

# Getting on Snow!

By: Tyler Kornfield



Whether a beginner or a pro, early season skiing can be very beneficial to the progress one can make over the year. Depending on where you live, skiing may start in October, November, or December. Where I am from in Alaska, we are lucky and usually get snow within a two-hour drive from home by the end of October. With man-made snow systems becoming more prevalent, many places around the country have caught up to us.

For those who are already jumping on snow and even those that have a few more weeks/months, I have a few recommendations that will help keep all the gains made this summer:

1. **SLOW IT DOWN** – I haven't touched snow in seven months. I am excited and so are my friends. Everyone is ready to prove how much they have improved this summer. Relax.

Skiing on snow is hard. It is physically demanding, and it will take a lot more out of me than I think if I am not careful. If I want the most out of my first week, I need to ease into it, find my rhythm and start nailing my kick. If I am doing intervals, I try not to rush, focus on using power in my arms and my legs rather than rely on a high tempo. This way, I can ingrain a more natural gliding phase that will carry through the winter.

- 2. KEEP UP THE “DRYLAND” TRAINING** – Just because there is snow on the ground, does not mean I disregard everything I’ve been doing all summer. This means keep up my running and strength work. Through the entire year, I usually ski in the morning and run every evening. It feels good to mix up the muscle groups and you never know when you arrive somewhere that doesn’t have snow and you still must get outside and train.

I also try to maintain my strength through the season with a gym session at least once a week. This keeps my muscles engaged and my body aligned and injury free. It is a tricky year for getting into gyms, especially when traveling, so I am planning to bring enough equipment (TRX and bands) to get creative while on the road. At home, I created a rudimentary garage gym that has just about the same functionality of the best gyms I have found.

- 3. JUMPING (PLYOMETRICS) GO A LONG WAY** – Along the same lines as running, I try to maintain plyometrics the whole year. This means, once (or twice if it is not a race weekend) I spend 10-15 minutes alternating between single leg, double leg, and skate jumps. I try to get creative and make up new ones to keep things interesting. They may feel like a chore at first, but I have learned to love them once I started to see my power was more accessible in races.
- 4. COME PREPARED** – After a long summer, it is easy to forget how much ski gear I need. Usually the first day, I am a mess. My skis aren’t waxed, my boots are somewhere in the back of my closet, and I can’t seem to find any of my hundred buffs. In the days leading up to my first ski, I try to gather everything I need, scrape my skis from my summer wax, and put binder on my classic skis. Prepping skis is always undervalued in pre-season skiing. Putting in a little effort in the warmth of my garage makes a huge difference in my enjoyment.
- 5. LASTLY, DON’T STRESS** – There have been many years that the weather will not cooperate. I have had seasons with drastically differing amounts of on-snow time in the month before racing begins and it does not correlate with my results. The stress of a lack of snow, in the end is just a distraction, and if I keep doing the same as I have the whole summer, I know I will be fine.

*Tyler Kornfield is a professional Nordic skier and skis for the APU Nordic Ski Center in Anchorage, Alaska. He will be starting his season on the World Cup and is actively fundraising for his season racing at <https://www.gofundme.com/f/tyler-kornfield-world-cup>*

