

First Time Ski Progression

1. Flat Land

- a. Introduce the Equipment
 - i. Make sure your student understands how to buckle boots and straps, get in and out of bindings or ski, and how to carry skis.
- b. Boots Only
 - i. Have your student move around in boots. Go through all the movements they may need with their skis on such as wedge, sidestepping, turning, stepping from foot to foot, etc.
- c. One Ski On
 - i. Continue to explore the same movements as you did with boots only. This allows students to get a feel for sliding while they still have the “emergency break” of one foot.
 - ii. Spin in a circle using small steps, touch the tip and then the tail of the ski to the snow, sidestep, and glide like a skateboard. Make sure to do this with the other ski as well.
- d. Two Skis on Flats
 - i. Make sure the area you are doing this drill is actually a totally flat area!
 - ii. Practice the same movements as with one ski such as turn in a circle using small steps, side stepping, and gliding forward
 - iii. Add in things such as rolling knees in/out to engage edge, practice a wedge, etc.

2. Slight Hill

- a. Safety first! Never choose a slope where a student who cannot stop could run into another person or object! Ideal terrain offers a flat transitioning area to a slight downhill and then to a counter uphill slope
- b. Two Skis Climbing a Small Hill
 - i. Explain the “fall line” Show side stepping by rolling knees and ankles into the hill. If your student is capable of learning to side step, show them how to do it.
- c. Straight Runs
 - i. Balanced stance is key here, do as many runs as needed to achieve a balanced, upright stance with hips over the feet as much as possible.
 - ii. Remind students to stand tall and keep skins touching front of boots

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- d. Gliding Wedge
 - i. Show your student how to steer their skis into a wedge shape. Suggest that they “spread” their feet into a wedge or “open” into a wedge
 - ii. A gliding wedge gives students a wide base of support and “pre-edges” so they can learn to turn without changing edges.
- e. Breaking Wedge
 - i. Once your student can make a wedge in balance without crossing tips or other problems, show your student how to open the wedge larger to control speed and to stop.
 - ii. Learning to stop is an essential movement required before going up the chairlift. If your student is not capable of independent speed control, you must use a retention device.

3. Chairlift Procedures

- a. Remember that your student must be able to stop either independently or with retention devices before riding the chairlift.
- b. Give your student the opportunity to watch others load.
- c. Explain outside the line that when you approach the front of the line, you will follow a chair onto the loading area. As the chair approaches, look at the chair, reach back and sit down, or to sit down straight back on the instructors count.
- d. Explain the rules of the chairlift: Sit back, sit still, hold on, and Look ahead.
- e. Explain that to unload, you will count down the unload and when their skis touch the ground you should stand up and lean forward.
- f. Make sure you are clear of the unload ramp before preparing for your run

4. Wedge Turns

- a. Once your student can make a wedge stop, show them how to “point” their skis in the direction they want to go.
 - i. Using cones or flags are helpful for this exercise.
- b. Use words like “twist your legs” or “turn your feet”
- c. Unless your student has a physical limitation that prevents it, you should always introduce students to direction changes by turning their legs, not by pressuring the outside ski. This will be added later.