

# news d'Nord

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## 7 Ingredients to Great Demos

by David Lawrence, PSIA Nordic Team

Great demos become incredible teaching tools for visual learners. Because of that, great demos don't always rely on great skiing. Sometimes making an idea "stick" might require demonstrating both an efficient and inefficient movement so your skiers can see the difference. Another requirement to make a concept "stick", your ability to so slowly even inexperienced skiers perceive the movement being highlighted. A lot of great skiers can ski fast and efficient, but struggle to ski slow and efficient. Another great way to make your concepts "stick" when you demo, be a great copycat! Mimic another skier's technique to show her a side-by-side comparison of the movements.

In addition to those three tips for great demos (demo it right - demo it wrong, ski it slow to show, copycat skiing), below are 7 additional ingredients to great demos.

### 1. Tell Skiers What To Look At During

**Demo** – always remember to tell your skiers what to look at when you give a demo. Even if it is a quick static demo of bending your knees, be sure to tell them, "Look at my knees and notice how bent they are." Tell them what to look at and what to notice.

### 2. Give Good Demos – don't underestimate

the power of performing a bad demo. Remember, not everyone learns through audio. If you say one thing, but show another, you can effectively break the learning cycle. Unfortunately, many teachers and coaches don't know when they are giving poor demos because students don't know or don't feel comfortable saying anything. Having someone assess your teaching demos is a great way to get better. The only advice I can give is don't assume your



demos are accurate. Practice them, analyze them and really try to own them each and every day.

3. **Be Aware Of Other Movement Patterns That Can Distract Your Skiers** – I've seen coaches and instructors highlight one movement, like hips forward, but then start to ski with the same arm and same leg moving at the same time. The movement pattern was so blatantly inefficient I couldn't focus on the forward hips. Be aware that other movement patterns not associated with the skill you're teaching doesn't detract from the learning environment. What you do matters, even when you weren't trying to do it!
4. **Show Contrast During Demo (Efficient Way Vs. Inefficient Way)** – this is a very powerful teaching tool that I think is underutilized. Often juxtaposing the efficient way with the inefficient way to make a move helps students solidify a new skiing concept. To hit a home run with this technique, be sure to ask skiers to ski the inefficient way first before skiing the efficient way.
5. **Highlight One Thing In Demo** – remember not to chase your butterfly like thoughts when you demo. Focus on one thing, and one thing only when you demo. If you're showing a group how to keep their elbows bent when poling, don't get caught up in explaining where you plant your pole tips, when to flex your abs, how far to swing your poles. You can cover all those things later, but cover only what you're focusing on first. Practice and ski that idea, then add another element like follow through next. Practice and ski that idea, then add another element. Remember, highlight one thing at a time.
6. **Show Movement Patterns From Different Angles** – one frustrating thing about watching a coach or instructor do a demo, is watching them do a demo away from you. Then they stop, and ask you to ski. How can I see how bent your knees are or how flexed your ankles are or where your hips are if I can only see you from behind. It is essential when giving good demos that you show the demo from different angles. Let your students see you from the side, from the front and from the rear. Don't make the cardinal sin of skiing away from your students and expect they understand what you're talking about.
7. **Check For Understanding** – It is also vital that after skiing an idea, or practicing a move, even if you're not finished with your progression, to check for understanding.



## Looking From the Other Side: A Tele Focus

by Jim Shaw, PSIA Nordic Team

I was skiing the other day and noticed that my heel pieces didn't seem to be holding my heels down. Oh, that's right, it's tele. It also seems that this little dilemma of not having our heels held down generates a lot of questions.

- Where should the feet pass during the turn?
- How quickly should the lead change?
- Should the lead change go to a particular point and hold or be continually changing?
- How much lead change should there be?
- Does the foot in the back advance and become the front foot or does the front foot retract and become the back foot?
- Or, should the 2 feet change together?
- When the feet pass should the heels be up or down? Or one of each?
- How should the weight and pressure be distributed? More on the front? More on the back? Should it change during the turn?

I'm sure there are a host of other questions that could be asked.

The questions become even more interesting when we ask, "Do the answers always stay the same or do the answers change with snow conditions? How about with the size or type of turn, or with the desired outcome or the skier's ability?"

I'd be willing to bet that many or most of us have answers to many or most of these questions.

I have definitely had a bias towards a more progressive lead change, not too early in the turn.

This season I have had several opportunities to work with some telemark racing technique. Racing technique is not consistent with my biases. Instead of more progressive lead change, racers change the lead early. Change the lead ASAP. Move the weight forward at the start of the turn.

I know, "That's racing and carving. The technique is specific and not the best choice in all situations."

But...

As I head out to ski today, I could choose to start with my typical focus, applying progressive lead change in changing situations. In other words, start with my bias, not too much lead change too soon, then branch out from there.

However, I might mix it up today. Start applying too much lead change too soon. Then, maybe, I'll apply it in more situations. Who knows? I only know to ask: What does carving brings to my off piste? What does my off piste bring to my carving?

Am I searching for the "holy grail" of lead change?

Yes, I'm searching, but NOT for the holy grail per se. Instead, I seek questions, experiences, experiments, not a "holy grail" at the end of the journey.

So I say, "Keep asking questions. Keep experimenting. Seek experiences." Hopefully you never find the holy grail, but then again, I hope you never stop searching!

Come Tele with us at A basin & Loveland April 18-20, for the 4th Bi-Annual Tele Academy.

All the Best,

Jim

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## Tele or Not - 3 Reasons to Drop the Knee in Deep Pow

by Ross Matlock, PSIA Nordic Team

I have a problem, I'm an addict. I admit it. My addictive personality forces me to search for more, go deeper. I found it again, that addictive trait, skiing in Japan this winter. My drug of choice, the deep light powder of Hokkaido.

There are two reasons I continue to prefer telemark skiing in powder. The first are the options available to me. I can stand up and alpine or drop the knee and tele. The second are the face shots. My thought is that due to the amount of sensory devices available on our face (your eyes, nose, ears and mouth), the face has the largest capacity to sense changing conditions. Being so close to the brain, the sensory feedback is fast and direct.

Music to the addicts ears, fast and direct.

Recently I noticed distinct differences between the two disciplines, alpine and tele, regarding how the skier and snow interact. Using face shots as the standard, I have observed the following.



1. The first and most obvious difference, dropping the knee allows you to get closer to the snow. As skiers, this could be the difference between getting the occasional face shot, to getting constant face shots. For the addict, the constant supply is always preferred.
2. The telemark stance allows the front thigh to act as a snow shovel pushing more snow onto the chest and face. Aside from just getting into the snowpack a little deeper, the front thigh provides the 'plow affect' redirecting even more snow into the face. On those not so deep days, face shots are icing on the cake. Imagine, while you wipe the pow from your goggles, your alpine buddy is struggling to get his chest peppered. Getting the most out of marginal product, a great quality of true addicts.
3. Technology increases our fun factor 10 fold. Skis with tip rocker eliminate the rear ski plunge created from tip pressure that develops by lifting the rear heel. The more active your binding, the stiffer your binding springs or bellows, the more tip pressure created on the tip of the trailing ski.

The neutralizing effect that rocker gives allows us to stand over our feet, taking full advantage of skeletal alignment. No more losing the rear ski in deep powder, or having to adjust our center of mass to compensate for rear ski plunge. The result; skiing longer and harder in deep snow.

Combining a lower stance with a forward foot tilling up the snow and rockered skis, my high is available all day!

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## **Ice Under Your Bar?**

By J. Scott McGee

Most bars have ice, and most keep it under the bar, but we're not talking about the Saturday night kind of bar...

### ***Don't Use Your Pole Tips!***

Most cross country skiers have turned to the tool in their hand – their poles – when stymied by snow or ice packed in underneath the bar that holds the boot into the binding. I've been surprised by the number of pros who use the sharp end of their poles to poke at the ice and snow stuck to the bottom of their boots. In fact, they're actually scratching, denting and scraping the nice, smooth, snow-phobic plastic outer surface of the boot sole, rendering it a better binder for snow in future walks from the parking lot to the trailhead.

### ***Instead, try one of these methods:***

1. Use the top of your pole. Though not as sharp, it's still good at poking at the snow, and encouraging it to come out.
2. Whack the edge or bottom of the sole of your boot with the grip on your pole. Careful!...if you use the shaft, that carbon fiber beauty might show you what it's made of! Line up with the grip, and then swing it sharply and deftly.
3. Use your ski tip. Walk forward a step, and the perfect bar cleaner-outer is right there at the end of your ski. Secure the ski by stepping on it with the other foot or ski, and slide your boot over the tip until you get it under the bar. Voile! Ready for action.

An added benefit to well-preserved bases is that snow-shedding boots are not only easier to get into bindings, but they ski better too.

When snow sticks asymmetrically to the boots or bindings it can really throw off your edging, whether for a skate or classic push-off, or a flat ski glide in either. In fact, anti-stick spray, spray on wax, or even rub on wax – on both boots and bindings – can add to performance, particularly in certain new snow conditions. Treat your boot bases like you do your ski bases, and you'll enjoy less sticking and better skiing for a long time to come!