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3-2.2 LEARN TO SKI SHORT TURNS AND BECOME AN EXPERT

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Dynamic short turns



Short turns compared to long turns



Sliding sideways down the fall line

3-2.2 LEARN TO SKI SHORT TURNS AND BECOME AN EXPERT

The dynamic short turn on a steep trail or perhaps in untracked powder is for most skiers, the very essence of skiing. An excellent skier dancing down the mountain in rhythmic, short turns makes a very pretty sight. If you master the fundamentals, skiing short turns need not be a distant dream. Have a go at it and chances are you will soon be skiing like an expert.

Short turns are dynamic and fast. You have to force the turn and "push" the skis around more than you are used to in long radius turns where the skis, to a large extent, make the turn for you. You cannot become an expert without practice and the short turn is no exception. The following exercises will lead you towards the complete short turn and we recommend that you follow them step-by-step.

STEP ONE: SIDE SLIPPING ALONG THE FALL LINE

Find a steep trail that is even and preferably newly groomed. Place yourself on the edge of the trail where there are not too many skiers to disturb you. Place your skis horizontally across the slope. Turn your upper body - and *only* your upper body - towards the valley, so that your chest is pointing downhill. At the same time your hips should be leaning into the hill. When you put your weight on the edges of the skis, they should have a good grip in the snow. Try moving both knees towards the valley while standing up at the same time. The edges of the skis will loosen their grip in the snow and begin to slip sideways. The goal is to sideslip in a relaxed stance straight down the fall line. Avoid slipping forwards or backwards by standing centered over your skis.

Tip1: Chose a steep slope. Get the feeling of the edges of the skis by side-slipping down the fall line. Use your feet and ankles to control speed and direction!

Try experimenting with edge angulation through a stop and go motion, using your knees and ankles as a tool to control your side slip. Press the edges of the skis down into the snow when you want to stop and relax the pressure when you want to slide again. Also, remember to turn around so that you can practice side slipping and stopping to both your left and your right. The delicate movements in your ankles and knees, as well as the control of speed, are essential elements in the complete short turn.

STEP TWO: SKIDDED TURNS

Now, try to turn, but at the same time feel your skis skidding. It is very important that the trail is not too uneven because you should try to turn while both skis are lying flat on the surface of the snow. Do not push down as hard on the edges of the skis as you normally would.

Tip2: Execute skidded turns with the skis flat on the snow!

Turn the skis solely by skidding them round in medium radius turns. This is easiest if you relax your body. Experiment along the way with the shape of the turn. Also, turn in slow motion and vary between short and large radius turns.

STEP THREE: SKIDDED TURNS IN A "CORRIDOR"

Continue with the skidded turn as in step two but start with large turns, making them progressively shorter and



Losen the grip in the snow

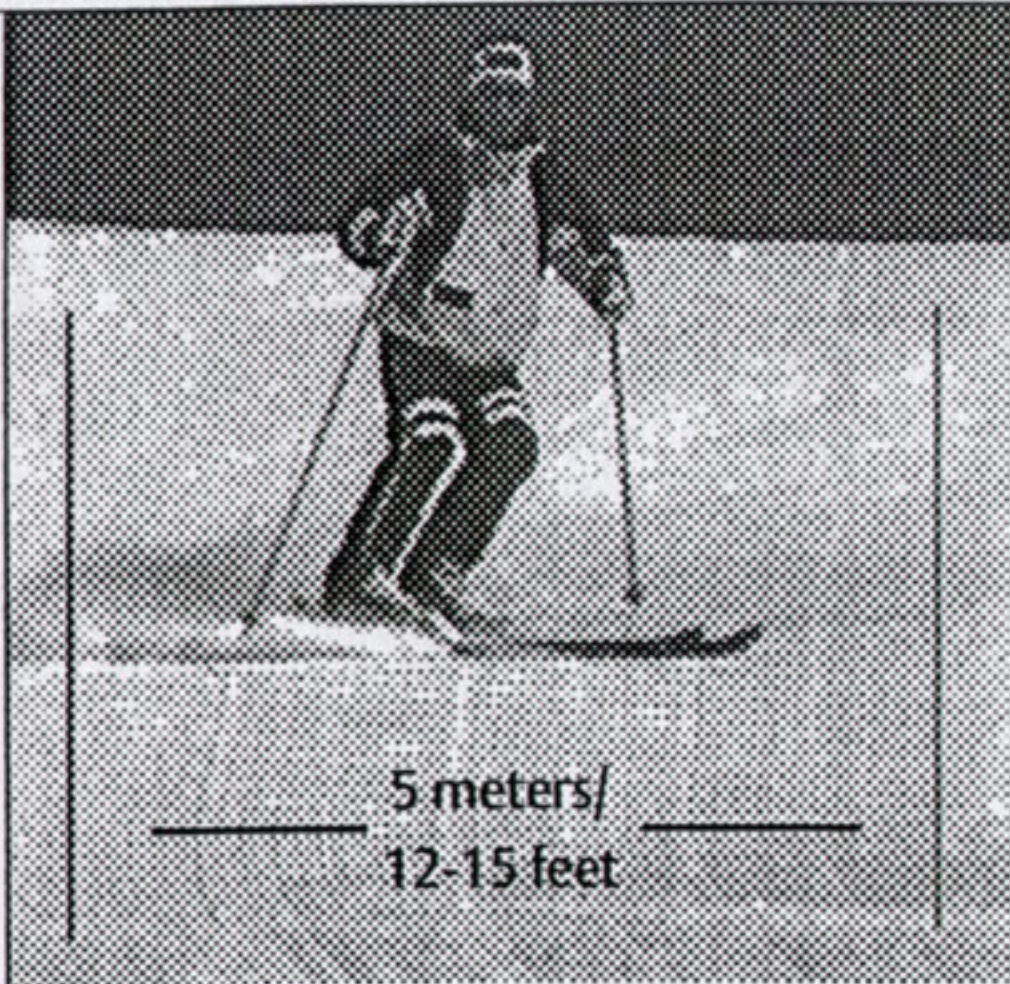


To stop press the edges of skis into the snow

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Skidded turns in a corridor

shorter. Remember that you should still be skidding on completely flattened edges and controlling your skis with your ankles and lower legs with movements resembling figure "8's".

Tip 3: Try executing skidded turns in an imaginary corridor!

Force yourself to ski short, skidded turns on a narrow track straight down the fall line (about 5 meters, or 12-15 feet, in width) and then practice making the skidded turns in this corridor. Continue this exercise until you master a series of linked skidded short turns while remaining within the corridor.

STEP FOUR: FROM SKIDDING TO A "HOCKEY STOP"

A hockey stop is an identical movement to the one an ice-hockey player uses when stopping on skates. Place your skis in a parallel position. Through a quick twist of the feet and body it is possible for you to stop quickly. You need a trail that is neither too steep, nor too flat, preferably a well groomed intermediate trail. The better groomed the trail, the better your result.

Continue with the short skidded turns as in the previous exercise. At the end of the turn, twist your skis so that you almost come to a complete stop. You should keep enough speed to be able to continue skiing into the next turn.

Tip 4: On intermediate terrain, make a series of skidded turns that end in a hockey stop!

When you twist the skis, your chest and upper body should always face down towards the valley. This position is central to the short turn.

Take a few runs where you concentrate solely on keeping your chest facing the valley. Your legs (and skis) should turn beneath you without affecting your upper body position.

STEP FIVE: COMBINING THE HOCKEY STOP WITH THE POLE PLANT

Find a slightly more challenging trail than you used during the previous exercise (preferably an intermediate to difficult trail). Point the ski tips downhill and ski straight down until you reach a reasonable speed. Twist the skis resolutely across the slope so that you stop quickly executing a complete hockey stop. Try making hockey stops both to your left and right.

As in the previous exercise, your upper body should remain facing toward the valley, even though your skis are lying diagonally across the slope.

In its final form short turns are executed with the use of the poles. Therefore you need to learn the movement and timing of your pole plants. Try this exercise in connection with the hockey stop. The initiation of the pole plant comes from the wrist and lower part of the arm. Move the pole forward in front of your body and plant it in the snow about 30 to 40 cm (1 foot) at a slant from the tips of the skis. (See chapter 3.2 for more about pole plant).

Tip 5: Plant your pole during the later part of your hockey stop!

Timing is important. Place the pole nearest to the valley in the snow at the end of the hockey stop. The pole plant must begin again before you have stopped completely. Practice the pole plant to both sides.



The hockey stop



The pole plant

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Skiing short turns

STEP SIX: THE TRANSITION TO THE SHORT TURN

Now put everything together. An intermediate trail is ideal for this exercise.

Your hockey stops need to be linked together and become a series of turns. Try to get the edges of your skis to dig deep into the snow a split second before you initiate the new turn. In this way the hockey stop will become the platform for the turn to follow. After a while the result should be a fluent transfer from one turn to the next. Be careful not to stop too abruptly while maintaining pressure on your edges.

Tip 6: Unite the different movements and make them fluent. Use up and down movements and the ski poles to create rhythm and flow!

Focus also on moving yourself up and down. The rhythm and dynamics of the up and down motions help you initiate your next turn. The aim of the up and down movements is to enable you to put enough pressure on the edges of your skis so they dig into the snow.

The pole plant has two main purposes; it provides good rhythm and it gives you a point to turn around. Keep your hands in front of you and use the ski poles to stabilize your balance and position.

SUMMARY: LEARN TO SKI SHORT TURNS AND BECOME AN EXPERT

Tip 1: Choose a steep slope. Get the feeling of the edges of the skis by side slipping along the fall line. Use your feet and ankles to control speed and direction!

Tip 2: Execute skidded turns with the skis flat on the snow!

Tip 3: Try executing skidded turns in an imaginary corridor!

Tip 4: On intermediate terrain, make a series of skidded turns that end in a hockey stop!

Tip 5: Plant your pole during the later part of your hockey stop!

Tip 6: Unite the different movements and make them fluent. Use up and down movements and the ski poles to create rhythm and flow!



Tip 2



Tip 5



Tip 6