

# Safety

## Shots

**Safety is no Accident!**

### **Skiing in Slush**

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Spring snow conditions can change dramatically throughout the day. What was slush yesterday might freeze into solid ice overnight. As warm spring temperatures melt the snow, they can create "corn" snow, which consists of large, loose ice crystals that are still so fun to ski and ride on. However, continued sun and heat further soften the snow, turning it into dense, deep slush. Skiing in slush can be scary and difficult. But there are ways to keep skiing, staying safe, and having fun.

Skiing these shifting conditions can be challenging. In the morning, groomed runs are typically firm, resembling hard-packed snow. As the day progresses and the sun works its magic, the top layer softens, making for easier edging and the fun spring skiing we all look forward to. But when the soft snow deepens and turns into slush, skiing becomes more difficult.

Slush presents a particular challenge for skiers who rely on skidded turns. As the skis slide sideways during a turn, they need to push the loose snow out of the way. In deep, heavy slush, this movement is resisted, making it harder to slide and sometimes even causing a tip-over if the skier isn't prepared. The solution is to maintain a bent-knee, balanced stance and avoid oversteering, instead, focus on shorter, more controlled turns to maintain speed and prevent getting stuck. In some ways, slush skiing can feel like skiing heavy powder. Rather than relying on edges to grip, push off the loose snow under your bases.

Wider skis can be particularly effective in these conditions. Their greater surface area allows them to float more easily on deeper slush, making it easier to carve turns. Use warm-weather wax designed for wet, sticky snow to help your skis glide more

effectively. The wider skis with warm-weather wax reduce the chances of sinking too deep into the slush, providing a more enjoyable experience in soft spring snow.

The takeaway? Skiing in slush requires more focus on carving to maintain control and safety. But with the right equipment, like properly waxed wide skis, you can still have a great time and extend your skiing season. So, don't put away your powder skis just yet—there's still plenty of spring skiing left to enjoy!

*Linda Johnston is a long-time skier and ski club activist and has led many group trips to ski destinations in North and South America. She raised her two sons on Arizona and Colorado ski hills. Linda is a doctor of physical therapy, practicing in orthopedics for over 40 years in Phoenix, Arizona.*