

- **Skis:** As a general rule, the larger a ski is, the faster it goes and the harder it is to control. Be sure to buy or rent skis that are appropriate for your size and skiing ability, and have them fitted and tuned by a trained professional at a ski shop.
- **Bindings:** These should also only be adjusted by a trained professional at a ski shop. It's very important for bindings to be able to release in the event of a fall to prevent leg injuries, but bindings that release too easily can cause falls of their own.
- **Boots:** As the connecting point to your skis, boots are a vital piece of equipment. Make sure to get boots that fit correctly to keep your feet comfortable and warm, and to provide the best control over your skis. Boots should always be buckled up snugly to give your feet and ankles the support they need.
- **Poles:** These should always be the right length and have looped straps that go around your wrists. To check if poles are the right length, turn them upside down and hold them by the tip, with your hand resting on the basket. Your elbow should be at a right angle with the handle of the pole touching the ground.
- **Helmet:** As is the case with many sports, a helmet is the most important piece of equipment when it comes to preventing life-threatening injuries. You should wear one any time you go skiing. Get a helmet that fits properly and keep the chin strap fastened to keep it securely in place. Also, make sure to get a real ski helmet (not a football or bike helmet) that allows space for your goggles and ventilation on warm days.
- **Goggles and sunglasses:** The sun's rays are considerably stronger at high altitudes than they are at sea level, and when they bounce off the gleaming white snow, they can be a serious threat to your eyes. Sunglasses are the best way to protect your eyes from the sun's rays, but you should also always bring a pair of goggles that are the right size in case it gets cold or begins to snow. Goggles are also better at protecting your eyes from tree branches and other hazards.
- **Gloves or mittens:** Ski gloves should allow your fingers to move freely to grip your poles, but their most important job is to keep your fingers warm. With that in mind, many gloves include pockets for hand warmers. If you're still worried about your hands getting cold, however, it's a good idea to wear mittens, which are generally warmer than gloves.

Here's a rundown on what sort of clothes you should wear when you ski to avoid hypothermia and frostbite:

- **Thermal underwear:** As with all ski clothing, long underwear should be made of wool or a synthetic fabric such as polypropylene rather than cotton, which will stay wet and cold if it gets wet. The best long johns will fit snugly against your skin to form a warm base layer that your outer layers can fit over easily.
- **Thermal socks:** Thicker is not necessarily better when it comes to socks. A sock that is too thick will make your boots too tight, which will make your feet uncomfortable and cold. Choose socks that are the right thickness for your boots and reach up your leg to just below your knees.
- **Intermediate layers:** Fleece or sweaters made from wool or synthetic fabrics work best. Try to find ones that aren't too bulky to fit under your jacket.
- **Ski pants:** These should be the right size while allowing your legs to move freely. Be sure to get a pair of pants that are windproof and waterproof or water-resistant.
- **Jacket:** The best jackets will have plenty of pockets to store your gear. Many people like to use down jackets, which tend to be the warmest kind, but thin shells with extra intermediate layers can work just as well. As with ski pants, all ski jackets should protect against the elements and be windproof and waterproof or water-resistant.
- **Neck gaiter:** On really cold days, you'll want to have a gaiter that covers your neck and can be pulled up to cover your face. The best ones will also have a hood to go under your helmet.
- **Hat:** Remember, you lose a lot of heat through the top of your head, so keeping your head warm is the first step to keeping the rest of your body warm. When not wearing a helmet, a ski hat will help keep your head warm.

- **Always ski with a friend:** No matter how good a skier you are, it's possible to have a bad fall and be unable to continue skiing. Having a friend to look out for you and, if necessary, summon the ski patrol is much safer than skiing alone.
- **Know your limits:** Be honest with yourself when it comes to your skiing ability. If you're a beginner, stick to the beginner slopes until you feel comfortable enough to move up to something steeper. Most ski trails are clearly marked as green circles (beginner terrain), blue squares (intermediate terrain), or black diamonds (advanced terrain). If a trail says it's for experts only, it means just that. Skiing terrain that is beyond your ability is not only no fun, it's also a good way to get hurt.
- **Follow the rules:** Never venture past the ski area boundary or ski into a closed area. These areas are off-limits for a reason. They're not patrolled by the ski patrol, and they usually contain hazards that you don't want to deal with. Also, pay attention to any warning signs you might see. If a sign says, "Slow skiing area," you'll want to go slow to avoid other skiers. If a sign says, "Cliff," you'll want to go another way or stop before you go over the edge.
- **Practice skier etiquette:** Remember that skiers in front of you or below you on the trail have the right of way. You can see them, but they probably can't see you, so it's up to you to avoid them. Never stop in the middle of a trail or anywhere where you can't be seen from above, such as below a dropoff. Look uphill to make sure no one is coming toward you before you start down a trail or merge onto a new trail. If you're passing another skier on a catwalk or narrow trail, call out "On your right" or "On your left" to let them know you're coming up behind them.

1. Always stay in control, and be able to stop or avoid other people or objects.
2. People ahead of you have the right of way. It is your responsibility to avoid them.
3. You must not stop where you obstruct a trail, or are not visible from above.
4. Whenever starting downhill or merging into a trail, look uphill and yield to others.
5. Always use devices to help prevent runaway equipment.
6. Observe all posted signs and warnings. Keep off closed trails and out of closed areas.
7. Prior to using any lift, you must have the knowledge and ability to load, ride and unload safely.

KNOW THE CODE: IT'S YOUR RESPONSIBILITY.