

# Give it Your Best Shot

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Imagine this: you're at school, and it's 3:01 PM on a Friday in the cold month of January. You feel like you rushed through the whole day just so you can get to 3:45 when Ms. Cunningham makes an announcement over the intercom that it's time for the ski club to meet in the gym to take attendance. As soon as school ends, you rush downstairs. You stand there waiting patiently, surrounded by your friends. One hand placed on your ski bag, the other holding your skis, ski boots flung over your shoulder. As soon as Ms. Cunningham calls your name, you walk as fast as you can up the stairs and outside to the ski bus so you can get a good seat. You cannot wait to get to Holiday Valley to let the fun begin. You just know that in an hour's bus ride that seems so much shorter than that, you will be on the slopes, skiing until your heart's content. I believe that everyone could benefit from skiing.

Skiing makes you happier. Whether you are going alone or with your family or friends, you are bound to have a good time. The atmosphere of the ski lodge just lifts your spirits and makes you feel a certain kind of calm. Being able to put on all of your snow gear, ski boots and helmet makes you feel like you're suiting up for a new adventure every time. Almost like an astronaut exploring a snow-covered planet far away. After all the preparation to go on the slopes, when you finally get out to the chair lift for your first ride up, the chair lifts you from the ground and all your earthly worries. It's frigid out, yet you still feel warm. The chair lift is thirty feet up in the air, yet you still feel safe. It's almost like you're on a ride of magical and mysterious contradiction. You can sit on the lift for the five minute ride up and watch the snow slowly fall out of the big, vast, sky. You are able to see all the beginners, experts, and everyone who is somewhere in the middle going at all different speeds down the hill underneath you. You can

make fun of the people who wipe out and giggle at the little kids whose parents are holding onto them by a backpack-leash so they don't go flying into a tree. As you approach the top of the mountain, you are filled with the excitement of taking your first run down one of the many options of hills. The whole experience of skiing is like entering into another world, where everything is different from what you would do or see on a normal day. You can only get such a carefree, content feeling from spending time at a ski resort. It doesn't matter if you have never skied before, or if you think you are too uncoordinated. It doesn't even matter if you don't have skis or a helmet, because you can always rent them. As long as you have the motivation for fun and exercise, skiing may be for you. Just grab your snow pants and jacket, don't forget to put on a few extra layers underneath, and find a way to get out there and try it. Who knows? You may really enjoy it!

Skiing has health benefits. In just a short amount of time out on the slopes, skiing can burn many calories. The steeper the hill, the more calories you burn. This is because your body is working harder and harder to maintain its balance the steeper the slope gets. But even if you go on the easiest runs, you still get in a lot of exercise and burn a lot of calories ("Top 5 Health Benefits"), all while having fun! To me, skiing is a sport that is not as stressful as a sport that you would join for school. I'm talking about sports like lacrosse, basketball, field hockey, and cheerleading. These sports are competitive and can place a lot of emotional stress upon someone. They can also feel like a chore. Going to practice for one of these sports is different from going skiing on your own time. Skiing is not coached, unless of course you are ski racing or competitive skiing, but we aren't talking about *that* kind of skiing. You also get to choose when to go and what runs to do, and choose when to take breaks. Your body has to do more work to keep up its temperature in the cold air. So, the winter weather also contributes to the calorie

burning. It's hard to believe, but when you are skiing, you can actually get vitamin D from the sun while you're on the slopes, and this is especially important in the winter months when we have less sun exposure ("Top 5 Health Benefits")! Skiing improves your balance, coordination, and consciousness by getting you to be aware of all the little movements your body is making to keep you upright on your skis. This is called proprioception ("Top 10 Health Benefits"). Skiing works to strengthen your muscles such as your quads, calves, and hamstrings. This is another added component to the overall workout of the sport. Engaging and using these muscles also works to make your body more flexible ("Top 5 Health Benefits," "Top 10 Health Benefits"). I could go on and on about the health benefits of skiing, but there are just too many details to talk about in one paragraph. All of the things I have said contribute to your overall well being. Now that you know many of the ways skiing can really help you stay healthy, active, and agile, who wouldn't want to try it?

Skiing benefits you both mentally and physically in all sorts of other ways. As you can probably tell, skiing is my favorite pastime. I have been skiing for years without ever losing enthusiasm for it. Now, I'm not the best or worst skier out there. I have definitely improved my skills this ski season. In the last couple months, I have gone skiing more times than in any of the past years. I use my time on the slopes to have fun and practice my form, turning, speed, jumps, ect. I adore the experience of going to Holiday Valley or any other ski resort. Even if it's not for the whole day. I know I already elaborated so much, but that's because skiing has so many perks! As well as burning calories or giving your muscles a workout, it allows you to have a good night's rest. Even if you are prone to staying up late, being out on the slopes for however many hours makes you feel so exhausted and fulfilled that you couldn't possibly want to stay up any longer. Skiing also produces more conscious and health benefiting eating habits. Skiing is very

fun, but it's also hard work, which you don't even notice for the most part. You will probably steer towards protein enriched and healthy foods so you are able to prepare, refuel, or replenish your body (“Top 10 Health Benefits”). Along with benefiting your health, this outdoor activity is proven to augment your happiness. This is because being outdoors and exercising promotes the production of endorphins, which creates the feeling of relief (“Top 10 Health Benefits”, “Top 5 Health Benefits”). There are so many extraordinary benefits and results to skiing that I hope many of you will want to take advantage of after reading this. If you have already gone skiing, I hope you encourage the people in your life to take it on.

Some people will tell you that skiing is dangerous. I don't disagree, any sport can be dangerous. You could have your nose broken by a basketball, or your leg cut open by a hockey skate. You can be injured by skiing like you can by any other sport. You are going downhill with limited movement, and it is very easy to fall. This usually happens when you get going at a speed that's much too fast, accidentally catch air, slip on ice, or catch an edge. I know this because I used to fall all the time, and I still do sometimes. As well as falling, you could also be hit by or hit another person while going down the hill, or fall off the chairlift, among other accidents. Although, these last things I mentioned are a little extreme and do not usually happen if you are careful. Being careful and respectful of others is a huge part of skiing. If you do not do this, then it usually leads to getting hurt or hurting someone. As long as you watch out, follow the rules, and try not to push your limits, mishaps like this aren't likely to happen. As for falling, it will happen, guaranteed. Everyone who skies or has skied has fallen at some point. Most of these people probably still fall from time to time. Falling is a very normal part of the learning experience. Safety should be your number one precaution for this sport. As long as you keep this in mind, you shouldn't have a problem! Don't let worry stop you from embracing the

opportunity to try skiing. Because when you get out there, you'll realize it's not nearly as bad as you thought it would be! And if you are a first timer that isn't scared, that's good, too. Just remember to stay attentive and aware of your surroundings. Make sure you don't overestimate your skills and I promise you will have the time of your life, with many advantages!

Tell me, how can you resist giving skiing a go after everything I have just told you? Skiing is so beneficial to one's body and mind. You do not have to be a specific height, weight, or age. All you have to be is eager for the challenge. Skiing can clear your headspace and enable you to leave behind the stresses of life, at least for a little while. Just imagine going down the hill, so focused on maintaining balance and speed all while not falling, that it's difficult to think of any one thing. Anything besides how lucky you are to be on that mountain, at that moment, without a worry in your mind. You can feel the texture of the snow under your skis, and you can hear the wind rushing past you. As you slide down the hill, it's so hard to take your eyes away from the beautiful scenery full of vast trails and dark forest. As we now know, you get an extreme workout while skiing as well as a boost in your mood, happiness and health. Overall, skiing is extremely beneficial to one's physical and mental wellbeing. For these reasons, I think that if you are able to, you should try skiing at least once in your lifetime. Ask anyone that skis and they will tell you that it's just about the best thing that you will ever experience.

## Works Cited

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