

## Press Release

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### Skiing for the first timer

Nina Hasinski, ski instructor for Redpoint Holidays has some top tips for the ski novice.

Are you one of those people who has always fancied skiing but finds an excuse to put it off? Well the good news is that anybody can learn to ski if they are prepared to give it a go – and it may be easier than you think. What better way to spend a winter week than on a mountaintop in the sunshine, enjoying the spectacular view and anticipating a hot Gluwein in the après ski bar at the end of the day? Not to mention the exhilaration and sense of achievement you get from the skiing itself. So, if you plan your trip carefully and follow some simple guidelines, you should have a great time and learn a new skill into the bargain.

Nina's top 5 tips for the ski novice

1. Organising your first ski holiday is daunting: hiring equipment, organising lift passes and booking lessons, so choose a reputable ski company who will take care of everything for you. A smaller company with experienced staff offers a more personal service than the larger companies - and are often experts in their resorts. Don't look purely at price: obviously it is a factor, but the most important thing is that you are well looked after. Your first skiing holiday is the most important one you will ever take - it will decide whether you love skiing or never want to go again. Once you are more experienced and know your own needs better, you can then look for bargain deals.

2. The best and most fun way to learn is within the controlled environment of a small ski group, where you and a few others take turns to have a go. This is good for morale (as you will see other people falling over too and will be able to laugh about it together) and means you'll have someone to share stories with in the apres ski bar after the lesson. Individual private lessons may seem like a good idea, but it can be demoralising being with an instructor who can do everything whilst you are the only one struggling to keep up - and it can also be costly paying for enough lessons to really learn. Conversely, a large ski group will leave you waiting around for too many others and not getting enough individual attention from the instructor. We recommend a small group size of up to 8 people learning together as ideal. And make sure your instructor can speak English!

3. Go to your local indoor slope or dry ski slope and book a trial lesson. This will give you the basics of how the equipment feels to put on and introduce you to the feeling of sliding. When you get to the resort and go to hire skis and boots, you will have a better feeling for what to expect. Don't go overboard, one or two sessions are enough at this stage just to get the idea – you will learn when you get there either way.

4. Invest in a pair of proper ski socks before you go (£10 - £15 each pair) and pack them at the top of your case, so when you arrive in resort they are the first things to come out of your case ready to take to the ski hire shop. The thing that is most likely to put you off skiing is uncomfortable boots - and the main cause of beginners having uncomfortable boots is their socks!

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5. Don't buy any equipment at this stage. Hire skis and boots in resort for your first holiday (you need to be able to try different models if the ones you originally chose don't quite fit as the week goes on). Borrow clothing from friends or relatives where you can. You will need salopettes, ski jacket, hat and gloves. Sun cream and sun glasses are also essential items.
6. Skiing is a pretty physical activity and you shouldn't overdo it when you are learning. Ideally, lessons should last for 3 hours per day, 1½ hours in the morning and 1½ hours in the afternoon.
7. The first day of instruction should take place on the flattest part of the slope. You will start by learning how to put on your skis, how to hold your poles and how to slide (which is pretty exhilarating). Your progress may be gradual but, by the end of the day, you should have the new skills and confidence to let you slide.
8. The second day is usually still spent on the flat, perfecting your technique, so that by the time you are ready to go further up the hill you are in control. Your instructor will decide when the time is right, but once you have mastered turning left and right and being able to stop, you will move to the lifts.
9. Going up the lift makes it so much easier. Although you may feel apprehensive the first time, you will soon start to enjoy the lift doing all the work for you on the way up. You just need to learn to get down! This is where the real fun starts, as you get to put the skills you have learnt on the flat into practice on the beginner slope.
10. As the rest of the week progresses, your confidence and skills improve: you should find that by your last day of lessons you will be skiing and enjoying the easy (blue) runs and may even try out an intermediate (red) run or two! To ski these long runs is a real achievement and gives you the feeling of freedom and space that you don't get on the beginner slope. It also means that you are no longer a ski virgin on the beginner patch, but an intermediate!

#### Reaping the rewards

On our learn to ski weeks at Redpoint, we keep the final day of your holiday free from lessons, so you get a chance to ski with your friends or family, who may not have been in the same ski group. This way you feel the benefit of the week and can enjoy skiing freely with your friends and family – as well as enjoying the spectacular beauty of the mountains.

In my experience, even the most nervous novice is usually hooked by the end of the week. If someone in my ski group can't wait to get back on the slopes the next year, then I know I have done my job well. Many of our guests return the following year with an air of confidence and a determination to tackle the next stage. But, no matter how proficient a skier they may eventually become, nothing about my job gives me more satisfaction than seeing a ski virgin discover the exhilaration and pleasure that this great sport can bring.