PMTS Check Point #2
By Harald Harb, Inventor of PMTS ski teaching

Eva T.’ SkiStrong
By Eva Twardokens, 2X Alpine Olympian

Don’t Blame Your Lungs
By Jason Karp, Ph.D. in Exercise

How to Carry Skis
By Witold Kosmala, Certified Trainer

Necessity of PLAY
By Jess Daddio, Travel Editor...

More on Long Leg/Short Leg
Wanting Return Business?
By Nina-Jo Moore, Prof. of Communication
Photo on the Summit

Photo courtesy of Chris Anthony. Chris Anthony is a Colorado native and longtime Vail resident. For a good portion of his life Chris competed at an international level and traveled as an athlete and on-screen personality with the Warren Miller Film Team. Chris has filmed with the legendary action sports production company for 25 years and continues to do so. His feats are displayed in the annual Warren Miller feature film, as well as numerous television programs and documentaries such as “Warren Miller Global Adventures.” Find out more about Chris by going to www.chrisanthony.com/.

Photo on the Summit was taken by Vino Anthony – Chris Anthony’s father. Below is what Chris says about his father.

Father Day: Ski Film Star Chris Anthony Pays Tribute to His Father, Vino Anthony

The ski industry has relied on various approaches to introducing more people to the sport. Some are measurable and receive support through a variety of means, while others are difficult to properly account for on a spreadsheet. Ironically, it’s the latter that often have the greatest impact.

Probably the most significant and immeasurable is the passion of a parent who drags their youngster to the mountain after letting them walk around on the living room carpet in their 30-cm plastic skis for days on end. It is that parent who fell in love with the sport and will go to the ends of the earth to share it with the next generation.

Of course their agenda may be a little selfish as to try and get the son or daughter to fall in love with skiing so they in turn can go ski more. But no matter what the motivation, this is most likely how a majority of the population is introduced to skiing or riding. At least this is how I was taught.

An Early Start

My father, Vino Anthony, definitely had his skiing addiction, and when I arrived he took no pause in his efforts to get me up to speed as soon as possible. First on his back, which is in fact my first memory, and then on skis the moment I could walk (at around 18 months).

He was already a ski instructor as it was the only way he could afford to participate in the sport. He remained an instructor and a member of PSIA for more than 50 years. He did so for my sister and I, as this would make us eligible for our own ski passes. My mom could not escape his addiction either. She had to embrace it and soon helped with the cost by running a children’s ski school as a second job.
**Getting Families on Snow**
As we all know, skiing can be somewhat costly. But what the marketing experts and statisticians can’t measure is the numerous creative ways some families are able to get their kids on snow and keep them there.

My dad had to be one of the more creative. Maintaining his full-certification status and teaching on the weekends as a second job was not enough. He decided to start a kids ski program at Copper Mountain and then, literally on top of his primary business of being a jeweler, open up a ski shop called the Kids Ski Equipment Company in Denver, Colorado.

It was not to make money, but to make clothing and equipment affordable for us as a family, and other families alike. Yes, his selfish act to keep himself on snow put many other families on the snow in a more affordable way as well.

**Brainwashing Tactics Pay Off**
He also had a love for the culture of the sport. We were surrounded by it through images, films, and events. Ironically, the films I’m talking about are the Warren Miller films we would make an annual pilgrimage to see, and which would make us want to immediately get on the slopes. It was all part of his brainwashing tactics. It worked.

As a parent, he coached. But not too much, like I feel so many parents do today. He ultimately let me go and be inspired by many other people along the way. I’m not sure what his plan was—other than to share the joy of such an amazing sport. But it took me on a path for which I will be forever indebted. A debt I cannot repay, although I certainly tried. I did my parents a bit of money on tuition by acquiring a scholarship. And eventually, through my sponsorships, I was able to gift him some equipment. But nothing will ever repay the gift of skiing.

**A Debt I Can Never Repay**
Over the last few years, the true reward of the sport gave back to us both in dividends by letting us travel together and see different parts of the world from a variety of mountain ranges. Not too many sports promote this kind of father-son relationship. Sure, baseball and football allow for playing catch in the yard or the park. But skiing put you on mountains!

And with his fantastic eye through the lens, my dad also had material for his other hobby, photography.

Recently my father dropped me off to get on a private jet headed across the world to find powder. He was proud that it was skiing that allowed this moment to happen. As I crossed the ocean in the direction of Japan, my father ran back home to get his skis and prep for a ski program we would host together in Italy. He took a fall while skiing on an intermediate run he had skied so effortlessly countless times before.

**Lucky for the Shared Experiences**
It might be the “effortlessly” that got him. I’m not sure and we will never know. But this was not any old fall. This one cracked his helmet and took him out of the running for the next Olympic games. This one made me realize—as my father laid for months in the ICU—how special this sport is and how lucky I was to have a parent share it with me. This fall made every drive up the I-70 corridor a kind of memory lane, with a soundtrack made up of every song played in the tape deck on our way to the mountains for skiing when I was in elementary school.

It reminded me of every turn, every trip, every competition, and—most of all—that day my dad first put me on his back to go skiing.

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**From the Top**

*By Witold Kosmala*

*The Publisher and the Editor of Peak Performance Gazette*

*PSIA-E Alpine, Level III*

*Trainer at Sugar Mtn. Resort Ski School, NC*

*K2 Ambassador*

From the Top, indeed. It is the top of your turn that matters the most!!! I am talking about general skiing and not situational occurrences. ....

Maybe you have been skiing throughout the summer months, like in Southern Hemisphere, on glaciers, or inside the ski domes, but for many people skiing is a seasonal sport. This means that many skiers do not ski during the summer. That’s what makes our sport so tough. In November many ski areas open and our on-snow ski training and coaching begins.

The beginning of the season, in my opinion, is the most important part of the season, (like the top of a turn.) It sets the stage for the whole season. This is when we make plans, this is when we improve our technique. (Your strength you were improving over the summer.)
It is like a beginning of a swim season when swimmers build up the volume which takes them through the season. Like in running when you set your pace which will carry you to the finish line (with some acceleration at the end). Like in springboard diving when you initially set your dive into motion. Like in golf when you take a swing.

Like in living overall, early years set you up for life.

Your breakfast in the morning. Your food to fuel you through the day. Your schooling. Your preparation. Your second move depends on your first.

How about our own great sport of skiing? Doesn’t the top of a turn dictate the rest of the turn? Isn’t that the most important part of an average turn? You can’t finish a turn well if you don’t start it right.

I know one instructor that took this idea to the limit, realizing that the first move of his student will determine their success or failure. So, the student stood still getting ready to ski down. Of course, the stance needed to be improved. So they worked on that. (Nothing wrong with this, but some need for improvement can be tolerated. Stance always needs work.) A lot of time passed, but now they were ready to ski. So the student moved. NO NO NO, instructor yield. “Not like that.”

OK, OK, so the student stopped. Student got instruction on what the first move needed to be. So, they tried again. But the move was still not perfect, and they were yield to stop. This went on and on, and poor student never really moved. Frozen, frustrated, went home.

This was just an example that everything can be taken too far; to an extreme. There is nothing wrong with reacting to mistakes (or other things), and we can greatly improve our performance by learning how to react, but if we can improve the beginning, then the conclusion will be better as well, (and, of course, not every time. We can have a super start of a race and yet not finish great.) However, poor beginning makes it harder to have a good ending. My point is that we should learn to anticipate instead of only reacting.

OK, OK, enough psychology. The bottom line is, on the beginning of the season we should work on our fundamentals. Ski slowly and try to feel all our movements (or lack of them) all the way from our toes to the tip of our head. Work slowly so we can work on accuracy so when speeded it up a proper technique will be maintained. First runs should be like an intensive warm-up to the season of skiing.

On one of my recent violin concerts I played a piece where I had to play 9 notes in one second. There was about one minute worth of those notes. Do you suppose I just jumped right into it and started whipping them out in a hurry? Or, did I start slow, made sure notes were in tune, and then gradually speeded things up? Well, the same translates to our skiing. Don’t just jump into it on your first run of the season. Your run will be sloppy and perhaps even dangerous. Beginning of the season is the perfect time to improve last year’s imperfections, when they are not part of your routine yet. Maybe your thighs hurt on the first run. Now is the time to realize that they do actually work when skiing. So, focus on them and find out what they should do and when.

Beginning of the season is the best time to work on your toes. They will make your whole season better. So, why wait?

Unfortunately, not everything can be slowed down in order to improve it. For instance, if you need to practice an impulse, like a sequence of moves at one time. But, none-the-less, remember, it is the top of your turn that matters the most!!! Top of a turn prepares you for a journey.

I am so very happy to bring to your this publication of Peak Performance Gazette. I hope you will enjoy reading it as much as I enjoyed putting it together. Just remember when reading it, articles reflect authors’ viewpoints. Take them or leave them. Or modify them for yourself. Or think about them and try to see why authors have those viewpoints. Maybe they are correct after all and your viewpoints need to be altered. Whatever it is, awareness is a good thing.

If you don’t remember how you got this issue in your hands or would like to tell others how to look one up, here are a few ways. Choose one.

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Since this gazette is an independent resource, I wanted to ask you if you could distribute the above info to members of your Department, to your family and friends, and whoever else you see fit? You do not have to endorse all the ideas contained in this gazette in order to let others know that this gazette exists and that perhaps they might wish to look through it. I would deeply appreciate you sharing Peak Performance with others as an additional resource.

Please, let me know if you would like to contribute to our gazette. If you like to write about technique, that is great. If you would like to write how your ski school promotes lessons for advanced skiers, that is great too. Or perhaps you would like to buy space for advertisement of business or of a ski area – that is great as well. Write me at Kosmalaw@bellsouth.net.

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With this said, go on reading what our great authors have to say, and see what our great supporters show through their advertising. Let me give a special THANK YOU to our anonymous monetary donors. Your help is really appreciated. You all make this publication possible. Thank you, and Happy Thanksgiving, Witold.

In case you missed Fall colors, here is a photo taken by Will Mauney of A’mee Mauney Guy and her 8 month old Lab/Retriever mix, Dooney from the summit of Hawksbill Mountain in the Linville Gorge Wilderness Area in North Carolina on October 20th 2014. For more images visit www.williammauneyphotography.com or find Will on Facebook. You can contact Will at wmauneyiv@aol.com or call him at 704-477-0227.

WilliamMauneyPhotography

Main Course

Running Got You Tired? Don't Blame Your Lungs

By Jason Karp
Running & Fitness Expert
Exercise Physiologist Writer & Author, Speaker

Many new runners complain they can't breathe – even on short runs. Getting enough air is foremost on their minds.
Runners get frustrated with their lungs because they perceive them to limit their ability to run. They claim they "can't breathe" while running and are forced to stop so they can "catch their breath." Even trained runners feel this way.

At first glance, distance running seems to have everything to do with big, strong lungs. After all, it's through our lungs that we get oxygen. But if the size of your lungs mattered, why are the best runners in the world quite small people, with characteristically small lungs?

It's a marvel of physiology that enough air gets into your body, with your nostrils being no larger than the size of a pea. Even the space between semi-pursed lips is small considering the physiological demand for oxygen at high intensities.

A large man who, at rest, breathes about half a liter of air per breath and about six liters of air per minute, breathes nearly 200 liters per minute while running hard. That's 53 gallons of air entering the lungs each minute! Try filling a hose with 53 gallons of water in one minute. It gives you a lot more respect for the lungs.

Your lungs' capacity for holding air is mainly influenced by body size, with bigger people having larger lung capacities. Research has shown the lungs do not limit your ability to perform endurance exercise, especially if you're not elite. That limitation rests on the shoulders of your cardiovascular and metabolic systems; blood flow to and oxygen use by the muscles are the major culprits. There is no relationship between lung capacity and how fast you run a 10K.

Your main stimulus to breathe (at sea-level) is an increase in your blood's carbon dioxide content. You breathe more during faster-paced workouts and races because more carbon dioxide is being produced in your muscles and needs to be expelled through the lungs. Oxygen is all around you and has no problem diffusing from the air into your lungs.

Once inside the lungs, oxygen diffuses into your blood. This elegant process is more than adequate—at sea level, your blood is nearly 100 percent saturated with oxygen, both at rest and even while running a race. The hemoglobin of some elite runners, whose hearts pump large quantities of blood through the lungs each minute, become desaturated with oxygen when running at race pace, a condition called "exercise-induced hypoxemia." The situation is slightly different at altitude, where you breathe more to compensate for your blood being less saturated with oxygen.

Coaches often tell their athletes to breathe deeply to take in more oxygen. But since your blood is already saturated with oxygen, it's fruitless to take deeper breaths. Furthermore, since your diaphragm and other breathing muscles also must use oxygen while you run, the extra muscle contractions needed to take deeper breaths may steal some of the oxygen needed by your leg muscles. The metabolic cost of ventilation—how much oxygen your breathing muscles use—is the only factor related to your lungs that limits oxygen transport to your muscles and thus how fast you can run.

**From Lungs to Muscles**

If getting more oxygen into your lungs doesn't limit your ability to run faster, what does? Getting more oxygen to your muscles. And you do that by increasing the performance of your cardiovascular and metabolic systems, not by taking deeper breaths. You can improve your cardiovascular and metabolic performance by running intervals, running longer, and running more miles.

To get the most cardiovascular benefit from your interval training, run at 3K (2-mile) pace or slightly faster, which corresponds to your maximal rate of oxygen consumption (VO2max). Maintain this pace for 3 to 4 minutes and jog 2 to 3 minutes to recover between reps.

Longer runs and a higher weekly mileage enhance your blood vessels' oxygen-carrying capability by increasing blood hemoglobin concentration. They also create a larger capillary network surrounding your muscle fibers and increase muscles' density of mitochondria, which enhances the delivery and use of oxygen, respectively.

Training your cardiovascular and metabolic characteristics improves your ability to transport and use oxygen, which delays the accumulation of carbon dioxide, making you feel less out of breath. So next time you're running up a hill and think, "I can't catch my breath," don't blame your lungs.

*It all started with a race once around the track in sixth grade. Little did Jason know how much it would change and define his life. He is one of the most passionate and ambitious people you'll ever meet.*

*Since that first race, Dr. Jason Karp has become an internationally-recognized running and fitness expert and owner of Run-Fit. He is the 2011 IDEA National*
Personal Trainer of the Year and 2014 recipient of the President’s Council on Fitness, Sports & Nutrition Community Leadership award. A rare combination of education and experience, he holds three degrees in exercise science, including a Ph.D. in exercise physiology from Indiana University and a master’s degree from the world-famous Human Performance Laboratory at the University of Calgary. No other running coach or personal trainer has the combination of credentials, education, and experience.

A prolific writer who is more widely published than anyone in the fitness or coaching industries, he has more than 200 articles published in numerous international running, coaching, and fitness magazines and scientific journals, is the author of five books, including Running for Women and Running a Marathon For Dummies, and is currently the senior online content editor for Active.com. Having a love of the verbal as well as the written word, he is also a featured speaker at national and international fitness and coaching conferences.

Jason is a nationally-certified running coach through USA Track & Field, has taught USA Track & Field’s highest level coaching certification, has led elite coaching camps at the U.S. Olympic Training Center, and is the creator of the Run-Fit Specialist™ certification. He has been a runner since sixth grade and was a member of the silver-medal winning U.S. Masters Team at the 2013 World Maccabiah Games in Israel. See www.facebook.com/drjasonkarp.

The Necessity of Play

By Jess Daddio

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We live in an age of false security. Between laws, rules, warning labels, and restrictions, the world no longer operates in a trial-and-error fashion. We plan and prepare. We prevent diseases, track storms. We can answer most questions with a formula or predict anything with a scatter plot. But are we really as in control of our immediate future as we lead ourselves to believe?

In his chapter of Philosophy, Risk and Adventure Sports, entitled “The quest for excitement and the safe society,” Norwegian sports sociologist Gunnar Breivik expresses his belief that modern society has not only developed an obsession with control but also an avoidance of danger, risk, and fear. Breivik goes on to quote fellow sociologist and risk specialist Deborah Lupton, who stated in a 1999 survey that there exists in society “an increasing desire to take control over one’s life, to rationalize and regulate the self and the body, [and] to avoid the vicissitudes of fate.”

The secrets, the mysteries of this world, it seems, grow fewer every day. But anyone who has experienced loss, pain, or failure, knows that life is still full of uncertainty and adversity, that life is anything but a scientific formula where one can plug in the variables and calculate an outcome. Yet now, more than ever, our society is ill equipped to handle such hardship, despite living in a world that is fundamentally safer than at any point in history.

“We raise children, educate youth and influence adults to become softer, with less tolerance to pain, injuries, stress and problems,” Breivik states at the conclusion of his chapter.

How has this happened? How have we denigrated into a society, once saturated in challenge and imminent danger, into a cotton ball of a world that coddles its youth and operates under a pretense of safety? One word. Play. Or perhaps it’s really three. Lack of play.

Richard Louv hinted at its importance in a child’s learning capabilities in his pivotal novel Last Child in the Woods, a book that spurred the ‘No Child Left Inside’ movement. Psychiatrist Dr. Stuart Brown did a TED Talk on how “Play is more than just fun” and even founded the nonprofit National Institute for Play. Heck, NPR dedicated an entire week’s worth of stories to the necessity of play in not just our children’s lives but also our own. Everyone everywhere is talking about just how much we need to play.

It seems that somewhere between childhood and adulthood, we abandoned our youthful curiosity and innate desire to test, push, risk. We forgot what it was like to live without boundaries, when our mind was awhirl with uninhibited imagination. We forgot, in effect, what it was like to be a kid. The worst part about this? Our younger generation is now also forgetting how to be a kid. They’re learning algebra younger than ever. They’re going to piano practice and soccer and Spanish tutoring. Their schedules are as jam-packed as ours with adult-supervised activities. Even brief recess periods are structured if not compromised altogether for more classroom time.

Where in their busy day is there time to simply be a kid? When can our children explore the woods around their house with only a dinner bell to answer to? Our children need to know what it feels like to be a little cold, a little lost. They
need to skin their knees and get a few bruises. They need to know that some of life’s most important lessons can’t be taught in a lecture but in its total opposite – during unsupervised playtime.

**Free play: what it is**

While it’s beneficial for children to be involved in competitive team sports such as soccer and swimming, those activities do not tap into the most pure and true form of “free play.” Free play, or unrestricted play, allows kids the chance to be unsupervised and choose how they wish to spend their free time, be it through a game of hide-and-seek, playing house, or even reading for pleasure. Anything in which the child is self-directed and is not doing the activity for any ulterior motive (except for the sake of the activity itself) is considered free play.

Dr. Charles Schaefer, the founder of “play therapy,” once said, “We are never more fully alive, more completely ourselves, or more deeply engrossed in anything, than when we are at play.” So what is so beneficial about free play? Why should our children be allowed to have recess without rules?

**The benefits**

Before examining the advantages of free play, first consider the alternatives. You need only to take a glance at the National Institute of Mental Health’s website to see that just over 20 percent (1 in every 5) of children suffer from a “debilitating mental disorder” at some point in their life. Compared to the early 1950s, five to eight times as many children and college students are diagnosed with clinical depression. Granted, there’s the issue of overdiagnosis among professionals in the medical field, but there are psychologists who have traced the increase in mental instability to another source: lack of free play.

“We may observe an increased neuroticism or psychopathology in society if children are hindered from partaking in age adequate risky play,” writes psychologist Ellen Sandseter in a 2011 article in Evolutionary Psychology. Sandseter is not alone in her theory, and the extensive studies conducted on the topic have only supported her conclusions. Children that are pigeonholed into a life of organized activity typically grow up with an emotional imbalance and are often anxious, overwhelmed, and depressed. They feel as if they have no control over their lives. They become isolated and emotionally incapable of problem-solving or overcoming change.

On the contrary, children that are able to engage in free play on a regular basis are more apt to explore their own interests, practice self-control, master their emotions, and cooperate with others. They gain confidence and choose activities that foster their inherent desire to have fun and learn. A study in 2005 conducted by psychologists Anthony Pellegrini and Robyn Holmes proved that, when used intermittently with academic studies, free play caused students to have increased attention, better behavior, and more desire to do well in school.

In 2008, Finland’s educational system blazed onto the world’s radar with outstanding rankings in the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), drawing attention to what many believe to be the cause of the country’s high success rate: more recess. Finland schools offer students a minimum of 75 minutes of recess a day, whereas America’s school systems provide an average of 26 minutes (and that’s including lunch). Finland now ranks first in the world for science and second in math and reading. Where do we stand? Out of 34 countries, students in the United States rank 26th in math, 21st in science, and 17th in reading. Judging by these figures, it seems that ultimately, kids allowed more time for free play typically end up happier, healthier, and more successful.

Why, then, is unsupervised play not prioritized? One study performed in 2012 by the Seattle Children’s Research Institute revealed that, of the 8,950 preschoolers assessed, nearly half of them weren’t taken outside to play every day. What could lead to such play deprivation? One possibility is that parents’ concerns of athletic and academic success compete for importance and tend to take too much of a precedence. But it seems that even parents who do allot that time for free play aren’t always met with encouragement and support, but rather criticism. Some are even taken to court, accused of negligence by neighbors or local law enforcement. Schools don’t help the play crisis either, cramming in more hours of math and reading and cutting such play outlets as art, music, and recess.

**Places to play**

Considering our younger generations are spending an average of five to seven hours a day behind screens, this ‘lack of play’ stuff is no joke.

However, there is a hint of change in the air.

A number of non-traditional educational institutions are popping up across the country with the aim of providing children with experiential education and dedicated time for unstructured play. At the forefront of that movement is the Montessori establishment, an educational institution who’s foundation is built upon the belief that children learn better when given organic tools (i.e. stones, sticks, and other raw materials) as well as the freedom to use those tools however the students see fit.

Mountaintop Montessori, based out of Charlottesville, Va., has been in operation since 1982, making it one of the oldest Montessori schools in the region. Serving children as young as toddlers to as old as eighth graders, the fundamental core of the school’s day-to-day lessons are three-fold: to provide play, passion, and purpose to students by guiding them to discover and foster a curiosity for learning.
"We have honey bees, chickens, a garden, tilapia in the greenhouse," says Mountaintop Montessori Elementary Ecology Guide Patrick McCafferty. "The time [these students] spend in the outdoors, particularly the unstructured play-based time, leads to some really amazing discoveries that are seamlessly integrated into the students' lessons."

Those discoveries range from the scientific to the personal, from how to harvest a garden to learning self-discipline. Mountaintop’s campus is ideally situated in the heart of Virginia’s mountains, making an immersion in the natural world relatively easy. Yet even children from the nearby metropolitan hub of Richmond have the ability to take advantage of a play-based education that, like the Montessori method, provides ample learning opportunities within the context of the outdoors.

"The popular term now is 'grit,'" says Blue Sky Fund Executive Director Lawson Wijesooriya. "It's like resiliency and similar to self-confidence, but it's a child's own ability to believe they can overcome challenges."

Richmond's Blue Sky Fund provides school-based, after-school, weekend, and summer programs to get urban youth into the outdoors. Its mission is to use the challenges of learning to rock climb, hike, and paddle to teach academics as well as valuable life lessons. A majority of the students who take advantage of the Blue Sky Fund experience have never left the city limits and have grown up around everything from abuse and drug-addiction to poverty. Wijesooriya says it's always inspiring to see the looks on the children's faces when they see a starlit sky, untainted by light pollution, for the first time.

"Kids can't get the fullness of what they need both to stimulate their brains and engage their learning...by reading a book in a classroom," Wijesooriya says, citing the organization's keystone value.

Andrew Holcombe, math teacher and outdoor program coordinator for Asheville’s French Broad River Academy couldn't agree more. Holcombe says that, having grown up on the river himself, the benefits of using kayaking as a means of free play extend far beyond getting a little fresh air and vitamin D.

"If I can look at a rapid and break it down and work with my partner and make it through there, all of a sudden, math problems don't seem that hard," he says in reference to his own experience. "[Getting outside] opens up pathways in the brain, and I see that every day."

The academy is one of the few schools in the region that caters specifically to boys and balances four days a week of standard schooling by sometimes teaching in an outdoor setting and spending at least one full day a week (usually Wednesday) on the river kayaking. Holcombe says that the learning is "fast and furious and challenging," which is ultimately more successful in engaging the children than six hours a day, five days a week in a traditional classroom would be able to accomplish.

**Go outside and play**

While it's important for us to recognize the necessity of free play in our children's lives, it's nearly impossible to convey just how essential that is without first embracing it ourselves. If we spend too many hours slaving behind a computer instead of recognizing when to step away and have fun for the sake of fun, the younger generation will mirror that.

Adults need play for a host of reasons, one of the most important of which is to maintain our basic ability to survive. Psychiatrist Dr. Stuart Brown has dedicated his life to studying the affects of free play on the human mind. He says that the necessity of play for adults extends far beyond the obvious, like socializing and allowing us a momentary break from the seriousness of life.

"Play allows us to develop alternatives to violence and despair," Brown concluded after conducting over 6,000 interviews with felony drunk drivers, school shooters, and serial killers. His findings led him to believe that these troublesome outbreaks all stemmed from the same thing: play deprivation.

Playtime is meant to be fun, but the direct effects from allowing a little bit of play in your day are serious matters. Free play increases our ability to problem-solve, adapt to adversity, and even to learn how to trust.

"The basis of human trust is established through play signals and we begin to lose those signals culturally and otherwise as adults," Brown says in his TED Talk on the importance of play.

That play-trust relationship is evident in animals of all species, from monkeys to dogs to humans. It’s the foundation by which all of our relationships are built upon, from the bond shared between parent and child to the spark between lovers. And let’s face it: all work and no play makes life laborious. When we lose that fire in our belly, we become bored and, quite frankly, boring to be around.

Although I work for a magazine whose motto is "go outside and play," I am guilty of not playing nearly as much as I should. We’re all guilty. With every year comes an increasingly longer list of responsibilities that no doubt are deserving of our attention, but not every last drop of it. At the top of that to-do list, we need to prioritize time for free play like we do paying the bills, taking out the garbage, and mowing the lawn.
No matter how selfish it may seem, no matter how little time you think you have for it, playtime is essential and should be incorporated into our attitudes, our behaviors, and our day-to-day interactions. We need to play for our own mental and physical well being, as well as that of future generations who will learn by our example. Ultimately, the amount of time we allow ourselves to have fun will only positively affect our productivity, our capacity for compassion, and our overall health. We need play, in effect, like we need food and water.

With that, I leave you one final quote to consider before asking you, the reader, what you think about the necessity of play. This quote comes from the Irish playwright George Bernard Shaw who, interestingly, abstained from traditional education due to his dislike of organized training. He said, “We don’t stop playing because we grow old; we grow old because we stop playing.”

Jess Daddio has been the travel editor for Blue Ridge Outdoors magazine since May of 2013. Her job at the publication entails feature story writing for print and online as well as photo and video production, festival and event attendance, and reader outreach. She is a graduate of Emory & Henry College and left school with honors and a double major in Creative Communications and French Literature. It was during her time in college that she discovered she could combine her two-fold passion for telling stories and outdoor recreation. While in college, she was a guide on the New River Gorge and spent three months in Brazil’s Amazon River Basin with the National Outdoor Leadership School. Her favorite outdoor sport is whitewater kayaking though she also enjoys dabbling in rock climbing, slacklining, and mountain biking.

Wanting that Return Business? Let’s Look at Ways to do That!

By Nina-Jo Moore
Ph.D. in Communications

Here we are, almost at the start of a new ski season. If you work in the ski industry, you know that just as the success of the season is dependent on the wooly worm and the weather, your ability to bring your former skiing customers back to you will make or break the season for you. In order to try and find out what you might do to improve your ability to get your customers to return, let’s look at some nonverbal communication skills that should help.

When meeting your customers for the first time, it is important to make them feel comfortable, so your communication style does affect your possibility of bringing customers back to you. There is a concept known as immediacy in the field of nonverbal communication. Immediacy is defined as your ability to make people feel comfortable with you. It is the appearance of being open, friendly, and creating a positive atmosphere when you are around people. When you are more immediate, people will want to seek your presence; when you’re non-immediate, people will avoid you. The bottom line, then, if you are hoping for return customers, is to create that sense of immediacy. This can be done by the use of face and eye behaviors, the use of touch, the use of spacing, even down to appearance and your use of time.

Let’s look first to face and eye behavior. Positive - and sincere - facial expressions assist in building immediacy. A smile that is seen not only in your lips but in your entire face will help create that immediacy. Now to be sincere about it, that means you have to be positive about your position and about working with the public. If you are not positive about your work, then this will be pretty hard to accomplish. Eye contact is the other half of facial behaviors to which we pay attention. Making direct eye contact with the customers with whom you communicate will be very important. It is normal to glance away for a short split second, but looking away from people for a longer period of time when you talk directly with them sends the message that you are not interested in them. Be sure to create the atmosphere with your face and eyes that will draw people back to you.
Touch in a customer setting such as a skiing instruction should be one of two kinds: what we call functional-professional or what we call social-polite touches. Functional-professional touch is touch that is used as a function of the profession in which you are performing. If you are only touching your customers to show them how to use the equipment, or to show them posturing during skiing, or how to hold their hands, etc., you are no doubt fine with your touch. It is the touch that lingers too long, especially in areas that people deem intimate, that causes a negative reaction from the recipient of the touch. Social-polite touch is touch that we use to be polite: a handshake, a pat on the shoulder or forearm, or something of the like. This type of touch usually helps create a positive immediacy with others. Once you cross over the line into friendship-warmth touch, you may make them feel uncomfortable.

As a caveat, let me mention that if indeed you have been successful and your customers are returning, that would be time for friendship-warmth touch. Friendship-warmth touch is touch that says "I know you and like you." It's the longer handshake, or it's a pat on the back of the hand when shaking hands, or it's the pat on the shoulder as you shake hands. In some cases, if you have built a relationship with that customer over the years, even a short hug would be acceptable. The bottom line with the use of touch is that if it appears like you have overstepped your touch boundaries, take it back down a notch.

Spacing yourselves from the customers is also important. Just as we have different levels of touch, we have similar ones for space. The closest space zone is known as the intimate zone, and it is usually considered to be 0-18 inches. This zone is USUALLY reserved for people with whom we are intimate, except in the case of it being a function of your profession to be that close. Since you will often be asked to be that close to your customers, you will need to keep in mind that it may make them uncomfortable, and thus, make you less immediate. If that happens, back off into the personal zone – 18 inches to 4 feet – when not needing to be in that intimate zone. If you make the customer feel comfortable with your space usage, you will also be deemed more immediate, and customers returning to you will be more likely.

Another aspect of immediacy has to do with appearance and grooming. Since your appearance is dictated by your profession, and the weather at the time you are working with the customer, keeping in mind "clean and appropriate" will send the message that you are engaged with your job, that you like your work, and that you care about them as customers. This will create that positive immediacy you seek in order to have people return to you.

Finally, the study of time and its usage has shown time and time again that how we use our time communicates huge messages about us. Punctuality is important, so making your customer wait for you sends a negative message. Customers will feel like they are not important to you, and in most cases, repeated lateness will kill any chance you have of future interactions. Also, crucial in a case such as a ski instructor working with a customer, the time you spend with the customer sends them a message of how important they are to you. So, if you are always seeming like you are rushing them, you send the message that you wish to be rid of them. This will also be deadly to return business.

There are many other aspects of your nonverbal communication that will help create a positive immediacy, which in turn will create more return business for you. Although these aforementioned concepts just scratch the surface, they are the most crucial ones to improving your chances of return business. Also, the more people within your ski organization that pay attention to these and try to create more positive immediacy, the more likely your return rate of customers to your ski mountain will be higher. People go back to places where they feel valued, are happy with their service, and like the people who serve them. Happy ski season to you!!

Nina-Jo Moore, Ph.D. is a Professor of Communication Studies at Appalachian State University, where she teaches classes in human communication skills, including nonverbal communication. She is asked to speak regularly about how nonverbal communication affects different contexts. She is first author on a textbook on nonverbal communication Nonverbal Communication: Studies and Applications, Oxford University Press, 2014.
Eva T.'s SkiStrong™

By Eva Twardokens
2X Olympian in Alpine Skiing

The motivation for Eva T.'s SkiStrong™ came from countless conversations with a wide variety of skiers. The majority of them tell me they do next to nothing to prepare for the ski season! Their primary reasons are:

- They don’t have the time
- They don’t have the equipment
- They don’t know what to do.

With that in mind here is a complete 4 week cycle of workouts that are doable by all ages and levels of skiers and will significantly change your on-snow experience for the better!

Here is what the workouts will do for you

Put your body through a range of motion off the slopes that matches your range of motion on the slopes. The workouts are designed to allow you to move freely into all the positions you will potentially be in when you are on snow.

Make you SkiStrong™: Sure we need strong legs for skiing, but we also need a fully functional body to withstand spills. Sports – especially the most fun ones – come with risk, but a minimal amount of conditioning can shield you from serious injury.

Awaken and strengthen your spine stabilizers: The body inherently protects the spine through isometric contraction. You will be practicing gymnastic holds that strengthen those muscles.

It is my hope that Eva T.'s SkiStrong™ will help you with your health and fitness endeavors while enhancing your on-snow experience so we can all look forward to a fun, safe and productive winter!

Eva T. is a 2X Olympian in Alpine Skiing (Albertville and Lillehammer) and a 12 year veteran of the U.S. Ski Team. She has won 6 National Championships, Won a world Championship Bronze Medal, and is a World Technical Skiing Champion. She also is a Masters Weightlifting Champion. In 2011 she was inducted to the U.S. Ski and Snowboard Hall of Fame! She is now sharing her experiences from her athletic career and her knowledge in the Health and Fitness realm. As a sought after coach and consultant, she offers her services online as well as in person to help people experience an utmost quality of life! Check out Eva T. Strength and Conditioning website found at EvaTSC.com by clicking: http://www.evatstrengthandconditioning.com/.

Note for the Editor: You can find Eva T.'s SkiStrong™ e-book by clicking http://www.evatstrengthandconditioning.com/eva-t-pocket-workouts/skistrong/your-one-month-preparation-for-winter/. Also, see the flier on the next page.
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Made in the USA
How should you carry the skis to the slopes?

By Witold Kosmala
PSIA-E Alpine, Level III
Trainer at Sugar Mtn. Resort Ski School, NC
K2 Ambassador

Just looking at someone carry their skis you can tell about that person’s skiing ability. The same goes for other activities. For example, the way one carries their violin case illustrates whether they are amateur or a professional. So, here are some ways you can carry your skis. Clearly, some are better than others.

Carrying skis by their toe pieces keeps skis from hitting others. However, they might get your shoulder dirty and/or wet. Just be sure to grab the ski whose break is on the bottom so the other ski does not slide down. Also keep them pretty vertical, or else skis will separate and you will look like a beginner. See the photo on the side.

Put these skis quickly together, so no one will think you are an amateur.

If the skis are dirty, this is the best way to carry them.
You definitely do not want to carry the skis over your shoulder if they are muddy or full of snow. This is a true European way. I was at a ski school where the Ski School Director insisted that his employees carry skis this way.

On the way to the races. Now, hang your helmet on the tips of your skis. But, that is a “used to be.” Now with a rocker helmet strap will slide between the skis and damage the bases.

Like a gun? You must be a soldier to do this.
Well, maybe not a pro, but this works. For me, there is too much work to make this happen.

Only if you win a medal and you are on TV camera. Don’t you just love these K2 skis?

Whoever does this? A good way to not “sit back.” But, what do you do with those sticks? I must be a beginner.

OK, I am a beginner and I came for a lesson. Here are my skis. Could please, dear instructor, carry them to the slopes for me?
No, no, no. Edge of one ski kills the other. But, these skis have really nice graphics, don’t you think?

It hurt me to even pose like this. At least ski edges face away from each other so they do not cause damage.

This is called “sequential.” One ski at a time. Just think, you can practice sequential movements before you even get on the skis.
Gear of the Year

Throw a couple dozen testers at a boot or a ski, and you’re likely to get differing opinions, sometimes inexplicably divergent. So when consensus happens, you know you’ve got a winner. These picks reflect that process, with extra points awarded for freshness and innovation. Every year, stuff gets better. Meet the new benchmarks. By Joe Cutts

K2
Spyne, Spyrc, Pinnacle;
Rookie Sensations

K2 needed a boot. The easy route: acquire an existing brand and relaunch it. Instead K2 chose to build one from the ground up. Given the daunting complexities of boot design and manufacturing, it’s an ambitious undertaking, fraught with peril. K2 understood only too well from past failure. That makes the success of K2’s 2014 launch all the more laudable. The freshman-year offering is impressively broad: three all-mountain Spyne models for men, three Spyres for women, and two hike-ready Pinnacles for adventurous freeriders. There are thoughtful and effective technologies (water-free attachment of cuff and shell; a slick hike feature), and even our pickiest testers were impressed with the performance. Well done.
Training

Check Point 2: PMTS Racer Development, "Transfer to the uphill ski little toe edge."

By Harald Harb

Based on and derived from: my "Essentials of Skiing", book. This is the “Super Phantom Move.”

Harb Ski Systems published the book, "Essentials of Skiing", in 2012 and everything in that book is still valid, and still setting the direction for development skiers as the model for a strong skiing foundation. The book is for all levels of skiers trying to get to the advanced levels and also for skiers refining their expert levels. Therefore; it pertains totally to development athletes and racers.

From the "Essentials of Skiing", we still see a need to recognize more details of a ski turn and for that reason “Racer Check Points” evolved. This isn’t just for racers however, it’s the technique of the best racers that are demonstrated here, therefore these techniques will go a long way toward raising anyone’s skiing level. For everyone of these “Check Points”; we have a movement introduction and progression, so that all levels of skiers can achieve the skiing movements you see in this series. You may never be as fast or be as strong as these skiers in the photos used for demonstration, but you will be able to refine your skiing by using these movements from the demonstrations. There are simple entry level practice movements developed for "PMTS Racer Development" for each “Check Point”.

Now its time to learn how we use the outside edge of the inside ski, called the “Super Phantom Move”, in
my Book, "Anyone can be an Expert Skier 2". With the PMTS system we teach this to all levels of skiers, especially helpful for those skiers still using wedge entries or in a snow plow, and as you can see from these photos, very much used to transition by the best world cup skiers, let's get started.

**Qualities and abilities:** It is obvious that all the top ski racers have the ability to transfer balance whenever needed. Sometimes deliberately or accidentally most world-class skiers have this figured out. The first movement you need to learn how to transition, in this Check Point 2 releasing the outside ski hold, this is done by relaxing, flexing and removing pressure from the outside ski.

**Refinement:** The inside ski and leg need to be tipped to the same ski angle as the outside ski. A stable counter acted complimentary upper body relationship to the skis is essential for the end of the arc and it has to be held at the point of transfer.

**Mechanics or Movements:** Complete a round arc, into a traverse relationship to the slope, at that point change balance from outside to inside ski. Hold counter acting and counter balance, keep the inside ski angled, and the inside leg ready to support your balance shift to the little toe edge. Engage the inside ski edge, relax the outside foot, ankle and leg, raise or lift the outside leg and ski from the snow, then bend and retract the former weighted outside leg.

**Objectives:** All skiers participating in the training session, should be able to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the coach with a stationary example of the movements for this exercise, with ski balance changes and stance ski transfer. Then demonstrate a traverse with total weight and balance on the uphill inside ski. All skiers should then demonstrate, first in one turn, then in a series of turns, a release with the previous outside ski lifted, for at least a ski length, before another turn initiation, one form of this progression is to be completed by the end of the training session.
Quality of Movements: By the end of this training the skiers should have numerous opportunities to demonstrate little toe edge balancing ability. And upper body coordination with counter balancing and counter acting. The arms and poles should be held wide and pole tips should remain quiet and preferably on the snow.

Benefits of this exercise and variations of this exercise: Balance shifting ability from one foot to the other, independent balance and upper and lower body co-ordination. The key is to support the lower body balance change to the uphill edge, while holding a counter acted upper body relationship. Without a solid Counter-aced relationship, holding the uphill body and hip, this Check Point is very difficult to achieve at race speed.

Footnote: All "Harb Trained" coaches have a working understanding of foot and boot needs that directly handicap or limit young skiers from performing these types of exercises. If these exercises are not attainable it may have more to do with boot fit, alignment or correct footbeds, than balance or technical ability.

Note for the Editor: There are 9 Check Points in all, based on Harb’s book and video series, “The Essentials of Skiing”. The other 7 Check Points will be available starting in November from his video store downloads for $5.00. The link is: http://harbskitsystems.com/index.php?option=com_virtuemart&view=category&virtuemart_category_id=2&Itemid=102

Harald Harb
Dumont, Colorado, United States

Dry-Land Training

More on Long Leg/Short Leg

By Witold Kosmala
PSIA-E Alpine, Level III
Trainer at Sugar Mtn. Resort Ski School, NC

It is not just about making one leg long and one leg short, but how you go about doing that. There are basically 2 ways to make this configuration. One is, like I indicated in my article last month, by jumping over a box as fast as possible. Do you remember why the speed of jumping was important?

Here is another way to get one leg long and the other short. Look at the 2 pictures below and see what move I made to get myself from the position on the first photo to the position on the second photo, where I have long leg/short leg configuration.

No, don’t look how I am standing. Definitely not in skiing “home position” with my arms and hands behind me. But I need this in order to demonstrate the move. Look at the bottom of the fencepost between my legs instead.

No, don’t look how I stick out my tummy. I have to since my arms are behind me. Don’t look at my horrible right leg which cannot be flat on the ground due to my injury. Instead, look at the fencepost again. What did I do to get from the standing tall position on the previous photo to the position which I am in on this one? Yes, that’s right, I moved my hips laterally in order to attain the desired long leg/short leg.
Granted, there is room for every movement when skiing, but in general skiing the lateral movement of the hips indicated by the above 2 photos normally should not be used in the transition into a new turn. The only time the lateral movement of the hips should be used is perhaps toward the end of a turn in order to resist the force build-up. Lateral movement of the hips to start a new turn in a transition is definitely not a good move, especially on steep terrain. Intermediate skiers often want to get to the new edges just as soon as possible, and they move hips laterally down the hill in (or right after) the transition. If they don’t fall over due to lack of momentum in that direction, then they set themselves up for parking and riding – a limiting way of skiing. This lateral hip movement on top of a turn results in a sitting back position causing difficulty in making the next turn.

The movement exhibited in jumping over a box is a preferred movement, especially when landing on our feet is part of the take off. This causes hips to stabilize directly over the box and resulting in only feet moving laterally from side to side. In general skiing, it is the skis that move away from the core and hips, and angulation is attained to resist the forces. It is not normally the hips that move laterally away from the feet. Let me make this point stronger:

Ski straight down the hill using short swing. Your torso moves straight down the fall line but your skis make short turns. What moves away from what: skis from the hip or hip from the skis? You would not normally ski down just wiggling your hips from side to side, would you?

The expression often used: “drop the hips” in a turn usually indicates a need for bigger angles and stronger resistance to forces acting against you. Since the skis normally travel down the slope, often dropping the hips does not actually move them laterally, but it can. Also, keep in mind that higher the edges (to a point) with hip more inside of a turn, create more ski decambering and a tighter arc.

One more comment. Jumping over a box is not actually a movement that we do in skiing. If you think about it you will recognize that when jumping over a box feet move laterally from the torso. Now, how often do you do that when skiing? Maybe when you are doing a hockey stop. When else? In stivots. Rarely during a normal skiing down a hill. Jumping over a box is a good drill for flexion and extension as well as for long leg/short leg, but not accurate for the foot action that we need to perform while skiing.

Enough said.
Turn to Wisdom

- Change with the seasons of life. Don’t try to stretch a season into a lifetime.
- It’s not our job to toughen our children up to face a cruel and heartless world, it’s our job to raise children who will make the world a little less cruel and heartless.

Deep Stuff

- What is HUMILITY and what is it good for?

Thoughts for the Month

- Give some examples where in skiing momentum is your “friend.”
- What does “Point of no Return” mean?
- When you are standing with your feet side by side 4 inches apart, is the pressure on the inside of your feet the same as on the outside of your feet? How about when your feet are 12 inches apart?
- Why are bicycle pedals 6 inches apart and not any more than that?

Elaborations on last month’s Thoughts for the Month.

Question. How should you carry the skis to the slopes?
Answer. See article on page 15.

Question. Think about the skier’s stance. What should a skier’s “home position” be?
Answer. See article in the December 2014 issue of Peak Performance.

Question. Why was it so hard to teach newbies how to ski last season after they watched racers on TV coverage of Winter Olympics?
Answer. When people saw Olympians ski, they thought that that’s what ALL skiers needed to look like. I am referring to all those angles the newbies were trying to make with their pole going every which way. After all, on TV it looks like those slopes are pretty flat. Newbies in skiing normally do not realize how big a difference is between performance skiing versus beginners sliding down a hill. One main factor on beginner slopes is missing: momentum. See the first bullet in this month’s Thoughts for the Month given above.

This and That

Don’t Use These Either

Last month I gave a short list of sound which ski instructors should not use. Here are a few phrases which should also be avoided. Don’t belittle students by saying things like:

- Do I make myself clear?
- Do you understand?
- Does this make sense?
- I already told you ...
New Hotel Credit Card Fraud

Here is a warning that some source announced. So think about it this winter when you go on that ski trip. They are expensive enough without extra costs in time and money.

“At the front desk, typically when checking in, you give the front desk your credit card (for any charges to your room). You go to your room and settle in. All is good.

The hotel receives a call and the caller asks for (as an example) room 210 – which happens to be your room.

The phone rings in your room. You answer and the person on the other end says the following: ‘This is the front desk. When checking in, we came across a problem with your charge card information. Please re-read me your credit card numbers and verify the last 3 digits numbers at the reverse side of your charge card.’

Not thinking anything wrong, since the call seems to come from the front desk you oblige. But actually, it is a scam by someone calling from outside the hotel. They have asked for a random room number, then ask you for your credit card and address information. They sound so professional, that you think you are talking to the front desk.

If you ever encounter this scenario on your travels, tell the caller that you will be down to the front desk to clear up any problems.”

What is Going on?

Here is a typical American family. Do you think they are texting each other? Is this a silent group conversation? You know, I see this happening in ski lodges. Riders come in for lunch, get food and pull out their cell phones. Do you think they are silently discussing their experiences on the slopes so no one can hear them? Or, do you think they talk “technique”? Or, do they gossip? Wait, maybe they forgot how to talk, so they rely on writing?

Get to the Slopes Safely and Ski Safely

Research (and common sense) shows that if you pay attention when driving a car, many accidents can be avoided. If you concentrate on the road, you can almost predict what might happen and have more time to react then those people who:

• carry on a conversation with other passengers or on the phone (even with earphones and both hands on the wheel).
• text.
• daydream.
• think about their work or other particular things.
• read.
• are sleepy.
• are under influence of alcohol.
• are disrupted by activities in their vehicle, like kids.

I talked about reaction time last month. This idea is absolutely huge. Soldiers train their reaction religiously. One with quicker reaction has higher chances of survival.

Truck drivers (maybe) and racecar drivers (always) use racing simulators to improve their driving technique as well as their reaction time. The same should go for regular car drivers, most athletes, and definitely us – skiers. In case of emergency you might not have time to think through your strategy. You will have to react. This is when your subconscious mind takes over. Quicker you react, more likely you can decrease severity of the situation. Try to anticipate in order to give yourself more time to act and make that act a good one.

In the front section of this publication called From the Top, I talked about playing 9 notes on a violin in one second’s time. Do you think each note is processed individually or a whole bunch of notes make up one impulse? What about in skiing, when you react, a whole bunch of movements have to occur automatically. But, quicker the reaction time, easier it is to make those automatic movements happen.

Actually, I am here touching on another idea as well. Skiing is a very different sport then most. It is so very technique dependent, but in addition to that, huge mileage is essential. It is not like swimming, where if you keep repeating poor stroke over and over again you eventually cannot get any faster. Sure, in skiing if you repeat poor technique over and over again it will take that much longer to break the habit, but just skiing miles and miles will improve automatically many things, like: reaction time and subconscious preventative and safety movements.

So, parents with kids on a race team: don’t be too upset when coaches take your kids free-skiing. There is a lot of learning going on when skiing unpredictable terrain. Of course, free skiing with a purpose is better than free skiing with no focus. Free-skiing is a type of “play therapy.” Did you read the article on play therapy on page 7?

The Bottom Line

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