

## 5 WOMEN AND SKIING

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This chapter considers women and skiing; for example, modern skiing equipment and overcoming fear so as to make skiing more enjoyable.



Photo by Jacob Helbig

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It has only been within the past few years that the ski industry has begun to focus more on female skiers. It is now recognized, that what works for men in regards to equipment and technique, does not necessarily work for women.

This has resulted in the development and production of ski equipment specifically adjusted to women's physique and a number of leading ski schools in both Europe and the United States have also begun to offer courses tailored specifically to women.

In general, our teaching system takes both men and women into account and in this section we will focus on some of the factors related to equipment designed to help women optimize their skiing.

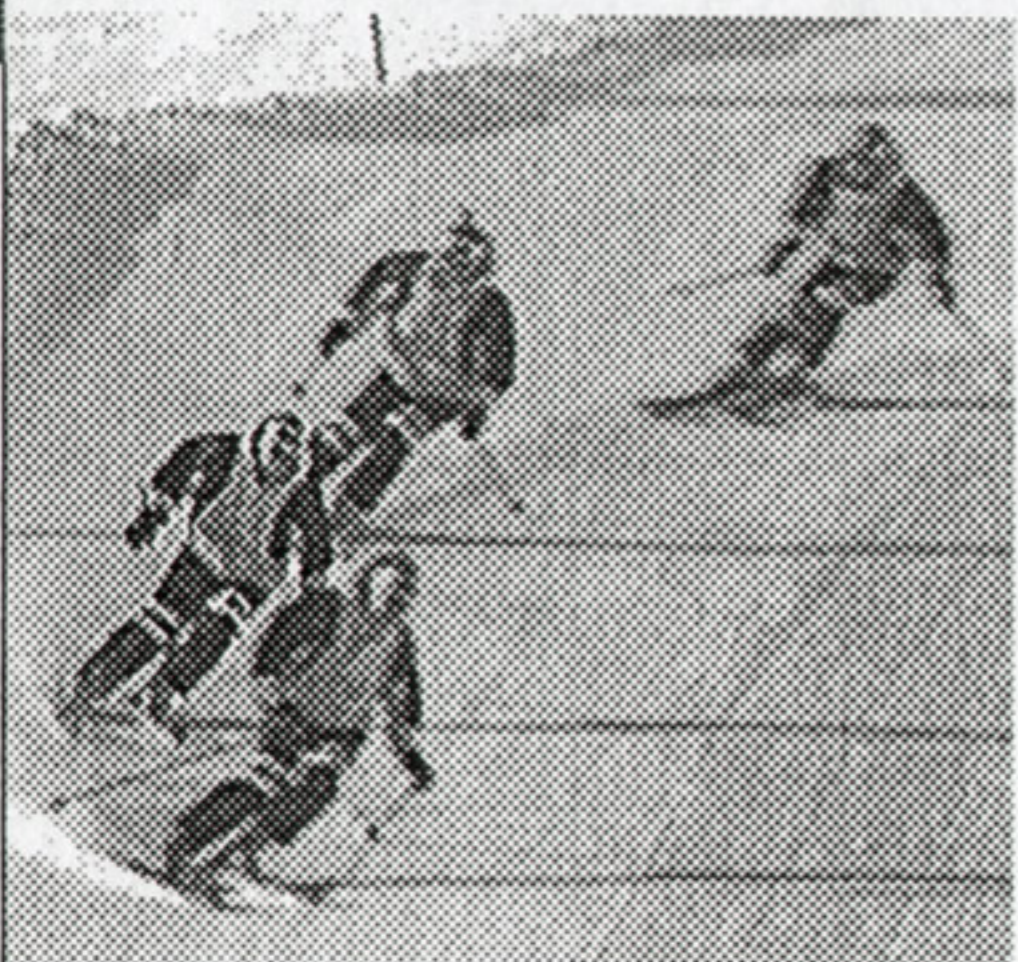
We will also take a closer look at the mental factors that generally influence women when skiing and give some advice on how to get a better experience on the mountain.

### ***EQUIPMENT FOR WOMEN***

Equipment best suited to your physique and technical ability makes a huge difference. For example, women typically do not have the same physical strength as men do, and therefore do not need nearly as rigid skis or boots.

Women's skis today are both more flexible and shorter in order to better adapt to women's strength. The result is that now men and women use the same relative strength in order to turn the skis.

**Tip 1: Use skis that fit your physical build. More often than not, women do not need their skis to be quite as rigid as men do!**



Modern ski boots are also developed and produced with regard to women's physique. The shafts on the boots are softer so that women can press their shins forward with less difficulty, making it easier to lean forward and stand in the correct basic stance. Not only are the shafts on the ski boots softer, but they are also adjusted to fit the shorter calves that women have. There is ample space for the calves behind the shafts of the boot (and a little further down than in traditional ski boots) giving a better and more comfortable fit.

Women's ski boots are also narrower in the foot, which both gives a better fitting boot, as well as better contact with the skis and thus improved steering.

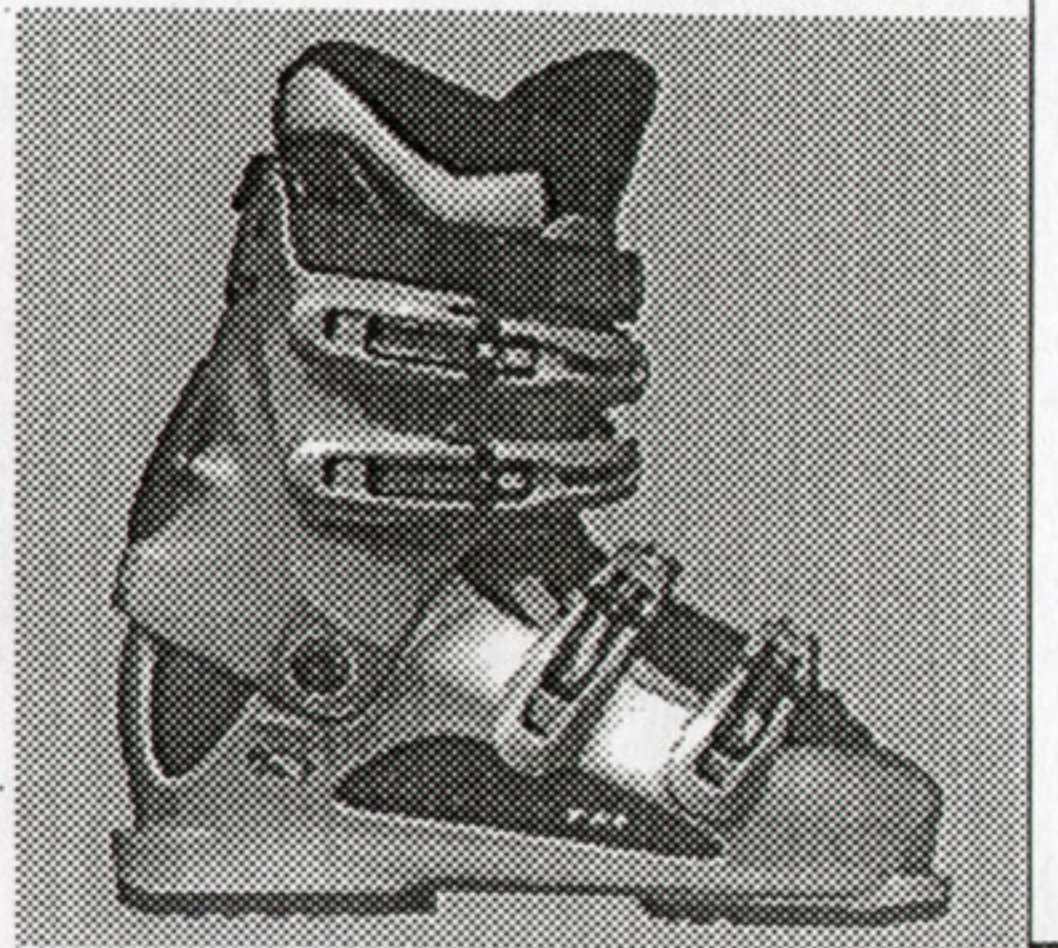
**Tip 2: Use ski boots made specifically for women. The flex on women's boots is softer and allows for easier forward pressure!**

Different skis and boots have their own characteristics, and the large selection of equipment available means you can find exactly the right equipment for you.

Visit [www.knowmygear.com](http://www.knowmygear.com) for specific advice and guidance. Here you can also keep abreast of the latest developments in ski equipment.



*Choose the right skis...*



*...and boots*



*Ski at your own pace*



*Ski with people of equal ability*



*Challenge yourself in different terrain*

### **SKIING PSYCHOLOGY**

Everyone has his or her own attitude, approach and expectations to skiing, and everyone is influenced and reacts differently. Our experience has shown that while men tend to race down the mountain, women tend to ski more safely and carefully. We think that neither of these approaches is optimal for the development of ones skiing skills. On the contrary, it is extremely important for the speed devil to be in complete contact with his skis so as to maintain maximum control.

If, on the other hand, you are too careful a skier, you may be missing out on developing your skills and pushing them to a higher level. Greater self-confidence on the slopes reduces some of your carefulness, and through self-confidence not only is the enjoyment of skiing increased, but also the courage to experiment and improve your abilities. Self-confidence also gives you a better sense of perspective and security.

A good rule of thumb therefore, is to always get an idea of the terrain before skiing, giving you some expectation of what is awaiting you. When skiing, make an effort not to let unexpected bumps knock you over. This means that as much as possible you ought to continue skiing even if for a short second or two you are slightly out of control. Regain your balance and search for a good rhythm while still on your skis even though it may be difficult.

**Tip 3: Continue skiing even though if you are slightly out of control!**

Do not think too much about what is happening behind you. Skiers coming from behind must give right of way when they are over-taking. It drains your energy and concentration if you are constantly looking behind you. You should of course check out the terrain behind

as well as in front of you before you begin skiing but once you have begun, focus only ahead of you!

**Tip 4: Take an overview of the trail before you start to ski!**

It is your decision where and for how long you want to ski. When skiing with others, do not throw yourself into something you are unsure about just out of consideration for their feelings. Also try to be the first to set off down the slope. This way you can decide both the speed and direction.

**Tip 5: Ski at your own pace. Do not let yourself be pressured!**

If possible you should ski with people of equal ability. This is of course only a general rule.

It can also help your self-confidence and improve your skiing if you ski with slower skiers so that you feel that you have a little energy left over - or if you ski with more experienced skiers in order to achieve better technique or to be pushed into skiing a little faster.

However, skiing with skiers on the same level creates a feeling of security preventing you from skiing faster than you wish to. In this secure environment, you can try to ski a little faster, make turns more often, or ski on gradually steeper and steeper terrain. Find your own balance between "relaxing" on the skis and pushing yourself to take up the challenges of the mountain.

**Tip 6: Ski with people of equal ability!**



*...and in moguls*



*Try fun carving skis or snow blades*



Tip 2

### **SUMMARY: WOMEN AND SKIING**

**Tip 1:** Use skis that fit your physical build. More often than not, women do not need their skis to be quite as rigid as men do!

**Tip 2:** Use ski boots made specifically for women. The flex on women's boots is softer and allows for easier forward pressure!

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Tip 5



Tip 6