



Skiing Myth Busters

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ATTENTION ALL SNOWBUNNIES: We are approaching skiing season! As you gather stocking cap, ski gloves, snow pants, goggles and skis, here are some skiing injury myth busters to think about before hitting the slopes.

- 1) *Skiing is among the most dangerous sports.* Sometimes being dangerous is associated with the risk of dying (James Bond style). Every time, we drive our car or ride our bicycles we take a greater risk of dying than hitting the slopes. The average annual death toll associated with cars (40,000) and bicycles (1,000) compared to skiing (30). However, skiing is dangerous if you think of the risk of an ACL injury, 30-70 injuries per 100,000 skiers per day, and compare that to football players: 60 ACL injuries per 100,000 per day. ACL disruption is the most common injury in skiing.
- 2) *Formal ski instruction will make you safer.* There is not enough research to support that skiing lessons reduce your risk of an injury. Current ski lessons focus on how to rapidly acquire the skills to ski with no attention to injury prevention or safety. Ski classes would benefit from instructing participants on how to avoid ACL injuries or how to recover from off-balance situations.
- 3) *Young bones bend rather than break.* Overall injury rate in young children is lower than older children; however, the rate and frequency of lower leg fractures in children are significantly higher than adults. Children with appropriate functioning equipment have a much lower rate of lower leg injury than children with improper and non-serviced equipment.
- 4) *If you think you are going to fall, just relax and let it happen.* Actually... Keep feet together. Keep chin tucked. Keep arms up and forward to prepare for protection of face and head. Muscles of the arms, legs and trunk should be tightened during a fall; this will protect the bones and joints.

If you would like to read more myths on skiing injuries:

Johnson, R. J. Myths Concerning Alpine Skiing Injuries. Sports Health: A Multidisciplinary Approach. Nov/Dec 2009. 1:6; p 486-492