

Cross Country Skiing FAQ's

Classic or skate ski?

Classic skiing is the traditional way to cross country ski where we compress the ski by kicking and gliding with the other ski. Skate skiing is more like ice skating or roller skating, using the side to side motion to propel yourself.

Wax or no wax?

Both types of skis need to be "waxed" to get a good glide. A "no wax" ski actually has a textured pattern under the foot area to grip the snow for a "kick". A "waxable" ski needs to have a kick wax applied under the foot area to be able to grip the snow. Both types should still have a glidewax on the tips and tails. This wax could be an easy-to-apply liquid or paste glidewax or an iron-on glide wax.

Touring or BC?

Touring skis are our most popular skis for many reasons. They can be used in groomed areas, in places where others have skied before you, or occasionally breaking your own trail. They come in "wax" and "no wax" and mostly in a mid-length style ski making them stable and easy to control. BC skis are usually wider than touring skis, giving us more flotation in deeper snow. Also, most BC skis usually have metal edges which helps the skis maintain their track when skiing icy conditions, going over debris, facilitating a turn going down hill or when simply kicking and gliding in non-groomed terrain. Many times a more substantial boot and binding are needed due to having a larger ski.

Race or touring? (Classic skis)

Touring skis are what most people use to get out and enjoy the trails. They can be "full length" or the more popular "mid length". They are easier to control, they are stable and easier to maneuver. If speed is not your number one goal, these are your skis. Race skis are typically a full length ski as a longer ski glides better. They are narrow and made from light weight, hightech materials. If getting to the finish line first or speed is your goal, ask for a race ski.

What length ski?

Skis come in many lengths and it can be confusing. Classic skis can be a "full length" or "mid length" ski. The rule of thumb for a full length ski is to reach above ones head and the ski length will be at your wrist. A mid length ski is a bit overhead height. A longer ski will glide better but a mid length ski is more maneuverable and stable. Decide what areas you'll be skiing in and go form there!

What is camber?

Camber is the "arc" formed in ski's construction. Camber is what gives the ski "flex". In classic skiing, it keeps the "kick area" of the ski off the snow while gliding. In skate skiing, it provides the "spring" one needs to transfer weight to the other ski and helps minimize the amount of ski in contact with the snow.

You got skis at a garage sale, will they work?

Skis come with a different camber or flex to accommodate the different weights of skiers. A ski for a 200lb skier will have more camber than a ski for a 120lb skier. Being on a ski not designed for your weight can make for a less enjoyable experience. Unfortunately it's not a one size fits all construction.

What are NNN, NIS, and SNS bindings?

Binding systems and boots must be compatible. The concept is the same but slight differences make each style unique and may not work with other styles. NNN stands for "new nordic norm". It has two small ridges running parallel to the ski and the boots will have corresponding grooves. NIS stands for "nordic integrated system". It has a plate installed on the ski and the binding is mounted on the ski simply by sliding it into place. To mount a different style binding onto a NIS plate, a binding will need to be "screwed" thru the plate. SNS stands for "salomon nordic system". Salomon binding systems have one wide ridge running parallel to the ski with a corresponding groove on the bottom of the boot. If in doubt, call a shop. There have been many advances in bindings and there may be compatibility issues even within the same binding styles.

I have a waxless ski, do I still need to wax?

The terms "waxless" and "waxable" are used to describe classic skis. No ski is truly "waxless". This term refers to a classic ski that has texture in the base of a ski to help grip the snow to propel the skier forward. Without this "texture" the ski base is completely flat and will need a "grip wax" or "kick wax" applied to give the skier grip. A glide wax is always applied to the tips and tails of the ski base to give the ski "glide" and prevent snow sticking to the base. This is not the same as a "kick wax".

Automatic or manual binding?

Automatic bindings are very simple...raise your heel just a bit, push forward and downward and the boot is attached to the binding. To release, a pole tip is inserted into a small depression on the binding, opening it and allowing you to simply step out.

Manual bindings need to be manually opened and closed. While you have to bend over with each entry and exit, there are some benefits. These include more secure contact with the boot to the binding and a less chance of the binding "icing up".

What type of wax do I use?

Glide waxing a ski can be a little overwhelming at first. A simple way to wax is to use a universal paste wax. It is universal in all temperatures and is easily applied with a small applicator. The draw back is that it does not last as long as a "hot wax" and it needs to be applied often.

Hot waxing is the best way to wax a ski, but is more labor intensive. A wax is chosen for the temperature that you will be skiing. Some waxes are "fluorinated" which helps repel moisture caused by friction and they generally last longer than universal glide waxes.

What do I need to wax my own skis?

To wax your own skis you will need the following:

-a wax table (or travel vise) to hold your ski while working on it

-waxes

-a scraper and "groove pin" to help remove the wax after it has set up

- brushes; you'll need to open up the base of the ski before waxing and also to remove excess wax left behind after scraping

*This is a minimum of what you need in order to get started

Pole Length Questions?

Pole lengths vary by the type of skiing you plan to do. A general guideline for classic skiing is the pole should fit to the height of your armpit of your raised hand.

For skate skiing, the pole should fall between your nose and upper lip. Personal preference and racing/recreational skiing can also determine pole length.