

Boots are the key to better skiing

By Larry Olmsted, Forbes

I can't say this clearly enough: there is nothing you can do to instantly improve your skiing as much as getting a pair of perfectly fitted boots. And for most skiers, that means custom.

So if you have an avid skier on your holiday list, look no further than the gift of custom ski boots, a gift that will keep giving back for many years to come.

I've written about this here at Forbes.com before in much more detail, but the long and short of it is that perfectly fit ski boots have four immediate and very tangible benefits: they are more comfortable, as result of better fit they are warmer and best of all they make you a better skier. This combination of increased comfort and warmth coupled with skiing that requires less energy adds up to the fourth benefit, a longer ski day with less fatigue.

The science is simple – to turn a ski you apply pressure to the edges, and today's highly responsive shaped skis are edgier and "easier" to carve than ever, but this is a double edged sword. The problem is that few people have "average" or neutral feet and most have low or high arches. Anyone in these groups is putting pressure on the edge of their skis – usually in opposite directions – all the time without knowing it.

If your feet pronate (lean in) as most do, you are constantly turning your skis towards each other. Your body and mind intuitively understand and adjust, using a lot of leg muscles, so you are fighting yourself and your turns all day long while burning out your legs. Get correctly fit with boots that puts you in a neutral stance and voila, it's easier to turn with

much less effort.

Many people are amazed the first time they ski in such boots, like a weight has been lifted from their shoulders. The beauty is this happens regardless of ability and everyone from a beginner to expert can enjoy the instant benefits of better fit.

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