

4. Friends don't let Friends snowblade

Under any circumstances, no matter what, no matter if your friends tell you that you'll look cool, not if you think it is going to be easier to get down the mountain without crossing your tips—there is never a reason to snowblade unless you are a gaper. You know how we hooted when you were riding the deep pow under the lift in your snowblades? We were mocking you, bro, and when you pumped your fist at us, we looked at each other and said, “what a gaper!”

5. Learn some manners

Do you meander across the whole trail without looking uphill once? Do you like to make big GS-style turns on the cat track? Is your idea of a good day in the halfpipe to ride right down the middle? Do you often find yourself at the top of the lift with only one ski because you were clacking them together to get snow off of them? This type of gaperism goes beyond being silly into being downright dangerous. Learn the rules of the mountain and follow them. Look up, look around and be aware of others. If you find yourself getting sprayed by strangers over and over, you may want to acquaint yourself with a little thing called mountain etiquette.

6. Ski softly and carry a big trick

You there, with the GoPro camera on your head and the brand new reverse-camber board and the fat twin-tip powder skis none of that matters if you are just going to spend the day hanging out at the top of the park, yammering on about all of the stuff you're going to do, or all the tricks you pulled last time you came out, or all of the crazy rails you would hit except last time you kinda tweaked your back. In my experience, the very best riders are usually the quietest about their skills and you don't have any idea how sick they are until you see them dropping that giant rock at Loveland and stomping it on their decade-old skis. Then they just keep riding and kind of smile at you shyly when you proclaim their amazingness.

Now that's
GAPE-TASTIC!



7. Taking your gear off and walking down is not an option

Seriously, call ski patrol and get a lift down before you remove your gear and walk. I know you didn't mean to ride the lift that only accesses extreme terrain. I know you missed the signs at the bottom that said “Double-black diamond only!” I know you are not ready for this. But you can't even carry your ski equipment across the parking lot without flailing. What makes you think you'll be able to safely walk down a double-black diamond with your equipment in your arms? At least leave it on and side-step, falling-leave, or snow-plough. Or better yet, pay attention in the first place and ski within your limits.

8. Get used to Chairlifts

Get used to chairlifts or just find a mountain with a gondola and stick to that. A gaper may be able to go unrecognized for quite some time, but how you handle the chairlift is a dead give away. Do you get confused about when to go, rushing on to the wrong chair and sitting in the middle of a couple, turning a two-person chair into a three-person one? Do you start talking loudly to the snowboarder who has his earphones in and is totally ignoring you? Do you grab on to your chairmates as you topple off the lift, making sure to wipe out everyone for chairs to come? Most importantly, do you yank the bar down the second the chairlift leaves the station, without even warning your seatmate? If you are over the age of 15 and you can't confidently catch a chair, ride a chair without a safety-bar and exit a chair without wiping out, it might just be time to embrace your gaper status.

And, really, what's wrong with being a gaper? If you can't follow these eight points of advice, it might be in your best interest to just admit that you are a gaper and go with it. There's nothing wrong with being a gaper, per se, it just means that when you show up to a Gaper Day party in your everyday attire, everyone will compliment you on your sense of humor.

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Bear Creek Design Group • 303-997-6628 • www.bearcreekdesigngroup.com

