

On Snow Progression Guidelines

**By
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1. Equipment:

- Ski check: Base Condition, Length, Radius
- Check sharpness
- Binding check: DIN, Safety, Forward Pressure
- Boot check: Condition , Size , Alignment, Stiffness, Lifters, Footbeds
- Ski Poles: Length
- FIS regulations: Standheight (boots, plate, binding), Speed Suit plumb
- SL Helmet and/or mouth guard

2. Free Skiing:

- Lots of mileage
- Non Stop runs – get in skiing shape
- Start on easy terrain
- Gradually move to more challenging terrain
- Ski all terrain and snow conditions, incl. moguls

- Main focus:
 - To get balanced (Lateral and For / Aft)
 - Ankle, Knee, Hip flexion
 - Focus on being soft on the edges at the turn completion,
 - Let the skis run.
 - Carve different radii
 - Creating different edge angles with angulation and inclination
 - Practice edge control, vary the pressure
 - Feel good (take some runs that remind you that you are a great skier, i.e., don't make all your runs "free ski" runs a chore)

3. Body Position / Balanced Athletic Stance:

- Open stance - shoulder width – comfortable but athletic, allowing for independent leg action and good lateral balance.
- Quiet upper body, quiet hands, forward and at armpit height. Keep elbows forward.
- Looking ahead, chest and head up - focus on some object down the hill or on a point on the horizon.
- Level shoulders, square to the skis but avoid causing "shuffle" in the feet.
- Parallel shins/matching, equal distance between feet and knees.

4. Drills:

1. Bamboo prop tasks, machine gun, double pole touch on the outside throughout the turn (switch in transition)
2. Work on both Fore Aft and Lateral
3. Use one ski drills and other drills to recognize errors. Stress speed control and turn shape.
4. Linked arcs on one ski stressing clean arcs turning left and right.
5. Medium radius turns, skis the same with apart throughout the turn.
6. Various skating drills

5. Traverse tasks:

1. Traverse in basic stance to sideslip to traverse.
2. Traverse while maintaining athletic body position.
3. Traverse with arms and poles straight out to the sides matching angle of slope.
4. Traverse while dragging downhill pole. Downhill leg is flexed.
5. Traverse with flexion and extension.
6. Traverse with small jumps.

- Javelin Turns
- 360's
- Jump over bamboo poles in a straight run on very easy terrain, (Lots of variation)

- Take away their ski poles to increase the difficulty of skills they've already worked on. Try the same drills/skills in a tuck
- Attempt to combine balance focus with a consistent stance.
- Nose over your toes.
- Matched Feet, no shuffle/diverging skis.
- Practice different edge drills
- Try all the above with the boots loosely buckled
- Try different stances (very narrow/very wide)

6. Carving: (Snow Blades)

- Feel the snow
- Start on easy terrain
- From a straight run, roll the knees side to side
- Observe their own tracks
- Work into linked turns.
- Practice without ski poles
- Practice tuck turns, roll edge to edge as fast as possible
- High / low tuck while carving
- Use edging drills to develop quick ankles and knees
- Maintain stance and body position
- Arms crossed across chest
- Incorporate double and single pole plants

7. Carving: (Regular Skis)

- Practice all types of radii.
- Practice short to long and long to short radius turns.
- Link the turns and emphasize clean smooth arc.
- Maintaining / adjusting body position during turn transition.
- Both skis weighted, maintain snow contact
- Recognize that they can use their mass more athletically on longer skis
- Vary edge pressure and Angulation
- Look for clean edge arc
- Synchronized skiing
- Outrigger turns

8. Pole Plant: (Slalom / GS)

- Start exercises
- Emphasis using wrist and elbow (No shoulder)
- Timing mechanism aiding in maintaining both fore/aft and lateral balance.
- Helps to establish rhythm.
- Single pole plant in free skiing. Powder plants, mogul plants
- Work on double pole plant to enhance other skills.
- Let the kids develop their own “style” in gates, yet make them able to execute all – single, double, and variations.
- Swing the basket, Show the basket, Tap tap plant, over the top and near the ski tips.

9. Gliding, Tucking, Jumping: (on flat terrain)

- Straight run glide in upright stance, arms way out in front.
- Straight run glide in high tuck, medium and low tuck arms way out in front.
- Straight run with wide stance and medium stance, parallel shins.
- Practice all the above hopping over bamboo poles in a straight run.
- Practice all the above while carving.
- Practice all the above in rolling terrain or over small jump.

10. Gate training:

- Work with drills starting with brush gates, stubbies, to work towards regular gates.
- Start with easy terrain and even rhythm courses. Allow them to bring their free skiing skills into gates.
- Gradually increase difficulty with course setting and then terrain.
(Vary the distance from turning gate to turning gate, vary the turn shape)
- Train on soft snow, ruts, ice
- Full length courses
- Timing
- Dual races
- Start exercises with timing
- Use props when necessary. (Helper gates, etc.)
- Use both quantity days and quality days. (Volume / Intensity)

11. Tactics:

- Use props to help with line
- Learn to ski a tight aggressive line versus round conservative line
- Adjust body position to terrain changes
- Generate speed (accelerate), maintain speed (glide)
- Imagery training
- Learn proper course inspection
- Practice race day routine
- Visualization through video
- Follow other skiers down the hill while free skiing

About The Author

Georg is a USSA Level IV International Coach who has also coached in two Olympics, five World Championships, and five Junior World Championships. Prior to joining the U.S. Ski Team, he was the Head Coach and Program Director for the Waterville Valley Black-and-Blue Trail Smashers from 1975-1985. In 2002 he joined the staff at Holderness School in Plymouth, New Hampshire.

Until his retirement, Coach Capaul was the Director of Snow Sports, at the Holderness School, Plymouth, N.H. He is the former U.S. Women's Ski Team coach, as well as the head coach for both the Men & Women's U.S. Ski Team in slalom and giant slalom. Georg Capaul, is one of the premier alpine ski coaches in the world today.