

INTRODUCTION

Sky Tavern has been introducing our community's kids and adults to sliding on snow using volunteer instructors and coaches for over 75 years! Our goal is to safely introduce participants to the joy of sliding on snow whether on 1 board, 2 skis or 3 tracks. We use PSIA based methodology adapted for our terrain and environment to optimize the learning process.

Historically skiers have been taught to stop using braking movements like a “snowplow” or “braking wedge”, learning these techniques from a straight run down the fall line. This method unfortunately ingrains defensive movements which include compulsive stemming and braking movements while descending the slopes. This method creates many plateaus in skier development preventing the skier from reaching expert level skiing.

Sky Tavern is employing the PSIA “gliding” *pathway to parallel* skiing, using more offensive vs. defensive methodologies. You will observe in this manual that **turning** to stop and control speed is the first priority vs. wedges and snowplows which are reserved for maneuvering on the flats and lift lines. Our goal is to ski a slow enough line to control our descents.

“Expert skiers ski a slow enough line to control their speed while skiing around that line as fast as possible”. “SKI THE SLOW LINE FAST VS. THE FAST LINE SLOW” is a common mantra. In contrast, a defensive skier will ski a more direct line down the fall line making big pivoting, skidding, braking turns (I don't want to go there). An offensive skier will ski down the slope at the same pace but cover 3 to 4 times more ground by skiing a round line carrying their momentum in line with the direction the skis are pointed. They ski a slow enough line to control their descent yet ski around that path as fast as possible minimizing tail displacement.

Here is a video example of how movements we teach to beginners learning wedge turns carries into parallel turns: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vO8r5AhQAUU>

Remember, we are “skiing” instructors, NOT “stopping” instructors!

**YOUR
RESPONSIBILITY CODE**

- 1** Always stay in control. You must be able to stop or avoid people or objects.
- 2** People ahead or downhill of you have the right-of-way. You must avoid them.
- 3** Stop only where you are visible from above and do not restrict traffic.
- 4** Look uphill and avoid others before starting downhill or entering a trail.
- 5** You must prevent runaway equipment.
- 6** Read and obey all signs, warnings and hazard markings.
- 7** Keep off closed trails and out of closed areas.
- 8** You must know how and be able to load, ride and unload lifts safely. If you need assistance, ask the lift attendant.
- 9** Do not use lifts or terrain when impaired by alcohol or drugs.
- 10** If you are involved in a collision or incident, share your contact information with each other and a ski area employee.

**Know and Obey the Code.
It's Your Responsibility.**

If you need help understanding the Code, please ask an employee.

Key Components of every lesson:

- Review and remind the student about skier responsibility code whenever possible.
- Introduce the lesson and what they will accomplish at completion.
- Create a clear visual image of what the students should be doing.
- Keep students moving! Talk less, ski more!

PSIA has defined the 5 fundamentals of skiing:

1. Control the relationship of the Center of Mass to the base of support to direct pressure along the length of the skis
2. Control pressure from ski to ski and direct pressure toward the outside ski
3. Control edge angles through a combination of inclination and angulation
4. Control the skis rotation (turning, pivoting, steering) with leg rotation, separate from the upper body
5. Regulate the magnitude of pressure created through ski/snow interaction

For our students, especially at the beginner levels, it is important to focus on a balanced stance fore and aft, tipping the feet to increase and decrease ski edge angles, and steering guiding the feet through directional changes. In every lesson as you move from boots to one ski to two skis, to first turns to advanced turns repeat the key elements of balanced stance, edging and steering movements of feet. The movements we teach beginning students are the same movements we teach at higher levels.

LEVEL 1 - INTRODUCTION TO EQUIPMENT AND SKIING MOVEMENTS AND SKILLS

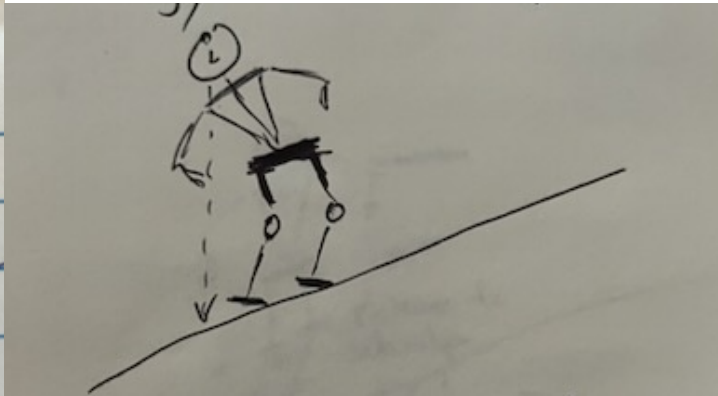
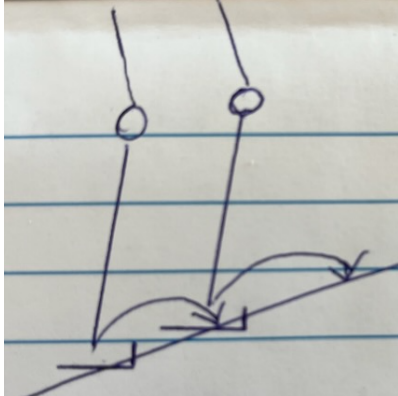
Terrain: Flat snow

Outcome goals: Skier can walk, glide on snow. Glide, shuffle, step and glide through a J-turn. Can turn skis uphill to a stop in both directions.

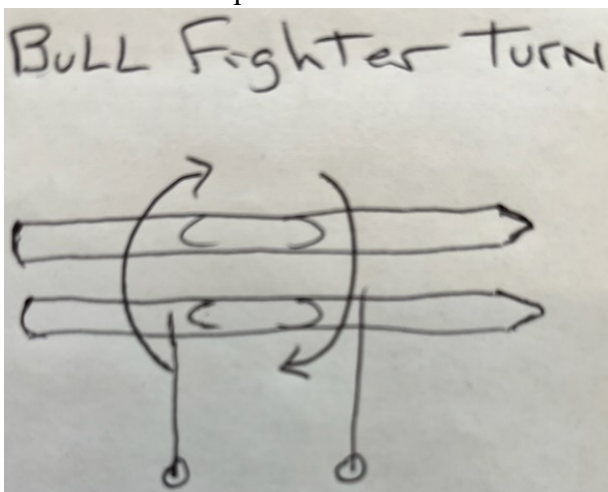
Ski boots only:

1. Check student and equipment
 - Boots on correctly
 - Gloves, helmet, pants not in boots
 - Pole straps on correctly
2. Explain ski environment
 - Fall line and across fall line and why we need to know this
 - Look uphill before starting – skier responsibility code
 - Have them show you fall line and across (perpendicular)
3. Athletic balanced stance
 - Explore front and back of boot and where balance lies
 - Find balanced position while standing fairly tall and slightly flexed starting at the ankles
 - What feels in balance? What feels out of balance?
 - Play with controlling your balance from your feet, feeling whole foot
 - Jump or bounce up/down to explore how it feels to be in and out of balance in a ski boot
 - Slide your foot front/back, twist your foot
 - Note how small movements help maintain balance and big movements cause loss of balance
 - How do they know they are in balance? What is their cue/focus?
4. Still in ski boots
 - Movement from feet to go from flat to little toe to big toe edge – quiet upper body
 - Balance on little toe edge standing on one foot (use poles to assist)

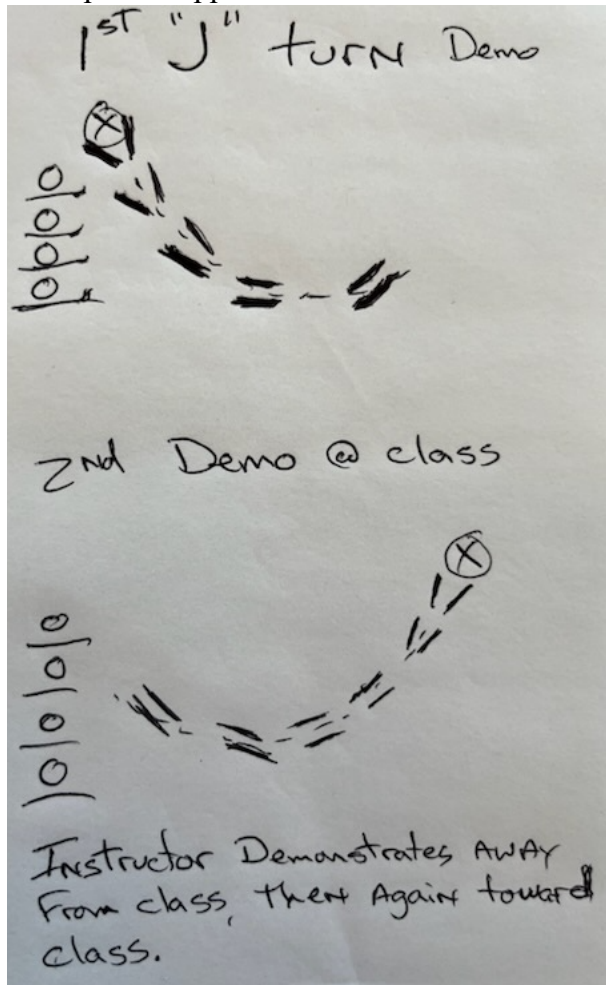
- Steer feet – make parentheses in snow to little toe side and big toe side
 - Use poles when walking/skiing – pole tips never go past the front/toes of boot
5. Walking and slicing and sliding
- Shuffle in circles and figure 8s while sliding inside foot first and outside foot up to match
 - Walk S-shaped line across and down the hill practicing edge transitions
 - Inside foot leads and outside foot matches but doesn't pass inside foot
 - Left foot leads to go left and right foot leads to go right – small movements to keep balance
 - Go around corners on your “edges” - leading foot rolls big toe up as you go around the corners and the outside foot rolls onto big toe edge and is balancing foot
 - Direction changes by rolling leading foot to lift it slightly off big toe edge, slide or step forward
 - Poles for balance assist (pole tips don't go beyond toes)
 - Focus on movement of feet and ankles and quiet upper body
6. Side-step up and down the fall line (re-explain the fall line)
- Tip feet up the hill/show boot bottoms to people below you
 - Face directly across hill – reminder of fall line vs perpendicular to fall line
 - Practice side stepping up and down on “edged” boots (analogy of the “Drip Zone” – your nose is farther downhill than your downhill ski so the nose drips onto the snow below the skis)



7. Herringbone step up the fall line as alternative climbing method, then walk S-shape back down
8. Bull Fighter turns
- Takes you from skis across fall line to skis facing down the fall line or you can do a 180 deg direction change with this turn – use poles in snow directly down the hill for support with palms on poles and elbows locked.



9. Shuffle down the fall line and shuffle turn out of fall line to right and left in J turn, then Bull Fighter turn and repeat in opposite direction



One ski only:

1. Explain equipment
 - How the bindings work – toe and heel and how to reset heel piece if needed
 - How to scrape snow off boots
 - How to put ski on and take skis off
2. Review pole straps and pole safety (tips never in front of toes)
3. Put ski on right foot and repeat everything from above boots section
4. Notice how much you need to flatten the ski to guide/steer it around, play with flat vs edged
5. Try scooter slides on flat straight area to learn to balance foot to foot. Small movements will maintain balance, big movements will take you out of balance
6. Take ski off and repeat all with ski on left foot

Note - Movement pattern repetition is key. Focus on balance, foot movements, small movements help with balance and big movements detract from balance

Two skis on:

1. Review skier responsibility code – watch out for each other up and down the hill
2. With skis on both feet, repeat everything you did in boots and one ski – create excitement: “We are skiing!”

3. Play with walking in figure 8s, ovals, S-line on flats, flat skis, edged skis, side stepping, shuffling
4. Plant poles behind feet and push, stay in balanced stance and glide on the snow – practice this until they can maintain balanced stance on skis with minimal upper body movement
5. Straight run (on shallow/flat terrain) with shuffle walk J turn to right and left

Introduce gliding wedge:

1. Goal is to steer front of ski into wedge, *do not push tails out into wedge*
Wedge stance on flats – feet no wider than hip width
On flats steer/guide one ski tip then the other into that wedge stance
2. Traverse across hill, focus on balanced stance, traverse across hill in small wedge – both directions
3. Traversing across hill/slightly downhill in a small wedge, turn skis uphill to a stop (see above J-turn diagram for how to demo and manage class).
 - Reminder of balanced stance – ski with feet
 - Reminder of where to hold arms/poles, quiet upper body is key
 - Reminder that we stop by turning skis across/up the hill to slow down/stop

Important – continue until everyone can comfortably perform a J turn to a stop in both directions
Emphasis on narrow wedge, balanced stance – double check upper body position!

We do not teach the braking wedge at this phase - braking wedge is NOT a way to stop. It is for lift line and other slow and shallow sloped areas where there is not the space to turn to slow down. Skiers cannot advance to performing turns from a large braking wedge.

LEVEL 2 - FIRST TURNS

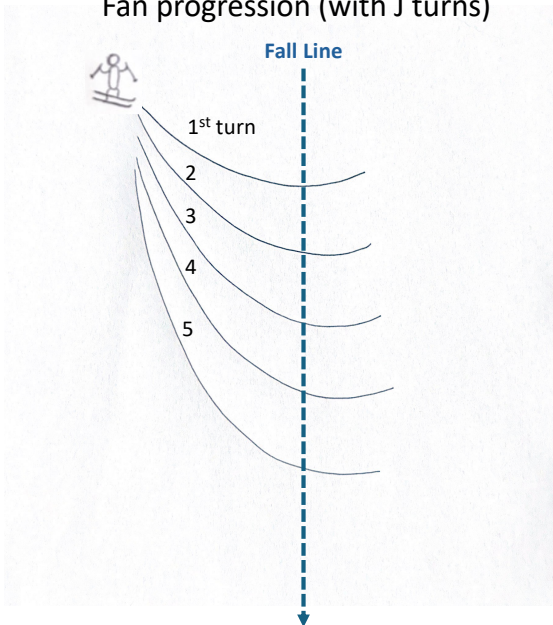
Terrain: Flat to very gentle slope on snow. Introduce carpet lift when they can turn to a stop.

Outcome goals: Skier can perform controlled, linked turns with speed control through turn shape and can stop by turning skis across the hill. Skier can ride the carpet lift.

1. Gliding wedge across hill

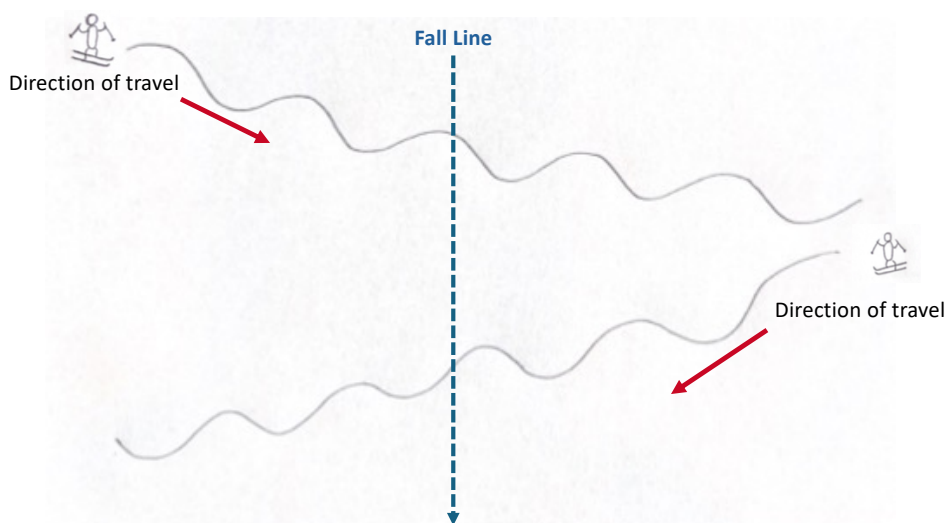
- Flatten, lighten and steer uphill ski to turn uphill to a stop (J turn) – both directions
- Slightly steepen the angle and turn to a stop – both directions
- Straight down and do same movements in a turn to a stop – both directions
- Use a fan progression to explore turning on very gentle terrain coming to a stop by turning

Fan progression (with J turns)



2. Use a garland to practice turn completions and initiations without having to cross the fall line.

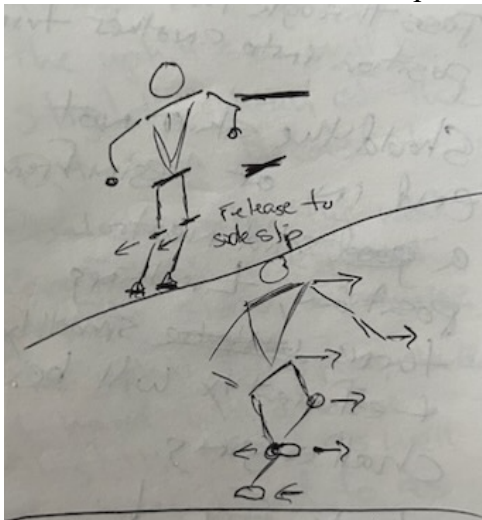
Garlands



3. Revisit skiers' responsibility code and relevant parts as we move into linking turns
4. Gradually on gentle slope (carpet lift) introduce linking wedge turns.
 - Students can follow your path, follow you
 - Draw a path in the snow with your ski pole or colored water
 - Put out small straws or cups or cones for them to turn around
 - Play with varying turn shape and size, garlands, practice turning to a stop
 - Re-emphasize that we stop by turning the skis across the hill.

MILEAGE - Introduce riding the carpet lift at start of Level 2 – loading and unloading students who can control speed and come to a stop by turning skis across/up the hill. Remember, learning happens more readily on easy terrain vs difficult terrain (true for all levels of students!) so don't hesitate to take a step back to more gentle terrain when indicated.

5. Additional exercises and drills at this stage:
 - Duck walk/herringbone – on flat and then up gentle hill
 - Skating on flats
 - Ski tall and ski small
 - 100 steps and 100 shuffles
 - Vary turn sizes from large to small from slow to fast
 - Reinforce, practice side stepping up and down hill
 - Introduce traverse across hill
 - Introduce side slip and revisit stance on skis



Neutral stance = the body position from which a movement or turn can be initiated and through which we pass from turn to turn. Standing with skis across the fall line, the uphill ski will be slightly ahead of the downhill ski as this is the most biomechanically comfortable and efficient way to stand and balance. The uphill ski, knee, pelvis/hip, shoulder and hand are all slightly ahead of the downhill side of the body and this is also referred to as a “strong inside half”. Weight is biased towards the downhill ski and the nose is in the “Drip Zone”. Skiers who do not end in, or begin from a good, solid, neutral and balanced position will have difficulty linking turns efficiently and easily. Encouraging a neutral stance begins in the boots with side stepping and continues as students explore stance with one, then two skis on and continue to focus on good body position.

If students can control speed and come to a stop via turning, then you can introduce braking wedge as a lift line maneuvering device but not as a stopping technique.

LEVEL 3

Terrain: Gentle slopes (think carpet lift hills).

Outcome goals: Skier can perform controlled, linked wedge Christy turns with speed control through turn shape and stopping through turning skis across the hill. Skis match at the end of the turn or sooner and edging movements and steering happen from the feet. Skier can ride the carpet lift and is introduced to chair lift loading and unloading procedures.

1. To start Level 3 – repeat Level 2 above with emphasis on flattening, lightening, and steering the inside ski to match skis at end of turns (note – if this was already done in Level 2, then your students will be making a spontaneous Christy and you can move on to the exercises below)
2. Exercises to use:
 - Traverse with both skis tipped uphill (bases show to bottom of hill)
 - Traverse while increasing/decreasing edge angle of uphill ski
 - Traverse while decreasing edge angle of downhill ski
 - Reduce size of wedge
 - Wedge traverse while flattening uphill or downhill ski
 - Fan progression and garlands practicing edges on/edges off
 - Continue focus on flattening the new inside ski, steering the new inside ski, lightening the new inside ski to allow a match at end of turn or sooner
3. Mileage with practice, varying turn shapes, speed control and stopping through turning. Balanced stance with quiet upper body

LEVEL 4

Terrain: Introduce chair lift ride to green runs.

Outcome goals: Skier can perform controlled linked wedge Christy turns with matching that happens before the fall line on easy terrain. Wedge is narrow and feet turn in direction of new turn with flattening of new inside ski at start of turn, lightening of new inside ski and increasing ability to balance on outside ski. Speed is controlled by turn shape and stopping is done by turning

1. Exercises to use:
 - Traverse across hill on both skis
 - Traverse across hill on one ski balancing on downhill big toe edge
 - Traverse across hill on one ski balancing on uphill little toe edge
 - Sideslips – neutral balanced stance across the hill, release edges (skis become flat to snow) and slide down the fall line, then re-engage edges (show your bases to people down the hill) to stop the slide. Practice both directions.
 - Diagonal/forward sideslips – perform a sideslip forward and diagonal and practice varying edges to control rate of slide. Practice both directions.
 - Forward sideslip and falling leaf side slips
 - Earlier matching in wedge christies by releasing both edges similar to the sideslip while guiding/steering front of skis/tips in direction of new turn. Emphasis on inside ski (right ski for right turn and left ski for left turn) flattening and steering into the new turn direction all the way through completion.

- Play with 360s and variations on side slip in various directions to further work on ability to release both sets of edges. Can play with skiing backwards on gentle terrain with a focus on balance.

LEVEL 4PT

Terrain: Easy green terrain for introduction of pole touch – even consider carpet terrain

Outcome goals: Skier performs controlled linked wedge Christy turns with skis matching before the fall line down green terrain with a functional pole touch.

1. Introduce pole touch. Initial use is as a timing aid at turn initiation. Goal is for skiers to touch the tip of the pole to the snow at the start of turn initiation/edge release. Movement originates from the wrist, not the arms or shoulders. The upper body remains stable and quiet when incorporating pole touch.
2. Exercises:
 - Quiet upper body – poles held across body at chest level with hands wide apart and ski linked turns keeping hands, arms, shoulders quiet while feet make turns.
 - Traverse with downhill pole taps – tap, tap, tap, turn after last tap. Repeat multiple times both directions and reduce number of taps to just one immediately prior to start of turn. Reinforce right hand/right turn, left hand/left turn while also right turn/flatten right ski, left turn/flatten left ski.
 - Play with turn size, shape, speed and pole touch. Quiet hands and arms with just a wrist flick to create the pole touch.