

Resources for Teachers: Waxing Skis and Ski Technique

Required Materials:

- **Ski vice** or a device to hold skis upside down in place
- **Assorted hot waxes**: these are rated according to the temperature when skiing.
- **Assorted kick waxes**: these are also rated according to the ambient temperature.
- **Ski scrapers**
- **Waxing iron**
- **Cork** for rubbing the kick wax into the ski
(The above materials are available at any outdoor athletic gear store such as REI).
- **Shop** (Wax skis in a shop or in a room where it's okay to make a mess. Waxing skis can be messy!)

Process:

1. Put one ski in the vice and secure it. Use Windex or another mild cleaner and a towel or sponge to clean it off. Let it dry.
2. Plug in waxing iron and let it heat up to approximately **130° F**. When it's hot enough to melt the wax, hold the iron above the ski on either the tip or the tail end and hold the bar of wax on the hot iron, melting it. Direct the drips onto the ski and place a drip about every 2 inches or so along the full length of the ski on both sides of the control groove.
3. When the wax is melted along the full length of the ski (on both sides of the groove), put the bar of wax down and begin to "iron in" the drips with the hot iron until the drips are re-melted and the whole bottom of the ski is completely covered. Don't let the iron sit still on the ski for more than a second or two as it can separate the bottom layer of the ski from the one above it!
4. Take that ski out of the vice and place the other ski in the vice and repeat this process. When the second ski is finished, take it out of the vice and put the first ski back in.
Now, begin the scraping process:
5. Stand toward the tail end of the ski about half way down it's length, facing the tip. Use your scraper with a pulling motion **from tip to tail** and gently scrape the hardened wax from the control groove until it is completely clean. When done, use the scraper on the rest of the ski, again from tip to tail. Continue scraping until all of the wax is gone. *You will know it is gone when you pull the scraper along the ski and no wax comes up.* Wipe the excess shavings off the ski and the first ski is finished. Repeat process with the other ski. The skis are now waxed and ready to test on the trail.

Hints for Kick Waxing:

If you and your students will be “Classical skiing” (not skating), you will need to use kick wax to propel you into a glide. This type of skiing is good for snow machine trails and groomed trails where the “slots” are already laid in the snow. Just put your skis in the tracks and *go!*

1. There are usually marks on the ski either on the bottom or the side showing the extent of the “kick zone”. This is the area where the kick wax is applied. It gives the skier traction to “kick” onto the other ski and glide.
2. Use your kick wax like a big crayon and rub it on the bottom of your ski in the kick zone only, not outside of it. Use plenty! It should look like gum smeared on the ski. Ugly!
3. Take the cork, press hard on the wax, and spread it evenly in the kick zone. It’s called “corking it in”. This will give you the necessary kick.
4. This wax tends to collect dirt and seeds from the trail, and then it loses its grip. When that happens you'll need to clean it off with your scraper and start over fresh.

As previously mentioned, kick waxes are also sold according to temperature range. Buy according to the temperature range in which you'll be skiing.

Ski Technique

- Cross-country skiing is about balance and glide. It is not walking or shuffling along with skis on. Watch one or two videos on technique. Here are two links: [X-Country Ski Basics](#) and [How to Cross Country Ski](#)
- Posts on the web are always changing. If these links don't work, just search for beginning classic cross-country ski techniques. You will find a lot of articles and videos to watch. Practice your glide and poling. Find small hills to go up and down. Practice step turns and herringbone.

-Denis Gardella, teacher