

# Mike Wiegele Helicopter Skiing

## Ski Tips & Techniques

### JANUARY 2011 - STRETCH FOR SUCCESS

Around this time of year after a few months of hard skiing, it is not uncommon for the guides to experience some aches and pains . Naggng muscles strains, tight lower back or maybe some pain in your quads or hamstring are all common complaints.

These are generally overuse injuries that occur because skiing everyday puts strain and stress on the muscles, joints and bones.

The best way to combat this isn't simply staying fit. It is with a dedicated stretching plan. For anyone who knows me and is reading this, you are all saying "McLean, stretching, ya right!" I know I'm not the most flexible person our there but I have improved and I plan to continue to work on flexibility.

So what is flexibility? For our discussion flexibility is the ability to move a joint through its complete range of motion. There are two main types: static flexibility is the ability to move slowly into a stretched position and to hold the body still (e.g. the ability to sit in a splits position); dynamic flexibility is the ability to move quickly or at normal speed into a stretched position (e.g. a gymnast performing a split leap).

Flexibility exercises should focus on static or very slow stretching. To be effective, flexibility training must incorporate an element of overload. This can be achieved by:

- stretching the muscle more than is normal (but within tolerance limits)
- holding a stretched position for longer than is normal
- increasing the number of stretches

The critical areas for ski focused stretching should obviously include all upper and lower leg muscle, shoulder, neck and back. Areas that we tend to overlook when stretching for skiing include forearms, stomach (core muscles), groin and, my nemesis, the hip flexor muscles.

Skiing tends to cause aggravation and shortening of the hip flexor muscles. That lower back pain you are feeling might actually be your hip flexors needing some attention.

Two great ski related books that include fitness and flexibility ideas are:

1. Ski Flex: Flexibility, Fitness, and Conditioning for Better Skiing ( Sport Flex Series) By Paul Frediani and Harald Harb ·
2. Fitskiing: Your Guide to Peak Ski Fitness By: Andrew Hooge

Keep in mind, you will have to do the stretches not just read about them to get the desired results.

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