



EMPLOYEE HANDOUT

Fit for Duty: Tuning Up Your Best Piece of Equipment

Employees must come to work with their mind and body prepared for the rigors of the day, every day. Sports science has shown how even a small amount of physical preparation can improve performance and reduce the risk of injury during physical activity. These same techniques are very applicable to workers at ski areas.

Please consider the following tips to improve your performance and decrease your risk of injury.

Safety Tips

Before Your Season Starts. Your body is your best piece of equipment - tune it up as you would any other. Run, hike, bike, swim or play a sport during the off-season to build **endurance**. In the fall, build **strength and stability** with specific exercises like running stairs, step-ups, squats and lunges. Be sure to include side-to-side movements like skaters jumps. Plyometrics (jump training) are strenuous but build **power** quickly. **Technique** is important, so consider taking a class. Starting your season strong and fit will improve your performance and decrease your risk of injury.

During Your Season

Sleep. Early morning starts and late nights with friends can lead to sleep deprivation. Getting enough sleep is essential for your mind and body to recover. If you can't get 8 hours, try napping (less than 20 min or longer than 110 min to avoid waking from deep sleep). Meditation is also very restorative and can be combined with stretching.

Food. Hard work requires fuel but your choice of what and when you eat can make a big difference to how you feel. **Fats** are packed with energy and long lasting but they require 4 hours to digest – too long if you are already working. Combine fats with carbs and protein to make them digest faster, and always carry a **snack** in your pocket to top up your energy between meals!

Don't skip **breakfast**. Winter driving conditions, opening the lift and morning avalanche work require good decisions. Your **brain and reflexes are faster and more accurate if they have fuel**.

Carbs are great fuel for hard work, but beware of the highs and lows of sugar. If you need energy immediately (an emergency or unexpected work assignment), sugar provides fuel quickly. But if you are at rest, sugar will cause a low about 2 hours later, and your decision making may become impaired.

Hydration. Every reaction inside your body requires water. In cold weather water is lost through breathing. Make sure to carry a small container of water as there are many locations at the hill where water is not readily available.

Dress in appropriate layers for the conditions. Being too cold consumes too much energy, being too hot can cause sweating. Wet clothes lose heat quickly, and fluid loss can lead to dehydration.

Posture is critical to the way that your muscles and joints carry load, but stiff boots and habitual postures distort awareness of your center of gravity. Practice setting your posture to neutral and activating your core while standing in the lift line or riding the chair so that it becomes automatic for when you have to move quickly and powerfully.

Recovery. Consuming a snack of around 300 calories (mostly carbs and some protein) within 1 hour after a day of hard work will restore your legs. Stretching or rolling out tight/sore areas will help to prevent them from getting worse. Alternating heat and cold can also help tired muscles.

Impairment by alcohol or drugs (recreational, illegal, prescription and over-the-counter) can impact your ability to work safely. All workers are responsible to:

- Make sure that your ability to work safely is not impaired by alcohol, drugs, or other causes.
- Not work if your impairment may endanger you or anyone else.
- Tell your supervisor or employer if your ability to work safely is impaired for any reason.
- Tell your supervisor or employer if you see someone who appears to be impaired.

Additional Resources

- [Fit for Snow](#) – Health & Wellness for ski industry.
- [SkiRad](#) –Ski conditioning exercises.
- [WorkSafeBC: Workplace impairment](#)
- Poster: "[Before you hit the slopes.](#)"
- More Ski Area Safety Resources: go2hr.ca/skisafety