



Bump Questions

Q: I have trouble keeping my skis together in the moguls. How can I ski bumps like a pro?

It's a mistake to get too hung up on keeping your feet together in the moguls. Yes, having your skis in close proximity often helps you stay tight and snake your way between the tightest of lines, but you still need to let your feet work independently. Watch pro mogul skiers and you see their knees together. They wear colored kneepads to let judges see their knees are tight. But their feet are slightly separated and working individually. Instead of thinking, "If I put my feet together, everything will work in the bumps, think, "I'll make everything work and my feet will come together". Even with shaped skis, we are still "walking down the hill" changing pressure from one outside ski to the other ski. (Like walking down stairs one foot at time.) Don't try to make two feet function as a single unit. Humans are two-footed and it's difficult to dance – in the moguls or otherwise – with your feet tied together. Perfect your short turns with your feet 6-8 inches apart. Once you have your timing down, start to bring your feet closer together. You'll find that a slightly open stance is quite stable in many bumpy situations.

Q: I stretch before I ski, but my legs always cramp up.

Gentle pre-ski stretching is a good idea, but it's not enough to prevent cramping, injury or other ills. Focus instead on limbering up after you ski, holding stretches for 30-60 seconds. Also try to stretch key muscles throughout the week to stay loose. If that doesn't halt the charley horses, your diet and what and how much you are drinking has something to do with it. Evidence shows that cramps can occur when you're dehydrated or when your electrolytes – minerals such as potassium, calcium, magnesium and sodium that carry electric charges to the muscles to help them expand and contract – are out of whack. One quick hit of electrolytes (such as downing a sports drink) won't solve the problem, though. You need to make a habit of staying hydrated and eating fruits, vegetables and other nutritious fare that'll help keep your electrolyte levels up.