

Skate vs. Classic Skiing

As more people take up cross-country skiing or return to cross-country skiing, there is much curiosity about the difference between classic skiing and skate skiing. Here is a brief summary.

Classic Skiing



The Motion: If you skied when you were younger, it was likely classic, as skate skiing has developed in the last 25 years. The motion of classic skiing resembles walking but hopefully includes a strong element of kick and glide.

Called the "diagonal stride", the classic motion involves pushing from the centre grip zone of the ski and then kicking out behind you. The centre of the ski is waxed for grip while the tip and tail are waxed for glide.

Gear: Classic skis have a double camber allowing the base of the ski to grip and glide throughout the diagonal stride motion. Classic skis may have a no-wax or a waxable base. Classic boots have a flexible sole to allow for a full range of motion during the kick phase.

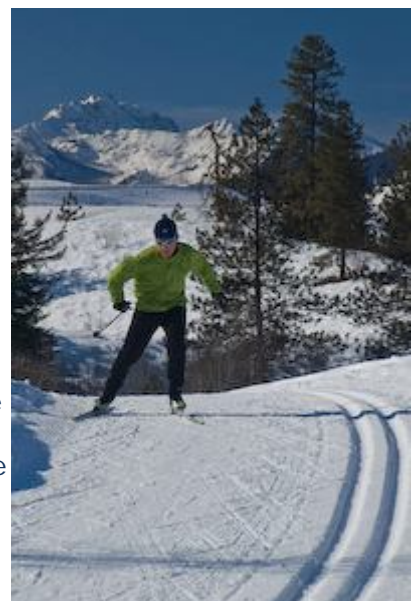
Fitness and Skill: Classic skiing can accommodate a wide range of abilities and styles. Classic skiing can demand as much energy and skill as skate skiing when performed at a high level, however it provides more leeway when learning. You don't need a high level of skill or fitness to start

classic skiing.

Terrain: Classic skiing can be done in a wide variety of terrain from track-set trails, to golf courses, to back country powder.

Skate Skiing

The Motion: The skate skiing motion mimics ice skating but adds arm action and lots of it. Double poling with both arms is widely used to gain and maintain momentum at the same time as the legs are pushed out from side to side. The legs form a "V" as you push off. As a result, grip wax is not required so the entire length of the ski is waxed for glide. Skate skiing tends to be faster than classic skiing. Skate skiing in very cold temperatures is especially demanding as the snow is dry and



slow.

Gear: Skate skis are shorter, narrower and stiffer than classic skis. Skate skis do not come in a no-wax version because the grip does not come from the bottom of the ski. You cannot use skate skis for classic skiing as the camber is not the same. Skate poles are longer than classic poles, often coming up to the bottom of the chin. Skate ski boots have a higher and stiffer cuff with lots of lateral ankle support as well as a stiffer sole.

Fitness and Skill: Skate skiing requires a higher level of fitness and skill, even for beginners.

Terrain: Skate skiers are limited to areas that have a hard packed surface or skate specific trails, generally found at Nordic ski centers.

Can you buy equipment that does both? We often get asked this question. It is very difficult to skate ski in classic equipment and it is impossible to classic ski in skate equipment. There is equipment that is labelled as 'combi' but it is our feeling that the 'combi' package means that you will be straddling the middle in terms of performance.

Who does skate skiing? People who are good classic skiers and are looking for a new challenge often take up skate skiing. Because it is faster, children and young adults find skate skiing a bit more exciting than classic skiing. Children who belong to a 'Jack Rabbit' program often learn to skate ski before they learn to classic. High schools and clubs that offer racing will also offer primarily skate skiing. A beginner skier who is very fitness oriented and in great shape often chooses to learn skate skiing. It does not make sense to purchase skate ski equipment unless you have access to skate specific trails.

We hope this answers your 'classic vs. skate' questions, but no matter which way you ski..... glide far!