

CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING BASICS

Preparation and conditioning:

- Pre-skiing conditioning
 - Work on increasing aerobic capacity via walking, hiking, running, cycling or with gym based equipment
 - Do strength training for legs, abdominal and lower back muscle groups, and upper body
 - Begin or continue flexibility/stretching exercises – very important
 - Get a physical exam – doctor's okay if there are any concerns

Gear and Clothing

- Check on condition of skis, bindings, boots, poles and other possible gear
- Select appropriate clothing – it is all about layering
- 10+ essentials (see rei.com) - you never know when you may need to be of help to others who are sharing the out-of-doors with you.

Safety Guidelines

1. Let someone know where you will be skiing (hiking, cycling, etc.) and when you plan on being back (especially needed if you are venturing into the backcountry)
2. Check equipment and your other gear to ensure it's functioning properly, and that you have all the clothing you will be using.
3. Know your limitations - both in terms of trail difficulty and distance - and ski on terrain within your ability.
4. Carry essential items with you in a pack along with an emergency repair kit.
5. Know the symptoms of hypothermia and frostbite, and what measures to take to help yourself or another.
6. Provide your body with energy and hydration at regular intervals. Physical activity can suppress your appetite, so eat and drink every half hour or so even when you are not hungry or thirsty.
7. If venturing off track (especially in mountainous areas)
 - Ski in groups of three or more so that there is adequate help in the event of an emergency.
 - Be careful when crossing ponds or lakes i.e. is the ice thick enough
 - Keep track of the time and when you need to turn around or set up camp
 - Remember to watch the more novice members of your group - How are they doing?