

# Mike Wiegele Helicopter Skiing

## SKI TIPS & TECHNIQUES

### JUNE 2011 - THESE BOOTS ARE MADE FOR SKIING

After La Nina hit us last season (a never ending powder extravaganza that has to be experienced to be believed... or something like that), summer is finally in full swing here in Blue River. Although the majority of people have traded in their winter boots for flip flops, this month's ski tip focuses on ski boots (a wardrobe staple here in Blue River).

I've always had a constant battle with ski boots. However, a few years ago I had a boot epiphany if you will, when I met Martin Rand at Sturtevant's in Seattle. After a quick evaluation of my feet, Martin hooked me up with new foot beds, boot punching and a heat moldable liner. Needless to say, my life as a ski guide changed forever. I'm not suggesting that everyone needs all three interventions – but I guarantee...everyone could benefit from at least one of these alterations.

Custom boot fitting is nothing new. The first "handmade" or custom fit boots originated with the leather boots of Ambros Strolz in Lech in the 1920. With the advent of plastic ski boots in the 1960s, true foot pain and suffering has led to an entire industry surrounding modern boot fitting techniques.

Martin has spent a lot of time in Blue River in the past 3 years. In collaboration with Ski Shop Manager Dustin Deuling, the result of the many visits (aside from a lot of great powder memories) has been the creation of our new boot fit center in Blue River.

Footbeds - Footbeds (also called orthotics) are custom made insoles that you insert into your ski boots. Designed to support your foot, footbeds help transfer hip, knee and leg movements directly to your skis. Think of footbeds as the foundation of your house and your feet and legs as the studs that support the building. Footbeds can also help cure a number of common foot problems and pressure points by helping to properly align your feet and ankles.

Liners - Ski boot manufacturers build boot liners to reasonably fit as many foot types as possible. A good custom liner can fit precisely to your foot, increase performance and comfort and make your boot lighter and warmer.

Boot modification - A standard plastic ski boot shell is designed for a variety of feet. Various shells will fit various feet shapes but ultimately, some boot work is required by most people. Heat punching, canting and shell grinding are the most common work. The aim is to customize your boot to better resemble your foot and the alignment of your leg. Sport shop Manager Dustin Deuling has improved and refined our boot fitting in Blue River in the past year by providing staff training and acquiring a new state of the art boot fitting machine.

No one has to suffer from cold, sore feet or boots that are either too tight or too loose. One trip to our ski shop and Dustin and his crew will sort out your problems. Foot massage...optional.

See you in the mountains.  
Tim McLean - Senior Lead Guide  
CSIA Level 3, CSGA Level 3