

West Valley Ski Team

Equipment Needed to Ski

If you're just starting this year, looking for the least expensive package or a combi set may look real tempting. The real plus of course would be that you would save some money but there are some big negatives that you should know before you buy.

First, there are many different levels and categories of skiing starting with recreational ski package (skis, poles and boots). In this category, the package is designed and built for flexibility, warmth and comfort. Doesn't sound like a bad thing does it? The problem is, is that touring equipment is heavy, lacks stability and control and the speed in the skis are sacrificed because of materials, shape and camber (ski flex). Poles as well are too flexible robbing you of the strength used to propel yourself into motion.

A combi (skate/classic) ski package or the two in one package is often looked at being a great way to start out to see if you like. That maybe so, but you'll compromise performance. Skiers wanting to see if they'll like it may find their improvements on such types of equipment come at a much slower rate and I find skiers become easily discouraged because they may not be improving as rapidly as others.

I recommend for the skier starting out, equipment specific to each of the two techniques: skating and classical. The top of the line is not necessary. The second or the third package down depending on the company would be a great way to start. I recommend shopping for your equipment at a specialty store. They will make sure that you not only get the right category of equipment but that the skis are cambered for your weight and your ability level.

Good clothing is another component in your mix of equipment. The wisest way to dress is to layer your clothing starting with the base layer, the mid layer and finally the outer layer. As a skier gets warmed up, taking off a layer is convenient and is the best way to regulate body temperature. After practice, the upper base layer is often wet. Having an extra shirt to change into will help to keep you warm and dry.

Some of the most advance base layers are made from polyester and should be light and close fit. One of the newer entries into the base layer category is Ibex. I've found that not only is it warm and wicks away the moisture but it does not develop the odors as fast as the polyesters do. The mid layer again should be a layer that wicks away the moisture but also adds the main insulative layer. A micro fleece or a wool/polyester blend is fairly common. This layer as well can control the amount of air/wind that moves through the clothing. The outer layer is often a shell with or without insulation. This layer should again should transport moisture out and keep the warmth in.

The one material that should be avoided in all layers is cotton. Cotton soaks up moisture both from the inside and if you've taken a spill, the outside too. Once wet, cotton becomes heavier, looser and traps the moisture next to the skin causing your skin to cool and making the possibilities of regulating warmth difficult.

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Equipment Checklist

Cross Country Skis

Classic

Skating

Optional-Rock Skis, skating. (For playing games)

Cross Country Poles, racing.

Classical

Skating

Cross Country Ski Boots, racing

Classical

Racing

Wax Kit

Green, blue and red kick wax

Cork

Ski Ties

Ski Bag

Base Layer (long underwear) top-Turtle Neck is best

Base Layer (long underwear) bottom

Poly/wool blend socks

Wind briefs (guys)

Micro fleece jacket or pullover*

Light weight shell jacket*

Warm active wear pants and/or shell pants

Over boots

XC Ski ear muffs

Warm hat

Neck warmer or face mask

Warm gloves and/or mitts

Extra T-Shirt

Running shoes

Running Shorts

Water Bottle

Duffle type gym bag or day pack

*These items can be combined but layering in most cases, is best.