ARE YOU HELI-SKI READY?

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Owner Pilates and Fitness Studio, Tsawwassen Wellness Centre

Get strong now for an amazing ski season on its way. The essential demands of skiing are:

- Strength (legs, core upper body)
- Agility
- Dynamic Flexibility
- Foot strength and mobility

My brother, John Mellis, CMH Ski Guide in the Cariboo’s, was a speaker at a recent CMH Event at my Pilates and Fitness Studio, the Tsawwassen Wellness Centre. When asked how “fit” someone needs to be before heading into the mountains, his answer was simple “You are your best asset. The fitter you are, the more you will enjoy your trip.”

Heli-skiing is not only demanding on a daily basis, but to feel strong for a 3-7 day trip requires a whole new level of fitness.

Erich Unterberger, Manager of Guiding Operations for CMH, said “what our guests are booking is a mountain experience”. While we all dream of blue bird days with the perfect snow conditions, sometimes we get more than we bargained for. Ski walking through deep snow, managing varying snow conditions from light and fluffy to heavier and wet all in one run all challenge our legs, core and cardiovascular system.

Are you Heli-ski ready?

A basic level of overall fitness is important as the foundation for any ski fit program. While we often focus on leg strength, core strength and upper body strength will support quick, powerful dynamic movements in your legs.

I steer away from weight machines as they don’t ready us for functional movement.

Below are two levels of strengthening programs and one stretching program to help get you ready to ski. We’ll call them BLUE and BLACK as I’ll assert that if you are reading this, you are a heli-skier or interested in heli-skiing and therefore have a certain level of fitness and ski ability to begin with. If this is not the case, you may want to start with a basic entry level fitness regime before starting on these.

Erich Unterberger speaks a lot about the importance of strong feet and demonstrated to me at a lesson how much the feet are involved in powder skiing.

Please consult your physician if you are unsure as to whether the following exercises are appropriate for you.
GETTING HELI-SKI FIT

1. **CARDIO**
   The best cardio is cycling; on the road, trails or stationary, cycling and skiing uses the leg muscles in a similar way. Asked to choose the best I choose the trails. Mountain biking involves up and down movements, lateral movements through turns and upper body and core navigating bumps, logs and rocks. Mountain biking in more interval training with the undulating hills and hard pushes.

2. **PLYOMETRICS**
   Include bounding/jumping onto boxes or a BOSU trains power and concentric/eccentric loading on the legs and hips.

3. **STRENGTH PROGRAM**
   Perform a 15-20 minute warm-up on a bike or with light running.
   The exercises demonstrated below can also be done on the floor without the BOSU or Stability Balls. Paper towels can be used as the gliding discs on the floor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXERCISE</th>
<th>BLUE LEVEL</th>
<th>BLACK LEVEL</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Forward lunge</td>
<td>Lunge with rotation</td>
<td>On BOSU</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jumping</td>
<td>Lateral Jumping</td>
<td>Single leg Jumping</td>
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CMH Heli-Skiing

![CMH Heli-Skiing Logo]
Ball Wall Squats

Squat with Dumbbell Reach

One legged squat with toe touch

Plank – front and side

Planks with sliding discs (can use papertowel 😊)

Sliding discs with arm reach
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bridge – walking feet</th>
<th>One legged bridge</th>
<th>Bridge with heel slides</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gluteus medius hip hikes with ball (drop standing hip down and then lift hip up by standing tall)</td>
<td>Side leg lifts</td>
<td>Add a calf stretch</td>
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MOBILITY AND FLEXIBILITY PROGRAM

Leg swings – front/back and lateral – side/across

Active hip flexor stretch (lunge with arm above head)

Standing quad stretch

Hip circles using a strap
Supine twist

Linda Mallard is the BC Representative for CMH and the owner and instructor of the Tsawwassen Wellness Centre – Pilates and Fitness Studio (www.twconline.ca). Linda can be reached at lmallard@cmh-rep.com if you have any questions about fitness and conditioning as you prepare for your next Heli-ski trip.