

DRAFT COPY ONLY

SENIOR SPECIALIST HANDBOOK



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© Paul Jones (PJ) and Cookie Hale
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Senior Specialist Handbook - Teaching Senior Skiers

GENERATIONS TIMELINE

* = DATES DISPUTED, ^ = STRAUSS AND HOWE

TERM	PERIOD
^PURITAN GENERATION	1588–1617
PURITAN AWAKENING	1621–1649
^CAVALIER GENERATION	1618-1648
^GLORIOUS GENERATION	1648-1673
^ENLIGHTENMENT GENERATION	1674-1700
^AWAKENING GENERATION	1701–1723
FIRST GREAT AWAKENING	1727–1746
^LIBERTY GENERATION	1724–1741
^REPUBLICAN GENERATION	1742–1766
^COMPROMISE GENERATION	1767–1791
SECOND GREAT AWAKENING	1790–1844
TRANSCENDENTALIST GENERATION	1789–1819
^TRANSCENDENTAL GENERATION	1792–1821
^GILDED GENERATION	1822–1842
^PROGRESSIVE GENERATION	1843–1859
THIRD GREAT AWAKENING	1886–1908
^MISSIONARY GENERATION	1860–1882
LOST GENERATION	1883–1900
INTERBELLUM GENERATION	1900–1910
G.I. GENERATION	1900–1924
GREATEST GENERATION	1911–1924
JAZZ AGE	1914-1928
^SILENT GENERATION	1925–1942
BEAT GENERATION	1950s-1960s
BABY BOOMERS	*1940s-1960s
GENERATION JONES	1954–1965
CONSCIOUSNESS REVOLUTION	1964–1984
GENERATION X	*1960s–1980s
^13TH GENERATION	1961-1981
MTV GENERATION	1974–1985
BOOMERANG GENERATION	1977–1986
GENERATION Y	*1970s–1990s
^MILLENNIAL GENERATION	1982-2000
ECHO BOOM GENERATION	*1982–1995
INTERNET GENERATION	*1994–2001
^NEW SILENT GENERATION	*1990s OR 2000s-?
HELMET GENERATION	2000-

Senior Specialist Handbook - Teaching Senior Skiers

PART I TEACHING SENIOR SKIERS

OVERVIEW

There is nothing presented in this handbook teaching seniors, that is not simply good, basic ski teaching. Safety, fun and learning are still paramount. The basic principles are that good instruction is **student centered** with the instructor facilitating learning by creating a **learning partnership** using an **outcome based** model, developed through **experiential learning** (i.e. skiing) and delivered **from the heart**.

The good ski instructor does not teach skiing, but teaches **people** (skiing). This is even more true, if possible, with the senior group. It is of paramount importance to balance the accuracy of the information you are providing with the humanity and social aspect of the experience. Many times, for seniors, the social, human part of the experience is more important than the content.

Accuracy of content:

There is an important philosophical premise for teaching skiing professionally; you are the professional and expert. Fun is great, but the instructional content of the lessons need to also be accurate. Your senior clients all have years of experience and are experts in something. Ski instructors are meant to be the “experts” in teaching skiing. There is also a very important attitude that needs to be heeded when you are teaching retired CEO’s, retired farmers, teachers, rabbis and anyone else. That is **confident competence**. You are the expert, you have accurate information, you know what you are doing and you are enjoying doing it; **confident competence**. When a client comes to you for a lesson, for the purpose of learning more about skiing, it is the responsibility of the instructor to not simply pat him on the back, tell him how great he is doing, etc., but to try and help him improve his skiing, and have fun and be safe doing it. This even applies to the very accomplished, possibly famous retired senior executive, even if he ‘knows it all.’ If that senior executive comes for a lesson, tells you that he wants to improve his skiing, and you see that he is very comfortable in a technique that is not helping his skiing, then you, as a professional instructor, should gently and tactfully guide him into a new technique that will improve his skiing and make it more pleasurable for him, even though your client may question or resist it at first.

Social experience:

However, please also remember that some seniors come to take lessons not to learn anything more about skiing, but simply to socialize and have fun. In that case, it is the job of the ski instructor to provide a safe and fun experience on the snow. Learning will most likely occur as a bonus.

SECTION 1. RATIONALE

Baby boomers are redefining both aging and retirement. They are living longer and staying active in sports longer. In addition to the boomers, the “pre-boomers” are also picking up the flag and charging ahead. More and more of these boomers and “pre-boomers” are continuing to ski, and even learning how to ski, well into their 80’s and beyond.

Senior Specialist Handbook - Teaching Senior Skiers

Riding up the lift at Bachelor in April, 2007, I was discussing ski technology with a man in his late 60's who had just taken up skiing the year before. He had recently purchased his second new pair of ski because he loved them so much better than the ones he had learned on. The previous week, I had been at Mammoth, at the PSIA Western Division Spring Convention, working with Cliff, who at the age of 89, passed his Senior Specialist Accreditation. Cliff had also had his hip replaced a few months earlier - and he was breaking in a new pair of ski boots. The winter before I met an older man who took up skiing after he had a double knee replacement. Then there is Junior Bunous, who is now over 80, still hikes to the top and rips non-stop to the bottom. The OTHGI (Over The Hill Gang International Club) is growing rapidly as are senior groups at resorts all over the world. **As professional ski instructors, we would be negligent if we were not to recognize this important and growing segment of our clientele and develop products and programs for their benefit.**

Developing programs that welcome and support the senior client, can also generate more growth in other age groups as well. It is often grandma and grandpa who buy the ski lessons and tickets for the grand kids. Many times families will choose to frequent the resort that grandma and grandpa also enjoy. Seniors are very influential.

Developing senior programs to be taught by senior instructors is also good for retention of membership in PSIA.

SECTION 2. WHY IS THE SENIOR SKIER STILL SKIING

Some senior skiers have skied their whole life while others are new to the sport. Some are addicts who ski for the love of it alone. Others ski for the physical benefits of staying in shape and the opportunity to be outside, in the mountains in the winter. Others simply like the excuse that skiing provides to travel the world visiting various resorts. Many others ski largely for the social aspect of it, especially for the family opportunities it affords.

There are many reasons that seniors are skiing. However, there is one motivation for skiing that is more prevalent in the senior population, people. Seniors value life differently than young adults. Life is precious, and getting shorter all the time for them. People and relationships transcend and have more worth than the material world. With age, come more losses. With age, many times, comes the attitude to celebrate the day and enjoy living with your family and friends. Thus, the social aspect of skiing will be generally more important for the senior skier. Therefore, in teaching seniors, it is most important to remember that you are not teaching skiing, but rather you are teaching people.

SECTION 3. WHO IS THE SENIOR SKIER

For our purposes here, we are considering senior skiers to be those who are approximately age 50 and over. Internationally, this is a commonly accepted age for classifying seniors.

In the senior population, there is as much diversity, or more, as in the general population. Many seniors have fascinating histories. Considering the importance of the social aspect for seniors, it is rewarding to encourage discourse and interaction within the group. This will help build a strong group dynamic as well as enrich the

Senior Specialist Handbook - Teaching Senior Skiers

quality and fun of the lesson. Everyone, including the instructor, will grow and gain from the time spent together.

A working knowledge of some pertinent “aging” characteristics also leads to being more successful in teaching senior clients. We will look at the senior skier within the framework of the cognitive, affective, physical and spiritual domains.

Cognitive Domain - Mental - Thinking, Learning, Remembering

Sometimes cognitive decline may accompany aging, leading to some memory problems and slower intake and processing of information. However, that is not always true and often there is no decline at all. There are indeed some processes that are stronger in the older adult. Yes, wisdom is real. Following are salient points from recent research that will help in the understanding of the senior client.

- “Although younger adults appear more likely than older adults to interpret a story analytically, older adults appear likely to focus less on the story's details and more on the gist of the story and its underlying significance (Adams et al., 1997).”
- “Older adults also have shown similar or better abilities to represent, update, and recall more global and holistic levels of understanding (e.g., Radvansky, 1999).”
- “Prior research has demonstrated that aging is associated with increased dependence on schematic knowledge (e.g., Hess, 1990).”
- “Aging may be marked by the increased salience of associative and automatic processes such as heuristics (Mutter and Pliske, 1994; Yates and Patalano, 1999).”
- “Although life-span theories (e.g., Fredrickson and Carstensen, 1990; Labouvie-Vief, 1999) do not make predictions about the salience of automatic, associative, and intuitive processes versus controlled and analytical processes in older (compared with younger) adults, aging research nonetheless supports this distinction. For example, Jennings and Jacoby (1993) demonstrated that older adults performed less well than their younger counterparts on tasks that required conscious control of memory, but they performed equally well on tasks that relied on automatic memory processes (i.e., familiarity).”
- Seniors will make decisions more slowly and cautiously than younger adults, using decision strategies that are less cognitively demanding. They are less flexible in learning and revising judgment and decision strategies. (Sanfey and Hastie, 2000)

Application to teaching skiing: Age and experience have equipped seniors to be more able to see the “big” picture and not get lost in the details. When introducing a new concept, put it into perspective. Be careful to not complicate the technical concepts of skiing and expect seniors to accept the new concepts immediately. Allow them time to verify new information by experience. Seniors have a highly developed model of judgment and decision making strategies which they are not apt to change. Their internal model has been refined through their years of living. They are familiar with it and it has worked for them. They will process any new information within this existing framework. Therefore, link new learning to old learning by using comparison and contrast. Lead seniors to apply the new learning to verify it. For example, when

Senior Specialist Handbook - Teaching Senior Skiers

teaching how to use turn shape to control speed, briefly explain the concept, then immediately experiment making turns with different shapes. Point out their own typical turn shape and how it compares to the rounder turn. Continue making turns having them explore the pros/cons, advantages/disadvantages of the various turn shapes. Link the new with the old and confirm through experiential learning, i.e. skiing.

It is also critically important when teaching seniors to give them the opportunity to take ownership of the lesson by providing input and direction for the lesson. At the beginning of a lesson, discuss the reasons that the seniors are there, what their goals are. At the end of a lesson, recap. Did you meet their goals. Discuss future plans. Seniors are used to taking control of their growth and future.

Affective Domain - Emotional

- Affective information is more important for seniors.
- Research has shown that seniors have improved efficiency and quality of decision making with affective markers. (Stern and Carstensen, 2000)
- “Seniors learn better from affective cues than the other age groups.” (Stern and Carstensen, 2000)
- “Aging may increase reliance on heuristics and affect in judgement and decision making.” (Stern and Carstensen, 2000)
- “An individual experiences more apprehension the less confidence he has in his ability to perform successfully.” (Slanger, 200?)

Application to teaching skiing: Seniors learn best with affective markers; i.e. when the new learning also is marked by and accompanied with emotional content. Unfortunately, fear is also more likely to be present in the senior skier. As Slanger notes, “An individual experiences more apprehension the less confidence he has in his ability to perform successfully.” This is very often the situation with the senior skier. Needless to say, fear does not promote learning. Thus, for seniors, almost more than the rest of the population, remember safety, fun and learning. If people feel safe and are having fun, then learning can occur. It is important for the instructor to be very cognizant of each individual's level of security and confidence, as well as their physical state at all times during a lesson. The physical and the affective are very much connected. In seniors, with aging bodies, but still with young minds, it is sometimes difficult for both the instructor and the clients to discern exactly how much they can do. Constant attention to reality, combined with accurate technical knowledge, will help maintain a positive emotional environment. Hopefully, with age and experience has also come some wisdom and emotional stability to handle the changes brought on by aging.

A healthy, strong instructor-client learning partnership is extremely important to facilitate learning with senior clients. As the senior may be unsure of his own knowledge and abilities, he is looking to the instructor to provide professional direction and confidence. Trust is paramount. For this trust to be strong, the instructor should be genuine and connect with their client from the heart.

Senior Specialist Handbook - Teaching Senior Skiers

To develop trust, listen to your clients. Take a real interest in them, in their past experiences. Listen to their unspoken expressions and movements. Be aware of them. Be protective too. Watch closely and keep them safe. In new experiences, be honest in describing the sensations they will have. Help them. The trust will grow.

Positive affective cues can help with all levels of instruction. An instructor can also use affective cues directly. For example, tell the senior to think of the most wonderful, peaceful, secure place he likes the best. Then have him recall that thought every time he enters the fall line. Come up with off-the-wall comparisons that make you laugh. Make connections that have emotionally charged content. The lesson will be more fun and your client will become more actively involved and learn.

The affective atmosphere of the lesson is created by the instructor. Not much learning will occur if the atmosphere is negative or discouraging. The instructor needs to be especially skillful in both the manner in which he delivers his instructions as well as their content. Being competent in understanding cause and effect and movement analysis alone is not enough. The key is being able to see what is the next step for the client that will improve their skiing. What can they be successful at performing next? What should they work on adding to their skiing next? What are they doing well now, that they can build on? Tell them what to move when to make the ski do what and why. There is no need to tell them what not to do. Show them good skiing. Set them up for success. People need encouragement. They perform better when you compliment them. Encourage them over and over again, genuinely, sincerely. Make the learning fun and encouraging. They will learn more and come back for more. Creating this positive, encouraging affective atmosphere is the single most important thing that an instructor can do.

Treat everyone with respect. Be sincere and honest in all your comments and encouragement. Have fun. Seniors are skiing because they enjoy it. They are taking lessons to increase that enjoyment. So go for it, enjoy those moments with them.

Physical Domain

- Possible Osteopenia (low bone mass)
- Possible reduced muscle mass
- Possible decreased cardiovascular reserve
- Possible increased sensitivity to the cold
- Possible increased sensitivity to the sun
- Possible neurological manifestation of aging on coordination and balance
- Possible vision impairment
- Possible hearing loss
- Possible physical limitations due to previous injuries
- Possibly none of the above
- However, a very wide range of physical strength and ability

Application to teaching skiing: Seniors probably vary more than the average population when it comes to the physical domain. However, seniors who are skiing are a self-selected group and are a bit above average in their physical abilities. With seniors, spend time at the beginning of the lesson learning about any physical limitation that

Senior Specialist Handbook - Teaching Senior Skiers

they may have and take these into consideration both when planning the lesson and during the lesson. Create lesson designs specific for seniors by being careful with the **lesson pacing** and **terrain selection**, focussing appropriate **terrain tactics** and adapting **techniques** that will help the group be successful and improve.

As with all people, be sure to advise seniors of the **mountain environment**; i.e. the exposure to the sun, the wind, the cold and the need from skin protection, eye protection and proper clothing. Seniors usually do better in goggles and sunglasses that are not as dark. Older eyes do not usually adjust as rapidly to changing light and often require more light to see clearly. Toe warmers and hand warmers are usually very appreciated as circulation may not be what it used to be. Some of the “new”, high tech clothing is wonderful.

Pacing is very important. You might need to stop more frequently and take a bit longer breaks to enjoy the scenery and find the restrooms. Remind your people to breathe. It is amazing how many people ski for long distances without breathing.

Important Note: Please be especially aware of heart attack symptoms. If a person is sweating and pale, get help immediately. Be especially aware of this in people that are over weight and not used to physical exercise.

Terrain selection is critical. It's important to consider snow conditions when selecting terrain. Sometimes a blue run can be a green run and sometimes a green run can be a blue run. Application of appropriate **terrain tactics** is also crucial. It is important to understand how to choose what line to ski, exactly where to put your feet on the snow to use the terrain efficiently and effectively. For seniors, it's important to be able to read the snow and decide exactly where to turn. This is especially true when on terrain that is a bit more difficult for them. Many times, I've taken my senior clients down through some bumps to have them exclaim that it was so easy - only because I had them stay in my tracks, making nice round turns on the flatter places, staying out of the troughs, smoothing out the line while I set the speed, keeping it constant and moderate.

In selecting terrain, also consider what other types of skiers will be on that terrain and how crowded it will be. An area crowded with young snow boarders or ski racers will not promote good learning or a good experience. An area that is noisy will be distracting and may make it harder for those skiing with hearing loss. On a poor visibility day, it is especially important to choose runs that are either below the fog or that at least have many trees or other markers for orientation. Poll your clients as to their preferred terrain and ask why. I cannot overemphasize the importance of terrain selection and tactical use of that terrain for your senior clients.

Technique is important. Following are the main technical elements for seniors.

1. The main focus of senior technique is **low impact**. This means more skidding and a little less carving, however, the turn shape is still important. Aim for nice **ROUND** “scarved” turns that make use of the new “shaped” skis.
2. A **balanced** fore/aft stance is paramount. A tall, stacked stance is much easier on the knees, legs and back. Standing over the

Senior Specialist Handbook - Teaching Senior Skiers

- feet, stacking the bones for support instead of using the thighs. The more vertical the thighs are, the less they will fatigue.
3. More **two-footed** with less “foot to foot” weight shifting, as the conditions and turn forces allow, tracking both skis without “stepping”. This is especially true using shaped skis.
 4. **“Banking”**, total body inclination is acceptable, especially to accommodate knee injuries and weak thighs. However, there should always be more weight on the outside ski.
 5. Movement patterns are forward and diagonal (**for/agonal**) movement into the new turn, rather than up and back to initiate the turn.
 6. **Pole** usage techniques are appropriate to “modern” skiing. Replace the ‘older’, harder, abrupt, pole *plant* on edge set with a ‘modern’, light, pole *touch* on edge release that encourages forward and diagonal (for/agonal) movement into the turn. This ‘newer’ pole usage also promotes rhythm and flow down the hill with less work than the previous, abrupt, hard, braking pole plant.
 7. Balancing and **blending the skills** smoothly is a goal. Continual **smooth and flowing** movement with no static positions to hold (no parking and riding) also makes skiing much easier as well as less tiring. It’s a dance.

Physical conditioning exercises are also valuable for the senior skier. Following are some guidelines and suggestions:

1. Conditioning must be low impact and should be fun. Be careful of plyometrics.
2. Check with a doctor before beginning. Consulting with a physical trainer is also helpful.
3. Start easy and build up. Stay faithful and continue.
4. Spinning on a bike is great, but the road is more effective.
5. Don’t over train. Alternate training days with rest days.
6. Weight training is still one of the best types of training for skiers and seniors. Low weights with high reps.
7. Classic exercises include: 1/2 squats, drive ups, lunges, push ups, crunches.
8. Don’t forget to stretch.

Spiritual Domain

While there are many diverse spiritual beliefs, these beliefs play a more important role in the life styles and decisions that seniors make. Suffice it to say, that being sensitive and accommodating of the spiritual domain is very very important with the senior skier.

Application to teaching skiing: Take time to smell the roses; i.e. take time to stop, look out over the snow covered mountain scene, watch the chipmunk scurry across the

Senior Specialist Handbook - Teaching Senior Skiers

trail, investigate the small tracks coming out of the trees, marvel at the snow crystals on the fence, inhale the magic becoming rejuvenated and refreshed.

SECTION 4. EQUIPMENT CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE SENIOR SKIER

Skis: For skis, short. Length should be no longer than 175 cm for men and between 145 and 160 cm for women. Narrower waisted skis are easier to turn on the groomed snow. Slightly wider waists are better in crud and off piste. The waist will depend on the terrain and personal preferences of the senior. A mid-fat 72-78 mm waist is often a good compromise. It's recommended to stay away from the radical side-cut slalom skis. A 16/17 meter radius is kinder. Softer flex and torsion are also easier for lower impact, less dynamic turns. Seniors, as well as everyone else, should always demo skis before they buy and choose ones to match their strength, ability, speed and terrain preferences. Maintaining their skis is also important. The more technical the ski and the harder the snow, the more critical the tune.

Boots: So often seniors have large slippers for boots. This makes it so much more difficult to perform. Properly fitting boots are a must. Boots are the most important piece of equipment. Custom is important for the senior who skis more frequently.

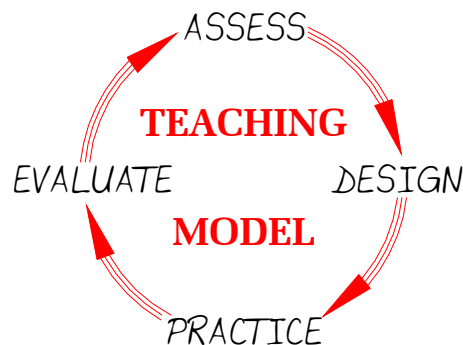
1. The shells should be small enough. There is a tendency to purchase too big shells. Shell size the boot. Take the liner out, place your foot into the shell with your toes lightly touching the end of the boot when you are standing. There should be about 1-1/2 to 2 fingers or space between your heel and the shell. With the liner in, your toes should lightly touch and the fit should be very snug. Too big a boot will hurt your feet and making control of the skis difficult. One pair of thin to medium socks is all that should be worn.
2. The forward flex should be soft enough so that the senior can flex his ankles, but laterally the boot needs to be stiff to support a more carved or scarved turn.
3. The ramp angle should be low, allowing for a more upright cuff so the senior can maintain a taller, stacked stance.
4. Alignment and lateral canting is more critical with the shaped skis. Over and under canting is hard on the knees.
5. The liners should be comfortable, but snug and with foot bed providing the proper support. There are some great, after-market, stock foot beds. However, custom foot beds and custom liners are usually the best way to get a comfortable and functional boot.

Poles: Poles need to be long enough to allow the senior to stand upright when using the poles. Short poles cause the user to have to bend too low to be able to touch the pole to the snow. Either they lead to the more tiring, knee hurting, squat stance where the skier is in the back seat; or they lead to sore backs from the user always having to bend at the waist to be able to touch the pole to the snow.

Senior Specialist Handbook - Teaching Senior Skiers

SECTION 5. SIMPLIFIED TEACHING MODEL

Teaching seniors utilizes the same teaching model as any other age group: Assess, Design, Practice, Evaluate and start the cycle again. This model is simple and effective. Specific skiing techniques, tactics, drills are covered in the on-snow portion of this handbook. Following is a brief discussion of the teaching model highlighting key points that are helpful in working with seniors.



Assessment: Assessment begins the first time you watch your new clients walk towards the meeting place. Be observant of how they move, how quickly and comfortably do they move? What are they wearing? What is their equipment like? Continue your assessment when you greet them asking about their ski history as well as their personal history and lives. Find out if there are any physical conditions you need to be aware of; why are they taking the lesson or clinic; what are their goals, what do they want to learn or change. Offer a few easy, mild, stretching exercising and then take your warm-up run.

(Many senior programs are now beginning by meeting indoors, often times with some food such as breakfast or coffee and donuts.)

Lesson Design: Ski behind the group as well as leading during the first run or two. Assess their skiing levels/abilities. Combine this data along with the information you learned during your initial discussion to design your lesson: What you need to start working on first; What are you going to do (drills, tasks, information, etc.); Where you want to go; How fast do you want to ski; How often will you stop.

Lesson Practice: Do it. Ski more and talk little. Single focus. Present, Demonstrate, Practice, Ski. Break new learning down into small, simple, concrete, do-able tasks. Practice, ski. Have fun. Adjust the pacing. Practice, ski. Select proper terrain. Control any “fear factors.” Practice, ski. Practice, ski. Ski, ski, ski. Smile. Ski. Ski. Ski.

Lesson Evaluation: Monitor progress. Continue assessment. Make changes immediately if necessary. Create successes. Build on strengths.

Re-cycle: Do it all again: Assess, Design, Practice, Evaluate. Safety, Fun Learning!

CLASSIFYING/GROUPING SENIORS

Rusty Crook has developed a framework that groups seniors into four specific categories: Senior Rippers, Senior Explorers, Senior Cruisers and Senior Rookies. Senior Rippers go fast and ski lots of terrain. Senior Explorers are not quite as bold as the Rippers, but still like to ski a wide variety of terrain. Senior Cruisers love to carve up groomed terrain. Senior Rookies are beginning skiers. Presenting these categories to your senior groups and allowing them to discuss and self-select is a very efficient way of dividing large groups as well as helpful in developing a lesson plan for a smaller group.

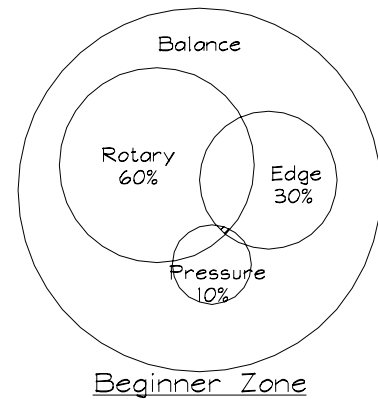
However, for the purposes of discussing lesson content, it is still helpful to divide skiers into three basic skill groups; Beginner Zone, Intermediate Zone and Advanced Zone. Following are some basic recommendations for these zones. More detailed

Senior Specialist Handbook - Teaching Senior Skiers

techniques and tasks are found in the skiing tasks section of this manual.

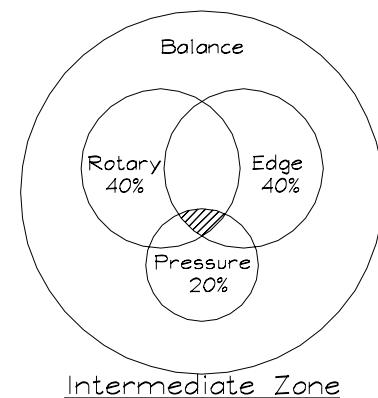
Beginner Zone Overview:

- Spend more time focussing on gliding and not hiking uphill. Lift assistance is paramount. Seniors tire more easily than teenagers....
- More scooter, push-off/skating
- Basic drills:
 - Edge boot exercise
 - One-footed scooter
 - Bull fighter circle step turn
 - Straight running
 - Straight running with flexing and extending
 - Step/fan to change direction or stop from a straight run.
 - Wedge turns, focus on steering of both skis
 - Round wedge turns to a stop
 - Two-footed side slip compared to one-footed side slip of wedge
 - Forward side slip
 - Turn uphill into forward side slip and then more edge to a stop
 - Round turn shapes for speed control



Intermediate Zone Overview:

- Basic drills focusing on direction change / gliding
 - Traversing with side slipping with focus on edging and rotary
 - Fan approach of wedge christies and parallel christies (round turns)
 - Diagonal forward side slips
 - Falling leaf side slips
 - Side slip uphill foot, big-toe/arch weight shift - commitment turn drill
 - Introduction to pole use
 - Linked hockey slips
 - Patience turns
 - Open parallel
 - More dynamic parallel
 - Scarved turns with round shape for speed control



Advanced Zone Overview:

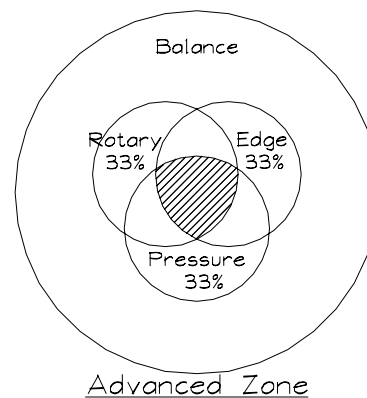
- Turn shape focus with edge control for a variety of terrain and conditions (Scarving)
- Basic drills:
 - Short Radius round turns
 - Medium Radius round turns
 - Long Radius round turns
 - Gates/NASTAR
 - Off-piste

Senior Specialist Handbook - Teaching Senior Skiers

Deep snow
Wind slab snow
Wet heavy snow
Bumps

- Enrichment through Classic to Modern Connection:
(Note: Skiing history and the demonstration of the following techniques can also be used in the Beginner and Intermediate Zones.)

1908-1920's: Arlberg Technique
1940: Emile Allais powerful parallel
1948: Emile Allais horse kick
1952: Stein Erikson reverse shoulder
1955: Classic counter rotation, Austrian
Mid 1950's: Wedeln
Mid 1960's: Christie legere/Projection Circulaire
Late 1960's-1970's: Avalment, classic French compression/extension, Jean Claude Killy
Late 1960's-1980's: Joubert's rotary push-off, braquage
Late 1970's-mid 1980's: Anticipation, Italian
1973-1989: Stenmark, Mahre combination of counter rotation with rounder carved turns
1979: PSIA open stance and step turns
Mid 1980's: Super Parallel, French with open stance
Late 1980's: Modern counter rotation, compression/extension by Austrians
Mid 1990's: Modern carved with shaped skis



SECTION 6. PROMOTING SENIOR SPECIFIC “PRODUCTS”

There are basically two approaches to take when promoting Senior Specific Products:

- 1) Offering Senior Group and/or Private Lessons through the Ski School
- 2) Developing a Local Senior Ski Group or Club

1. SKI SCHOOL SENIOR GROUP AND/OR PRIVATE LESSONS

When arriving at ski resorts, many seniors do not consider taking lessons from the ski school because they do not want to be in a group with 30 year olds and possibly a 20 year old instructor. However, if they are offered a product of a “senior specific” lesson using senior specific techniques with other senior skiers and taught by a “Senior Specialist” i.e. a specially trained instructor, many seniors will indeed decide to take lessons. Then add to the senior lesson offerings, some special classes such as “Early Season Tune-Up” or “Conditions Du Jour Made Easy” or “Bumps for Boomers” and there will be even more interest.

However, a ski school must be very careful that when they begin to offer “senior” products, that those product are staffed by qualified instructors only and that they do indeed provide valuable instruction to the senior skier. They also must be affordable.

Senior Specialist Handbook - Teaching Senior Skiers

2. DEVELOPING A LOCAL SENIOR SKI GROUP/CLUB

“Silver” ski clinics, “Over The Hill” groups for the wise, more experienced skier are growing. Following are some pointers and ideas for starting one in your area.

Introducing a new program requires either additional resources or a reorganization of your existing resources. You will need allocate both time and monies for production of advertising and promotional materials, bookkeeping of program events, participants, payments, allocation of space for meeting places, staffing and training of instructors, supervision and future planning etc.

Program Offerings: One of the first decisions to be made will be **what** you are going to offer and **when** you are going to offer it. Generally, the main purpose of a senior program is to provide a venue for seniors to meet and ski with others of their own generation. Therefore, the content of senior programs needs to be organized with that in mind.

Successful programs have found that regular timing is a key. For example, every Thursday at 8:30 for breakfast with the 2 hour clinic starting at 9:30. Or every Monday, Wednesday and Friday, etc. However, consistency is the key, with the morning being the best time to meet.

Some programs also offer a travel event, where the group visits a nearby ski area.

Some programs add in some special education opportunities about topics such as “Equipment”, “New versus Old Techniques”, “Clothing”, “Boot Fitting”

Some programs add in some special clinics on certain topic such as “Bumps”, “Gates”, “Powder”, etc.

Some programs offer 3-day Senior Ski Camps, etc.

Some programs offer other social events that continue during the off-season months, such as pot-lucks.

Location: The meeting place also needs to be consistent. Many programs meet indoors with some food such as breakfast or coffee and donuts. You might want to designate a special “senior” corner or meeting place in your lodge. Some areas offer overnight ski storage and even a “club” house. Wherever the meeting place is, it is important to have a welcoming environment.

Cost: One of the next decisions to be made will be the cost of the senior clinics or classes. Some successful senior programs began as “Free” senior ski clinics. Others have begun with reduced pricing. Many times seniors on limited incomes are very selective about what they will spend their monies on, but they do have monies to spend. So offering a “test” drive for free or a reduced price can be a successful way of initially growing a program. However, not all ski areas will have such “seed” money to spend to develop a senior program.

Promotion/Advertising: If your area has some nearby retirement communities or subdivisions, you can directly advertise your program by the mail or flyers in those communities. You can use the radio, internet, direct mail or whatever media your area usually uses. If your ski area sends out mail to it’s season pass holders, you can include a flyer or registration form in that mailing.

Senior Specialist Handbook - Teaching Senior Skiers

Following is an example of a registration form used for the Tahoe Donner Senior Program:

PLEASE CHECK ALL THE ITEMS THAT MOTIVATED YOU TO ENROLL IN OUR SENIOR PROGRAM:

- Wanted to learn modern skiing techniques
- Desired to improve skiing skills
- Was having difficulty skiing advanced terrain
- Things, "Just aren't working right and I don't know why."
- Wanted a social outing
- Wanted to relieve boredom

WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS RELATIVE TO YOUR SKIING THIS SEASON?

HAVE YOU EVER TAKEN A LESSON OR ENROLLED IN A SKI PROGRAM BEFORE?

DO YOU PARTICIPATE IN ANY AEROBIC AND/OR STRENGTH BUILDING EXERCISE PROGRAMS?

IF YES, HOW MANY TIMES PER WEEK?

PLEASE RATE YOUR PRESENT PHYSICAL CONDITION:

GREAT (5) - ABOVE AVERAGE (4) - AVERAGE (3) - BELOW AVERAGE (2) - POOR (1)

- Physical strength
- Endurance (ability to ski long runs without a stop)
- Relax/reaction timing
- Visual accuracy
- Balance when moving
- Lung power (breathing capabilities)
- Overall hearing accuracy Left ____ Right ____

PLEASE CHECK WHAT YOU WOULD CONSIDER TO BE YOUR PEER GROUP?

50-55 ____ 56-60 ____ 61-65 ____ 66-70 ____ 71-75 ____ OVER 76 ____

PLEASE CHECK, ON AVERAGE, HOW MANY DAYS DO YOU SKI PER YEAR?

5-10 ____ 11-15 ____ 16-20 ____ 21-25 ____ 26-30 ____ OVER 31 ____

PLEASE RANK FROM 1-5, (1 BEING MOST PREFERRED, 5 LEAST PREFERRED) WHICH MID-WEEK DAY THAT WOULD BE THE MOST CONVENIENT FOR YOU TO PARTICIPATE?

MONDAY ____ TUESDAY ____ WEDNESDAY ____ THURSDAY ____ FRIDAY ____

THANK YOU, AND WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU THIS SEASON!

Senior Specialist Handbook - Teaching Senior Skiers

PART V MAKING IT MORE FUN: SENIOR SKI TECHNIQUES AND TACTICS

As senior skiers, even those of us who sometimes still rip, welcome learning any techniques and tactics that make it more fun to ski, especially if we can ski longer and faster with greater ease and no sore knees or tired thighs. Following are some drills and tactics that help make skiing more fun for us.

In general, some senior specific concepts for skiing are being more two-footed, stacking the bones to allow the skeleton to support our mass, continual and progressive movements of bending and unbending to match the turn shape, low impact turns and “scarving”. Terrain tactics cannot be over emphasized. Learning to read the snow to find the best or sometimes flattest places to turn is of utmost importance for the first-time skier as well as for the veteran of 50 years of skiing.

Here are a few new terms that we have gathered over the past few years:

Foreagonal - The forward and diagonal direction that you are supposed to move as you begin a new turn. (Thanks Mike Phillips at Mt. Bachelor.)

Stackitude - Stacking your bones, more vertical thighs. (Thanks snowboarders.)

Finishiation - The long blend from just after the fall line of the old turn to just before the fall line of the new turn. (Thanks Nato at Jackson Hole.)

Scarved turn - A skidded carved turn. All the movement patterns of a carved turn, but with just a bit of a skid to make it easier on the joints for seniors - and everyone else as well. (Thanks Rusty Crook and at Mt Rose.)

FORE/AFT BALANCE

One of the most important skills that we must develop as we get older is fore/aft balance. Following are a series of drills and turns that can be practiced that will improve fore/aft balance as well as give us more confidence.

Note: For a detailed description of the following tactics as well as a discussion of First-Timer Senior Lessons and gliding wedges, etc. please see the full version of this handbook.

1. DIAGONAL SIDE SLIP

On steeper green terrain, or any non-intimidating terrain, slide forward and sideways (diagonally) across the hill.

- In a comfortable, ready stance, lead change is minimal.
- Zipper of torso aimed in direction going, shoulders relatively level.
- Weight is pretty even on both feet.
- Elbows in front of torso, hands wider than elbows.
- Sideslip is in a straight line or relative to shape of hill.
- See release of edges by tipping of shins.
- Speed should be constant.

Speed up and slow down sideslip in two ways; 1. more or less edge angle; 2. varying direction

Senior Specialist Handbook - Teaching Senior Skiers

skis aiming, more downhill or more across hill.

Direction skis aiming due to both twisting, rotary control movements, and, in this drill, more importantly fore/aft pressure.

Play with this balance. Vary fore/aft pressure to aim more downhill or across the hill.

Diagonal sideslip backwards.

Benefits

- Learn how to balance while moving and going slow, how to slide **WITH** the skis.
- Helps to center the stance.
- Learn to finesse edges.
- Learn to be supple with ankles, knees, hips.
- Upper body activity is critical to be aimed in the right direction.
- Learning how to sideslip and being comfortable side slipping is critical for low impact skiing especially when navigating more difficult terrain; i.e. safety.
- Sideslipping cannot be practiced too much. Play with falling leaf sideslips, add in some buttery spins.

2. UPHILL/DOWNHILL SKI SIDE SLIP

On blue terrain, start with a diagonal side slip, transfer all weight to downhill or uphill ski, lifting up other ski and continue side slipping. (Perform first on downhill ski, then on uphill ski) Not all seniors can stand on one leg at a time, so simply modify this drill and transfer most, but not all of the weight to one leg or the other. There will be a tendency to track instead of slipping when you first lift up a ski, concentrate on continuing to slip. This is a drill for both balance and turn entry.

- In a comfortable, ready stance, lead change is minimal, lifted up ski is level.
- Zipper of torso aimed in direction going, shoulders relatively level.
- Elbows in front of torso, hands wider than elbows.
- Sideslip is in a straight line or relative to shape of hill.
- See release of edges by tipping of shins.
- Sideslip slower, faster, steeper angles.

BENDING/UNBENDING

Stacking the bones with fore/aft balance helps keeps us from getting tired. There is nothing more tiring than trying to ski while your thighs are more horizontal and holding up much of your body weight. Stacking your bones means that your thighs will be more vertical and you will be balanced over your feet, allowing your skeleton to carry most of your body weight.

Almost of equal importance in not getting tired is to never hold a static position with your muscles tensed. Your muscles need to breathe and relax. This will only occur if you learn to continually bend and unbend a bit in your stacked stance. Not only will progressively bending and unbending allow your muscles to breathe, but it will also help your balance when you come upon something unexpected in the terrain or snow. Continuous total motion is what the goal is.

Senior Specialist Handbook - Teaching Senior Skiers

3. COMMITMENT DRILL - TURNING SIDESLIP

This is drill for turn entry. On blue terrain, start with a diagonal side slip, weight on uphill ski. Put a little bit of pressure on the big toe/arch which causes ski to move towards the fall-line. As ski enters fall-line, edge the ski progressively to an outside ski christie. Go with the ski.

- In side slip, extend or unbend as you press on the big toe/arch.
- Move your thigh over foreagonally.
- As you roll forward, you can swing your pole, touching it at the top of their extension.
- Show flexion, or bending, as edge to make the outside ski christie.
- Upper body stabilized, zipper aimed at apex of turn, shoulders relatively level, elbows in front of torso, hands wider than elbows.

- Terrain really helps this exercise.
- Pressuring the big toe/arch while on top of a slight roll, makes it much easier.
- Tactical use of slight rolls and variations in terrain for choosing where to make turns.
- After do on each foot, now want to keep both feet on the snow, making turns with that early weight transfer and edge change focus.
- As increase in the ability level of the skier, can use this drill as an introduction to bumps. See the bump discussion in main handbook for use and application of this task.
- This drill is a turn entry and commitment exercise.
- This drill focuses on early weight transfer and early edge change which produces an ease in turn entry with greater control.
- This drill also assists in keeping the body perpendicular to the slope.
- The movement is forward and diagonal, into the new turn, which keeps you moving WITH your skis, staying balanced over their feet. Your thighs are oriented toward and into the new turn. This prevents you from getting in the back seat which prevents your thighs from getting tired.
- This drill also helps to properly round out and shape the top of a turn and then promotes cutting and finishing of the turn at the bottom.
- Late weight transfer, late edge change, moving down and back, pivoting and pushing tails out, skiing in the back seat, can all be helped by this drill.

4. COMMITTED ROUNDED SIDE SLIPS TO SLOW DOWN STEERING TO SCARVING

On blue terrain, link some of the committed rounded side slips. Think of moving your thigh over foreagonally as you unbend or extend at the top of the turn, using a pole swing and touch. Keep steering at the bottom of the turn, driving your shins for a nice round turn where you slow down by turning almost uphill. Pick up the speed, add a bit more edge angle earlier for some nice scarved turns.

- Steer both skis together, slowly at a constant rate for a nice round turn.

Senior Specialist Handbook - Teaching Senior Skiers

- Unbend, thigh over with bending/unbending matching shape and size of turn.
- Practice enhances balance and finesse of the pressure control, as well as edging skills.
- Continual total motion of bending/unbending, slow steering, progressive edging.

5. BLUE ANGEL EFFECT

Blue Angel jet pilots tip their planes and turn them at the same time. This is what you want to do with your skis in a carved turn. You steer your skis onto their edges progressively and early in the turn. Your edging and steering movements are balanced together and are progressive, continual and smooth. Your bending and unbending matches the turn shape and helps to manage the turn pressures. Your unbending foreagonally makes it possible to obtain early edging in the turn that will cut.

Seniors also love to carve turns, if they are skillful enough. However, the speed and pressure of these turns may be dialed down a bit sometimes, but not always. Carving on green terrain can be just as much fun sometimes.

Note: Tactics for bumps, powder, crud etc. is mentioned in the complete handbook, but coming in more detail in this abridged version soon. The complete handbook is available at www.seniorsnowsports.org

This printing is a preliminary rough draft, so please give us your feedback.

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