



Fitness Evolution 1

Getting To The Next Level...Rise Of The Machines

The key to ski strength may be as close as the nearest weight machine. Follow this guide to the best gym equipment for building a brawny ski body.

We've told you before, and most trainers agree: simple tools like exercise balls and balance boards and basic moves like hopping and squats are an important part of any ski workout. They add finesse to your fitness routine and lead the way to better performance on the slopes. But to build a powerful strength and fitness base, you may not need to look any further than the weight and cardio machines that take up most of the real estate at your local gym.

Weight machines isolate muscles for a super-focused workout and are relatively easy to use. Cardio machines prep your heart and lungs for skiing and improve all-around-fitness, on and off the hill. And because most gyms have similar weight and cardio equipment, you can usually perform a simple circuit wherever you go. But not everything at the gym is equally suited to skiers. Here, we can help you navigate the maze of machines and identify those that give you the biggest ski performance boost.

Leg Press: This is a classic for building strong quads and it comes as no surprise that it's a prime part of the U.S. Ski Team workouts. In addition to the standard two-leg push, experts suggest carrying the movement and pace to work a greater range of muscles. Try pushing with two legs and then lowing with one. Other options; push down and up with one leg, and slow the pace with a count of eight up and eight down as many times as possible. Why do it? Strong quads directly translate to strength and stability on the hill. They contribute to form, keeping you forward in your boots and function, helping you steer and brake. But watch out! Be sure that when you adjust the seat, your torso and thighs form a 90 degree angle in the ending position. An angle greater than 90 degrees will stress your knees and increase your chance of injury.

Hamstring Curl: There are two versions of the hamstring curl; horizontal (where you lay face down), and seated. Trainers say both isolate the hamstring equally well. Why do it? Strong hamstrings keep your tibia (shinbone) and femur (thighbone) stable. Without stability, your tibia can shift too far forward, increasing your risk of blowing your ACL. Strong hamstrings also decrease general wear and tear on your knee. Lastly, they help you shape your turns. When you roll and extend into a turn and your leg straightens out, that's when your hamstrings kicks in. But watch out! Make sure the pad sits right where your lower leg meets your ankle on the calf side, or you won't get the proper motion from the machine.

One-Arm Cable Row: This is an excellent move for strengthening your back and, to a lesser degree, your shoulders and biceps. To do it, sit down and grab a handle with your left hand. Extend your left arm forward, then twist back and to the left, pulling your hand toward your rib cage. Then switch sides. Why do it? When you ski, your upper body and skis move independently, and strong back keeps you stable. By twisting, you also strengthen the obloquies and abdominal, which make up your core. But watch out!, To prevent injury, extend your legs but don't lock your knees. Also keep your back straight, and aim for a 90 degree angle between your torso and thighs.

Chest Press: Skiers know they need to work their backs and might forget about the chest, and this machine is the perfect fix. It also strengthens the shoulders and triceps, Why do it? A strong chest is important for good posture, a must for staying upright on the hill. It's also vital for an overall well-toned body, especially if you're strengthening your back. If you work one, you must work the other to help prevent muscle imbalance, which can lead to injury. Shoulders and triceps assist in polling and with pushing yourself up after falling.