage the athlete attempt the shot out of the long grass and praise them for their effort. Over time, as the athlete becomes more comfortable performing the shot and continues to hit the ball out of the long grass, praise should be reduced.

Special Olympics carried out an Athlete Satisfaction Survey. This survey aimed to find out why athletes

participated in Special Olympics sports and their motivation to do so. The results can be seen in the pie chart below.



*Figure xii: Athlete Satisfaction Survey Results - Why athletes participate in Special Olympics Sport. These can be considered to be sources of motivation for athletes and should be considered in your decision making as a coach*



## **Motivation Myths:**

### **Motivation Myth 1: Athletes are either motivated or not motivated**

Some coaches believe that motivation is simply a personality trait, a static internal characteristic. They believe that an athlete either has motivation or doesn't. They don't believe motivation is something coaches can develop. For these coaches, the key to having a motivated team is to find and recruit athletes who have the right personality. However, while some athletes are, in fact, more motivated than others, this view does not provide any direction or guidance on how coaches can help develop and sustain athletes' motivation. The fact is, coaches can help athletes develop motivation.

### **Motivation Myth 2: Coaches give athletes motivation**

Other coaches view motivation as something they can inject into their athletes on demand, like a flu shot, by means of inspirational pep talks or gimmicks. They may use slogans, posters, and bulletin board quotes from upcoming opponents. These strategies may be helpful, but they are only a small piece of the motivation puzzle. There is much more to the story—motivation is not something coaches can simply give their athletes.

### **Motivation Myth 3: Motivation means sticks and carrots**

Some experts suggest that effective motivation means using carrots (rewards) and sticks (punishments) to drive athletes to do things they would not do on their own. This may seem innocuous, but think about it on a deeper level. It assumes that athletes don't want to do something, so the coach will provide motivation to make them do it through punishments or rewards. Coaches who emphasize the stick, in the form of chastising, criticizing, yelling, coercing, and creating guilt, often find themselves swimming upstream. No matter what they try, they meet resistance and negative attitudes. Not only is this approach ineffective, it saps the enjoyment out of sport. Coaches must understand athletes' needs in order to create a team culture that naturally motivates them.



## **Confidence (through Goal Setting)**

Sports confidence is the belief in yourself to execute or complete a task or skill relevant to the sport or activity you are participating in. Sport confidence should be gained through consistent execution of the skill or task in a controlled environment (training session). This can then be applied in a more chaotic environment (competition). For example; Maureen is confident she can complete the 100m breast stroke in her local competition because she has completed this particular stroke many times in her training.

*An athlete with lack of self-confidence doubts whether they are good enough, whether they have the qualities necessary for success (Plakona, Parčina, Ludvig, & Tuzović, 2014).*

1. Developing sport confidence in athletes helps to make participation fun and is critical to the athlete's motivation.
2. A considerable amount of anxiety is eliminated when athletes know what is expected of them and when they have to be prepared.
3. Mental preparation is just as important as skills training.
4. Progressing to more difficult skills increases the challenge.
5. Dropping back into easier skills increases one's confidence.

## **Developing Self-Confidence through Goal Setting**

Realistic yet challenging goals for each athlete are important for the motivation of the athlete, during both training and competition. Accomplishing goals at practice through repetition in settings that replicate the competition environment instill confidence. Sport confidence in athletes helps make participation fun and is critical to the athlete's motivation. Setting goals is a joint effort between athletes and coaches.

Goal setting must be a collaborative effort. At the end of the day, the goals are set for the athlete for what they want to accomplish, not what their coach, parents, friends, or family want them to accomplish. A coaches' role is to assist the athlete is creating the goals that align to their desires, and to keep the athlete on track to achieve those goals.



**Goals should be:**

1. Structured as short-term, intermediate and long-term.
2. Viewed as stepping stones to success.
3. Created and accepted by the athlete.
4. Used to establish the athlete's training and competition plan.
5. Flexible
6. Written down
7. Identified as either performance goals or practice goals
8. Achievable - Sometimes athletes will need to seek support to accomplish their goals

Following the SMART Goals model is a simple way to set goals for your athlete in a collaborative and logical way.





## Handling Disappointment (performance/success oriented/injuries)

Disappointment can present itself in many different ways for an athlete. This can be:

- Poor/Below expected performance (in training or competition)
- Good performance without the desired outcome (winning/scoring/placing)
- Disappointment for others (teammates/friends)
- Acquiring an injury (meaning inability to compete/perform)
- Not receiving praise (from coach/friend/family)

And many more reasons!

As a coach, it is essential that you assist your athletes in handling disappointment. Not only is this beneficial to them in sport, it is a life skill that can be applied in almost any other context (such as job applications, studying for school/college, acquiring an illness, etc.).

How disappointment can be seen in athlete behaviour:

- Anger
- Frustration
- Going within themselves
- Feeling overwhelmed (tears)
- Loss of focus
- Loss of motivation to train/compete
- Loss of interest in the sport

Disappointment often presents itself as stress in athletes. Special Olympics offers the Strong Minds program to assist athletes in learning how to cope with stress. This can be stress from competition or the stress that comes from daily tasks.

Check out the [Strong Minds](#) page for all resources required.

A useful tool for coaches working with athletes showing signs of stress would be the [Strong Minds Coach's Playbook](#). These strategies can help athletes with the stresses of life and sport, and promote healthy thoughts and coping mechanisms.





## Strong Minds Tips for Stress

### Coach's Playbook

Special Olympics  
**Strong Minds**



Strong Minds is an interactive learning activity focused on developing adaptive coping skills. Competition provides a natural opportunity to develop active strategies for maintaining emotional wellness under stress, such as: thinking positive thoughts, releasing stress and connecting with others. During Strong Minds, your athletes will learn the following strategies and will benefit greatly if you can incorporate these strategies into practice and games.

### Station 1

**1** Squeeze the ball for 3 seconds.



**2** Release the ball and any tension.



#### Coach Recommendations

- On the way to a game or competition
- During a pre-game team talk
- After the game during a team talk
- For an athlete sitting on the bench or in between turns/games

### Station 2

**1** Think a good thought.



**2**



- During practice and games, state positive statements to athletes
- Start practices with a song with a positive message
- Ask an athlete to start each practice with a positive statement to the team
- After the game, ask the athletes what went well

### Station 3

**1** Smell the flower [pinwheel].



**2** Blow the flower [pinwheel].



- Encourage deep breathing during stretching
- Teach the athletes to use deep breathing during a stressful situation in a game (ie. Before shooting a foul shot).
- Before a game, do a few rounds of deep breathing as a team



## Strong Minds Tips for Stress

### Coach's Playbook

Special Olympics  
**Strong Minds**



#### Station 4

**1** Try a few stretches



**2** How do you feel?



- Make sure athletes hold static stretches for at least 30 seconds
- Incorporate deep breathing into stretching routines
- Lead stretches that also focus on relaxation
- Encourage athletes to do a few stretches before they go to bed each night

#### Station 5

**1** Support others



**2** Seek support from others



- Set up drills for partner work to allow athletes to build connections
- Encourage athletes to use positive messages to teammates during practices and games
- Remind athletes that their coach and teammates are there to support them
- Encourage family members to also incorporate these strategies with their athletes

#### Station 6

**1** Pick the strategies you like



**2** Use the strategies in everyday life



This Strong Minds Tips for Stress concept was created by Special Olympics Texas

- Encourage athletes to visit Strong Minds at Healthy Athletes or Game Ready Minds at Performance Stations
- Remind athletes who visited Strong Minds to utilize the skills they learned in practice and games
- Ask the athletes to practice these strategies at home

Communication strategies by the coach, fellow athletes, families and friends will help an athlete handle disappointment. Listen to what the athlete says and why they may be disappointed. Offer positive switches – positive comment – correction – positive comment to take the athlete's attention away from their disappointment. The athlete's effort, attitude and preparation should be emphasized, not the result of the competition.



## Athletes in Training

### Self-Talk & Imagery

Self-talk represents the things you say in your head about yourself.

Self-talk can sometimes be negative e.g., “that team is much better than ours”.

Positive self-talk involves repeating a helpful and positive word or phrase such as “I am fit and ready to play”.



Imagery or visualization is a mental process. It allows you to simulate (imagine) experiences in your mind. Often these experiences have the desired outcome e.g. scoring a penalty kick in football.



Imagery also involves using your senses (smell, sound, taste, touch, and feeling) to create an accurate experience in your mind.

Positive self-talk and imagery promotes confidence and success. Coaches should help educate their athletes on the value of positive self-talk and imagery.

One thing coaches can do is help athletes establish a pre-performance routine. At the start of a competition athletes can very briefly

(10-15 seconds) do 4 helpful steps:

1. Close your eyes
2. Take a few deep calming breathes
3. Repeat a positive phrase “I am ready”
4. Picture yourself successfully making a perfect start, or finishing strongly.



This routine can be created and modified at training. Find what works best for the athletes. Take this pre-performance routine into a competition to help athletes best prepare mentally.

## Athletes at Competition

### Psychological Preparation

Just as you train your athletes physically and tactically for competition, you equally need to prepare them psychologically.

Physical Readiness + Psychological Readiness = Competition Readiness



Readiness of the athlete means being focused and prepared for competition.

- **Psychological Readiness:** Being a participant in the sport, showing confidence and an understanding strategy.
- **Physical Readiness:** Being physically conditioned and trained in the skills required for competition.

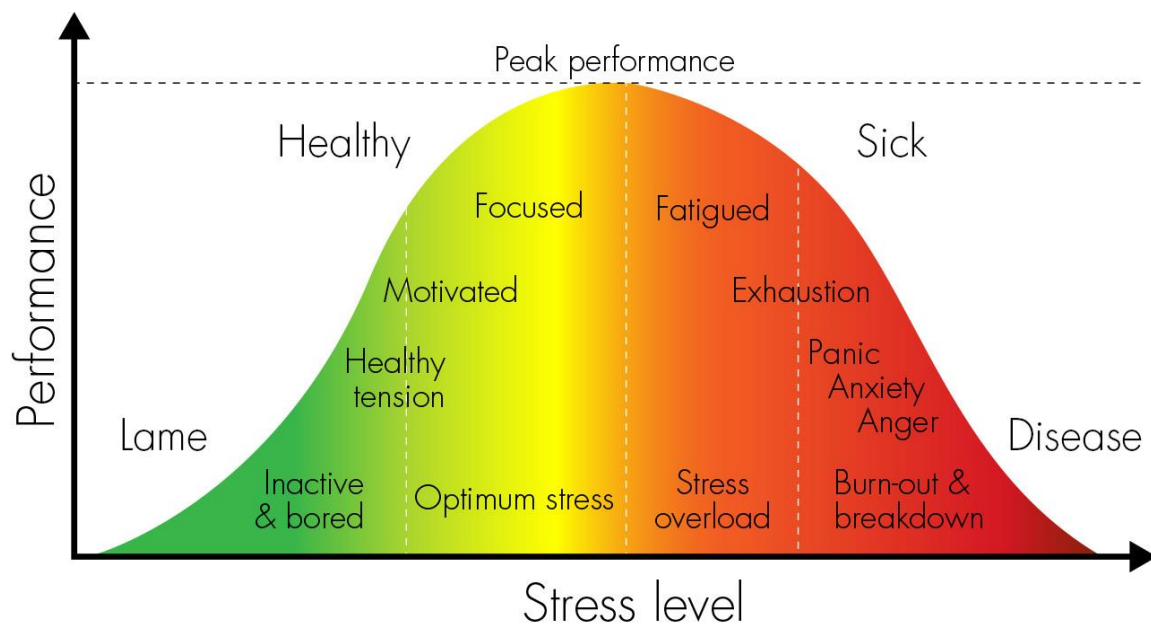
How to Psychologically Prepare for Competition:

1. Create and Set Competition Goals
2. Prepare for competition setting
  - a. Tell your athletes what to expect
  - b. Use videos of previous competitions
  - c. Have experienced athletes speak with inexperienced athletes
  - d. Have all equipment ready and available before time
3. Train as you plan to compete
  - a. Make sure training is properly preparing your athletes for competition
  - b. This will give athletes confidence going into competition performance
4. Practice Strong Minds Stations



Anxiety or stress is normal before a competition. Athletes who do not suffer from some sort of anxiety or stress before performance would be in the minority.

Competition anxiety occurs when an athlete perceives a competitive situation as potentially threatening, resulting in an aversive emotional response (Schaefer, Vella, Allen, & Magee, 2016). Although some level of competition anxiety is considered to be normal, when competition anxiety exceeds a threshold level it can become detrimental to performance, motivation, and enjoyment (Schaefer, Vella, Allen, & Magee, 2016).



*Figure xii: The relationship between stress level and performance. This graph shows where peak performance can be achieved with a moderate stress level. It also shows the dangers of high stress and anxiety. Credit cescasdestinationhealthy.wordpress.com for image.*

As a coach, it is your role to assist your athlete in not exceeding this anxiety threshold.

Simple measures such as:

1. Pre-Performance Routine
2. Strong Minds Stations
3. Alternative tasks to take their mind off of the competition/performance

These measures can be beneficial in the psychological preparation for athletes before competition.

There can be times when anxiety becomes too much for an athlete. They may not want to train or compete. The idea of competition or performing will cause them



serious stress. If this is noticeable for an athlete within sport and outside of sport (social life, education, family life, etc.), it is recommended that the athlete talk to a professional. This can be a family doctor, a counsellor, or a psychologist.

## Post-Performance Psychology

### What is success – individual to the athlete

Many athletes will equate winning and losing with success and failure. This is often a self-defeating perspective as athletes only partly control the outcome of competition and often winning is unrealistic.

Coaches should focus on individual effort, self-improvement and learning as barometers of success.

Each athlete will have their own take on what success is to them.

If an athlete feels they are unsuccessful at a competition:

- ✓ Reassure them that winning isn't everything
- ✓ Refer back to the athlete's goals
- ✓ Identify where they have achieved or progressed towards their goals
- ✓ Praise their effort, not performance
- ✓ Remember the Special Olympics athlete oath;  
*"Let me win. But if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt."*

## How to win & lose – code of conduct

All athletes should follow the Sportsmanship section of the [Special Olympics Athlete's Code of Conduct](#).

- I will practice good sportsmanship.
- I will act in ways that bring respect to me, my coaches, my team and Special Olympics.
- I will not use bad language.
- I will not swear or insult other persons.
- I will not fight with other athletes, coaches, volunteers or staff.

As a coach, your role is to remind the athletes of their conduct and how to manage themselves win, lose, or draw. The important thing to do when educating athletes on their code of conduct is to explain 'why'.



Explain that athletes should act in the same manner they would want others to act if they were in the same position. If an athlete is successful, congratulate them. If an athlete is unsuccessful, encourage them for next time.

Your role as a coach is to be a role model to your athletes. You should always demonstrate good sportsmanship throughout competition, training, or events. Athlete's often 'feed' off of their coach's energy and enthusiasm – make sure yours is always positive and following good etiquette.

<b>1</b>	Teacher	<b>5</b>	Mentor
<b>2</b>	Demonstrator	<b>6</b>	Psychologist
<b>3</b>	Assessor	<b>7</b>	Planner
<b>4</b>	Advisor		

*Figure xiii: Some roles a coach may take on in addition to being a role model.*

### **Athletes in a heightened state of anxiety post-performance**

Can be after achieving success (over-excitement) or not achieving desired outcome (disappointment).

If an athlete is excited and celebrating, do not discourage this! This is the feeling we all long for as athletes, coaches, and fans! Help the athlete to celebrate in a positive and safe manner.

It is important to not discount feelings of disappointment. It is appropriate to be disappointed when we lose a game or match. The challenge for the coach is to redirect that disappointment into a renewed commitment to training for the next competition or season. Becoming obsessed with losing is not a healthy or natural reaction for anyone.

Here are some strategies for athletes experiencing heightened states of anxiety:

1. Use Strong Minds stations
  - a. Positive Messaging
  - b. Deep Breathing
  - c. Stretching
2. Offer support – through hi-fives, knuckle touches, other forms of comfort that the athlete is accepting of and comfortable with





3. Have a consistent post-performance routine (win, lose, or draw)
  - a. Stretching
  - b. Debrief
  - c. Praise for effort

All athletes are different and will have different ways of coping. Work with your athlete what their best post-performance routine should be and when to carry it out.

For some, shortly or immediately afterward is appropriate. If you leave it too long, it becomes forgotten.

For others, they may need more time to decompress – **there is no one size fits all.**

The athlete's effort, attitude and personal skills attainment should be rewarded and positively reinforced.

### **Educating Athletes**

Each athlete is different. Simple guidelines and strategies on how to educate athletes will not be universally applicable to athletes. However, having a knowledge of the foundations as listed above will help you to best prepare your athletes for training and competitions.

Some simple tips for educating athletes about sports psychology are:

1. Introduce elements bit by bit
  - a. Start with goal setting
  - b. Strong Minds stations
  - c. Introduce pre-performance routines
2. Use sporting examples to explain elements of psychology
  - a. Confidence
  - b. Disappointment
3. Work in groups
  - a. Have open discussions about elements before, during, and after training and competition

### **References**

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# Planning for Snowboarding

There will be many different skills to teach riders during the course of a season. A season-long training plan will help coaches present skills in a systematic and effective way.

## Essential Components of Planning a Snowboarding Training Session

Each training session needs to contain the same essential elements. The amount of time spent on each element will depend on the goal of the training session, the time of season the session is in, and the amount of time available for a particular session. The following elements need to be included in an athlete's daily training program:

- Warm-ups
- Previously taught skills
- New skills
- Competition experience
- Feedback on performance

The final step in planning a training session is designing what the athlete is actually going to do.

**Remember** – when creating a training session using the key components, the progression through the session allows for a gradual buildup of physical activity.

- Easy to difficult
- Slow to fast
- Known to unknown
- General to specific
- Start to finish



## Principles of Effective Training Sessions

Keep all athletes active	Athlete needs to be an active listener
Create clear, concise goals	Learning improves when athletes know what is expected of them
Give clear, concise instructions	Demonstrate – increase accuracy of instruction
Record progress	You and your athletes chart progress together
Give positive feedback	Emphasize and reward things the athlete is doing well
Provide variety	Vary exercises – prevent boredom
Encourage enjoyment	Training and competition is fun – help keep it this way for you and your athletes
Create progressions	Learning is increased when information progresses from: Known to unknown – discovering new things successfully Simple to complex – seeing that “I” can do it General to specific – this is why I am working so hard
Plan maximum use of resources	Use what you have and improvise for equipment that you do not have – think creatively
Allow for individual differences	Different athletes, different learning rates, different capacities

## Tips for Conducting Successful Training Sessions

- Assign assistant coaches their roles and responsibilities in accordance to your training plan.
- When possible, have all equipment and stations prepared before the athletes arrive.
- Introduce and acknowledge coaches and athletes.
- Review intended program with everyone. Keep athletes informed of changes in schedule or activities.
- Alter the plan according to weather in order to accommodate the needs of the athletes.
- Change activities before the athletes become bored and lose interest.
- Keep drills and activities brief so athletes do not get bored. Keep everyone busy with an exercise, even if it is rest.



- Devote the end of the practice to a group activity that can incorporate challenge and fun, always giving the athletes something to look forward to at the end of practice.
- If an activity is going well, it is often useful to stop the activity while interest is high.
- Summarize the session and announce arrangements for next session.

### **Tips for Conducting Safe Training Sessions**

Though the risks can be few, coaches have a responsibility to ensure that athletes know, understand and appreciate the risks of snowboarding. The safety and well-being of athletes are the coaches' primary concerns. Snowboarding is not a dangerous sport, but accidents do occur when coaches forget to take safety precautions. It is the head coach's responsibility to minimize the occurrence of injuries by providing safe conditions.

- Establish clear rules for behavior at the first practice, and enforce them.
- Keep your hands to yourself.
- Listen to the coach.
- When you hear the whistle, Stop, Look and Listen
- Ask the coach before you leave the group, enter the course or ride off on your own.
- When the weather is poor, have a plan to immediately remove athletes from inclement weather.
- Make sure athletes bring water to every practice.
- Check your first aid kit; restock supplies as necessary.
- Have a screwdriver or multi-tool available for on-hill adjustments.
- Train all athletes and coaches on emergency procedures.
- Choose a safe area. Do not practice in areas with rocks or holes that could cause injury. Simply telling athletes to avoid obstacles is not enough.
- Practice on slopes that are appropriate to the skill level of your athletes and out of the way of other snowboarders and/or skiers.
- Walk/ ski/ snowboard the slope and remove unsafe objects. Remove anything that an athlete may run into.



- Review your first aid and emergency procedures. Have someone who is trained in first aid and CPR on or very near the slope during practice and competitions.
- Warm up and stretch properly at the beginning of each practice to prevent muscle injuries.
- Train to improve the general fitness level of your riders. Physically fit riders are less likely to get injured. Make your practices active.

## A Typical Training Day

Structure:

1. Warm up without the board, stretching.
2. Practice one or two runs, getting warmed up on the board. Be sure to remind the athletes to look at the slope and snow conditions.
3. Work on technique, correction or race training; introduce only one or two new techniques to keep the athletes from becoming overwhelmed with information.
4. Riding together, remind the athletes to keep in mind what they have practiced and to build in the new techniques or corrections.
5. Cool down.

## Practice Basics for Intermediate Groups

Basics for beginners are listed earlier in the various sections of the coaching guide. For new groups of intermediate/advanced athletes or for reviewing sessions such as the beginning of a new season, try a new area – but be aware of the following aspects:

- **Repeat the basics, such as:** “What are the slope rules, in which way do I lay my board in the snow, what are the different terms, and what are our rules in our group?”
- **Determine the riding level of the group:** Ask former coaches or parents, practice games like gliding competitions on a gentle slope that runs out flat, have the athletes pull each other around, etc. Many practice sections involving a group will have to be conducted at the level of the athlete with the lowest ability in order to be offered safely.
- **Start from the ability level of the group:** You should be able to determine the appropriate slope that they will be able to ride now! Be aware of the fitness level of the athletes, especially at the beginning of the season.
- **Keep it short:** Be careful not to overdo things during the first training days.



- Always ride with a coach in the front and the back, especially for groups of more than three athletes and/ or groups with new or unfamiliar members.
- Determine a meeting point in case someone becomes separated from the group. Does everyone have a cellular phone? Do you have their numbers? Write down your own cellular phone number on the athletes' lift tickets!
- If the athletes ride at a higher level, there is no better way of learning and getting secure and feeling comfortable on the board than by riding and anticipating new slopes.
- **IMPORTANT!** When you start riding new parts of the slope, always tell the members of the group where to stop, such as at the next lift pole or tree.





# Snowboarding Rules & Regulations

## Teaching Snowboarding Rules

The best time to teach the rules of snowboarding is during practice, for example, teaching the athletes to understand the rules of the start command, going around gates and completing the course. Please refer to [The Official Special Olympics Snowboarding Rules](#) for the complete listing of snowboarding rules.

## Divisioning

It is important that you as a coach learn and understand the rules and procedures of divisioning before attending competitions. Understanding the divisioning process will have a direct impact on your athletes' performance. The fundamental difference between Special Olympics competitions and those of other sports organizations is that athletes of all ability levels are encouraged to participate, and every athlete is recognized for his/her performance. Competitions are structured so that athletes compete with other athletes of similar ability in equitable divisions.

Special Olympics has suggested that all divisions be created so that the variance between the highest and lowest scores within that division does not differ by more than 15 percent. This 15 percent statement is not a rule but should be used as a guideline for establishing equitable divisions when the number of athletes competing is appropriate.

Coaches are critical in helping competition management teams make divisioning work. Divisioning works best when coaches submit preliminary scores. This helps athletes get into the proper division as well as gain additional competition experience.





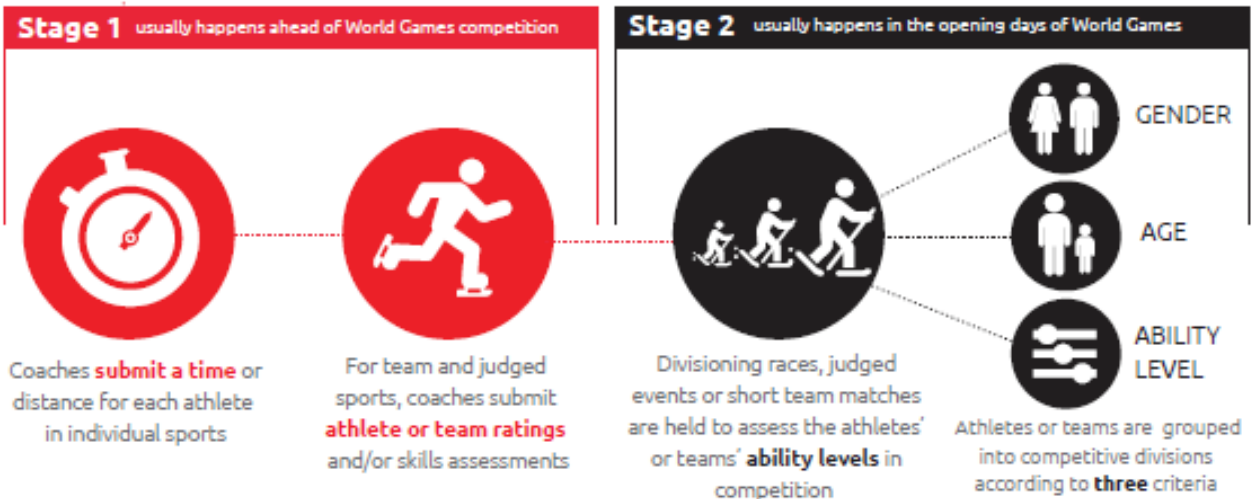


## Special Olympics **Divisioning**

Like all athletes, Special Olympics athletes love **the thrill of competition** and pushing their limits to achieve a new personal best.



Special Olympics uses a unique system called **'divisioning'** to give athletes of all abilities the chance for exciting competition.



**HOW MANY ATHLETES OR TEAMS ARE IN A DIVISION?**

minimum of **3** maximum of **8**

**HOW ARE DIVISIONS SET?**

There should be no more than a **15%** difference between the most highly skilled athlete or team and the lowest skilled athlete or team in each division

**WHY DIVISIONING?**



Divisioning makes Special Olympics competitions fair, empowering and exciting

An evenly matched competition makes athletes and teams try harder – and push farther. It's about athletes rising to a challenge – and giving it their all!  
**All they need to do ... is THEIR very best.**



See our video at [specialolympics.org/divisioning](https://specialolympics.org/divisioning)



## Protest Procedures

Protest procedures are governed by the rules of competition and may change from competition to competition. Only rules violations can be protested. Judgment calls made by officials or divisioning decisions cannot be protested. The protest must cite specific violations from the rulebook and a clear definition of why the coach feels the rule was not followed.

The role of the competition management team is to enforce the rules. As a coach, your duty to your athletes and team is to protest any action or events while your athletes are competing that you think violated the official snowboarding rules. It is extremely important that you do not make protests because you and your athlete did not get your desired outcome of an event. Filing a protest is a serious matter that can impact a competition's schedule. Check with the competition team prior to a competition to learn the protest procedures for that competition.

## Snowboarding Protocol & Etiquette

The following are rules that are to be applied to all people on the slopes:

- Always stay in control and be able to stop or avoid other people or objects.
- People ahead of you have the right of way. It is your responsibility to avoid them.
- You must not stop where you obstruct a trail or are not visible from above.
- Whenever starting downhill or merging into a trail, look uphill and yield to others uphill from you.
- Always use devices to help prevent runaway equipment.
- Observe all posted signs and warnings. Keep off closed trails and out of closed areas.
- Prior to using any lift, you must have the knowledge and ability to load, ride and unload safely.



## During Training

### For Coaches

- Arrive at training facility 15 minutes before the scheduled start time.
- Come prepared to coach: Know and understand the rules.
- Ensure that athletes are wearing proper equipment before training begins.
- Ensure that athletes participate in warm-ups, stretching and drills.
- Have a copy of an up-to-date medical for every athlete.
- Treat all athletes in the same manner.
- Speak calmly when giving instructions or corrections.
- Call snowboarders by their first names.
- Maintain a calm and pleasant demeanor.
- Answer the athletes' questions in a respectful and reassuring tone.
- Treat others as you would wish to be treated: Please be considerate of other snowboarders and/or skiers on the hill.
- Set rules and expectations for all athletes and coaches.
- Respect nature: Don't throw trash on slopes; don't ride in closed areas such as nature reserves.

### For Athletes

- Come prepared and on time to training.
- Notify coach if not able to attend training.
- Wear proper clothing for training.
- Give your best effort during training.
- Treat others as you would wish to be treated: Please be considerate of other snowboarders and/or skiers on the hill.
- Notify coach of illness or injury.
- Be supportive of your fellow athletes.
- Respect nature: Don't throw trash on slopes; don't ride in closed areas such as nature reserves.



## During Competition

### For Coaches

- Ensure that you bring enough equipment.
- Know where athletes are during the competition.
- Get score sheets and other paperwork done on time or early.
- Review all competition rules and procedures.
- Attend all coaches' meetings.
- Encourage your athletes to participate to the best of their ability at all times.
- Practice the Honest Effort Rule.
- Ensure that athletes are wearing proper equipment and attire before competition begins.
- Have a copy of an up-to-date medical for every athlete.
- Treat all competition staff with respect: Remember, they are also volunteers.
- Maintain a calm demeanor throughout the competition.
- Never use foul language or raise your voice in an angry tone.
- Thank the competition staff and officials.
- Set rules and expectations for all athletes and coaches.

### For Athletes

- Come prepared and on time to competition.
- Notify coach if not able to attend competition. □ Wear proper clothing/ uniform to compete in.
- Give your best effort during the competition.

## Coaching Tips

- Use positive reinforcement when speaking to athletes.
- Teach waiting one's turn during drills.
- Teach good sportsmanship at all times.
- Encourage athletes to cheer on teammates during training and competition.



## **Sportsmanship**

Good sportsmanship is both the coach's and the athlete's commitment to fair play, ethical behavior and integrity. In perception and practice, sportsmanship is defined as those qualities which are characterized by generosity and genuine concern for others. Below we highlight a few focus points and ideas on how to teach and coach sportsmanship to your athletes. Lead by example.

### **Competitive Effort**

- Put forth maximum effort during each event.
- Practice the skills with the same intensity as you would perform them in competition.
- Always finish a race or event - Never quit.

### **Fair Play at All Times**

- Always comply with the rules.
- Demonstrate sportsmanship and fair play at all times.
- Respect the decision of the officials at all times.

### **Expectations of Coaches**

- Always set a good example for participants and fans to follow.
- Instruct participants in proper sportsmanship responsibilities and demand that they make sportsmanship and ethics the top priorities.
- Respect judgment of contest officials, abide by rules of the event and display no behavior that could incite fans.
- Treat opposing coaches, directors, participants and fans with respect.
- Shake hands with officials and the opposing coach in public.
- Develop and enforce penalties for participants who do not abide by sportsmanship standards.



### Expectations of Athletes

- Treat teammates with respect.
- Encourage teammates when they make a mistake.
- Treat opponents with respect: Shake hands prior to and after contests.
- Respect judgment of contest officials, abide by rules of the contest and display no behavior that could incite fans.
- Cooperate with officials, coaches or directors and fellow participants to conduct a fair contest.
- Do not retaliate (verbally or physically) if the other team demonstrates poor behavior.
- Accept seriously the responsibility and privilege of representing Special Olympics.
- Define winning as doing your personal best.
- Live up to the high standard of sportsmanship established by your coach.

### Remember

- Sportsmanship is an attitude that is shown by how you and your athletes act on and off the slopes.
- Be positive about competing.
- Respect your opponents and yourself.
- Always stay under control even if you are feeling mad or angry.



# Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition
Backside	Refers to the side of the board where the riders' heels are, also known as the Heel Side.
Base	The bottom of a snowboard.
Boot out	A skid or fall as a result of a boot or binding dragging in the snow when the snowboard is tilted on edge.
Camber	The arch in a snowboard that causes the middle of the board to be higher than the tip and the tail when it is placed on a flat surface.
Carve	A turn made with a minimum of skidding, in which the entire length of the snowboard's edge passes through the same point in the snow.
Chatter	The vibration caused by the rapid, repeated bite and release of a snowboard edge on the snow.
Countdown	Also known as the start command: 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, GO.
Counter Rotation	The movement of twisting the torso and legs in opposite directions concurrently.
DNF	Did Not Finish
DNS	Did Not Start
DSQ or DQ	Disqualified
Edge	The metal strip that runs down the side of the snowboard along the base. The edge can be sharpened, allowing the rider to slice through hard snow and ice.
Fakie	Riding backward while in the rider's original stance.
Fall Line	The imaginary line down a slope, where gravity and terrain would allow a ball to roll down the hill. Snowboarders achieve their greatest speed when in the fall line.
Falling Leaf	An exercise in which the rider skids back and forth on the same edge in an imaginary corridor, mimicking the shape a leaf makes as it falls from a tree.





<b>Finish line</b>	The line at the end of the race where the time for each rider is stopped and recorded.
<b>FIS</b>	The abbreviation for Federation International de Ski, the organization that regulates all international amateur snowboarding competition.
<b>Flex</b>	A description of the stiffness or softness of a piece of equipment.
<b>Forerunner</b>	A snowboarder who rides a race course before the competitors do, in order to determine if the course is ready for competition.
<b>Frontside</b>	Refers to the side of the board where the rider's toes are.
<b>Garland</b>	A series of linked partial turns across the slope of the hill on the same edge, mimicking the shape that a garland draped on a tree makes.
<b>Gate</b>	A marker on the course, in the shape of a triangle, that the rider must pass at the smaller side; exists as both blue and red.
<b>Giant Slalom</b>	A type of race course with gates that a rider must pass through. This type of course requires medium-radius linked turns.
<b>Term</b>	Definition
<b>Goofy-foot Stance</b>	A directional stance in which the rider's right foot is the front foot.
<b>Grab</b>	To touch and/or hold part of the snowboard while airborne.
<b>Grind</b>	To slide or ride across an object such as a rail.
<b>Groomed</b>	Snow that has been mechanically prepared.
<b>Halfpipe</b>	A terrain park feature that resembles a large pipe with the top half removed.
<b>Heelside</b>	The edge of a snowboard nearest the rider's heels.
<b>Inclination</b>	Deviation from a vertical body position. This term is usually used to describe the overall appearance of the body in relationship to a vertical reference.
<b>Leash</b>	A required device used to keep the snowboard attached to the rider to prevent a runaway snowboard.
<b>Line</b>	The path taken through the gates.
<b>Magic Stick</b>	A short length of tubing or pole that can be used as a training aid.
<b>Nose</b>	The front end, or tip, of the snowboard.



<b>Powder</b>	A type of snow that is dry and fluffy.
<b>P.S.I.A.</b>	Professional Ski Instructors of America. The certifying body of ski instructors in America.
<b>P-tex</b>	A type of plastic material used for the bases of snowboards.
<b>Regular-foot Stance</b>	A directional stance in which the rider's left foot is the front foot.
<b>Rotation</b>	Turning the body in order to turn the snowboard in the same direction.
<b>Shovel</b>	The widest part of the snowboard, usually at the tip.
<b>Side-cut</b>	The hourglass shape of the snowboard in which the middle is narrower than the tip and tail.
<b>Skidded Turn</b>	A turn in which the snowboard slips across the slope throughout the turn.
<b>Slalom</b>	A type of race course with gates that the rider must pass through. This type of course requires short-radius linked turns.
<b>Stomp Pad</b>	A pad located between the bindings to provide traction to the foot that is not clipped in.
<b>Super Giant Slalom</b>	A type of race course with gates that the rider must pass through. The vertical distance between gates is 14 to 16 percent of the total vertical drop, requiring large-radius linked turns.
<b>Tail</b>	The back end of a snowboard.
<b>Tip</b>	The front end, or nose, of a snowboard.
<b>Toeside</b>	The edge of the snowboard nearest the rider's toes.
<b>Traverse</b>	Snowboarding across the hill from one side to the other.
<b>Waist</b>	The narrowest part of a snowboard, near the center of the board.