RIDE FREE!

THE DANISH CONTRIBUTION
19th INTERSKI CONGRESS

RIDE FREE!

The versatile skier

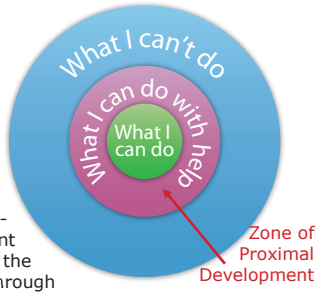
RIDE FREE is the core skiing philosophy of The Danish Ski School.
The philosophy is intended to guide both teaching and skiing.

We focus on the foot soles (balance, steering, edging), position (managing the external forces) and rhythm (playing with the external forces). The skiing essentials.
Based on a good understanding of these essentials, we aim for each skier to find her/his own style, to ride free.

We use the terrain as a teaching aid. We want skiers, from beginners to experts, to develop their skiing in varied terrain. We aim to develop skiers capable of enjoying as much of the ski area as possible; to ride free.

We would like skiers to experience as much of the ski resort as possible, as early in the individual development as possible. It is not our aim to perfect skiing at specific technical levels or development stages. It is our aim to ski the entire skiresort and adapt our teaching and skiing to the conditions within the skiers development zone, and thereby creating more versatile skiers with a wider sense of enjoying skiing in different terrain.

As skiinstructors it is our job to help the students progress; and break the boundaries which they are not able to do by themselves. This way the students becomes better skiers and reach a new level; the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD).



ZPD is the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving (e.g. how to ski bumps) and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving in collaboration with the skiinstructor. It is our job to challenge the skills of the student; to make them ski difficult terrain, which they never thought they were able to – but which they can do, when skiing together with at skiinstructor.

Our philosophy is not a revolution. However it is a break with earlier more rigid approaches of step by step development stages to be worked through in schematic routines. We acknowledge that some skiing essentials need to be learned by all, and perfected with time, however we do not see the optimal development as a pre-made plan. We believe that each skier will learn best from experience and from having to master multiple variations of challenges on the way - challenges which the good teacher must provide, and which the student can continue to work with and develop as they go; to ride free.

The Danish contribution to the 19th Interski Congress in St. Anton

The Danish Ski Federation

The Danish Ski Federation was founded in 1938 and is one of the 57 national sports federations associated under The National Olympic Committee and Sports Confederation of Denmark. The Danish Ski Federation is a portfolio of the Danish Ministry of Culture.

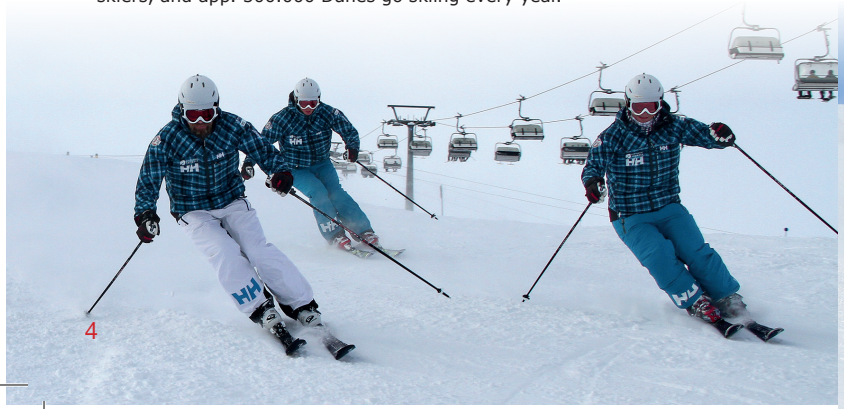
The Danish Ski Federation consists of a national Committee, under which several specialized committees have their area of expertise. The Danish Ski Federation has approximately 12.000 members.

The Danish Ski School

The Danish Ski School is the institution, which arrange and coordinate all the Danish ski instructor courses and exams. The Danish Ski School is a partnership between The Danish Ski Federation and the Danish Association of Professional Ski Instructors (DAPSI). DAPSI is a member of ISIA and The Danish Ski Federation is a member of IVSI and Interski.

Skiing seen from the danish point of view

Instruction of Danish skiers primarily takes place in the alps and the mountains of Scandinavia. And the common duration of a ski vacation is one full week. To Danes skiing is mostly seen as a social event, carried out together with friends and family. Making skiing a leisure event for ages ranging from 6 to 65 years. In addition to children, the majority of the clients taught by our instructors at resorts in the alps are between 25 and 45 years old. Most often the teaching takes place in the form of group lessons of four to five days of duration. These group lessons are formed on the basis of the student's level of skills and desire. 40 percent of all Danes (2.3 mill.) consider themselves skiers, and app. 500.000 Danes go skiing every year.



Alpine skiing according to the Danish Ski School

Due to the nature of the Danish skiing public and the topography of our country the Danish Ski School (Den Danske Skiskole) primarily caters to the recreational skier. Hence, our focus is primarily on the movements, which are needed for optimal steering of the skis. There is great focus on the correct adapting of the movements to the natural occurring variations in snow conditions, changes in terrain and changes in the desire for speed.

In the Danish Ski School we consider skiing optimal when the skier has full control over the track and speed. We strive for skiing where maximum control is achieved with a minimum of effort.

Ski technique

Being the pilot, not the passenger

There are two basic traits of the Danish Ski School's approach to skiing. These are movement and adaptation.

Movement – When we talk of movement we are referring to the concept of appropriate use of movement to attain optimal skiing. It is the technical capacity of the skier, not the skis nor the terrain, which makes good skiing.

Adaptation – The above described movements must be varied and adjusted to the conditions encountered by the skier. We believe in the variation and adjustment of movements in order to accommodate variations in e.g. terrain, snow and speed. The outside conditions – for example, the forces of nature, the laws of physics or the number of skiers on the slope – determine the framework conditions for our skiing. And only by proper adaptation can we master the unexpected.

The forces of the old turn being used in the entry to the new turn.

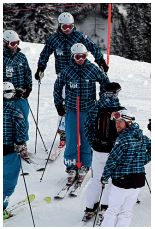
The Dynamic stance

By way of a solid and robust stance the skier can easily make the necessary specific movements that are a prerequisite for a good turn. At the same time he is able to adjust easily and rapidly to unexpected changes in terrain, snow conditions or other skiers on the slope.

When in motion – as in skiing - remaining in balance is by definition a dynamic process. There is constant need for adjusting arms, legs and the rest of your body in relation to each other.

By way of a solid dynamic stance the skier is best suited to adjust to challenges ahead. A good stance eases the lateral and vertical movement of the body in order to optimize the skiing position. We believe that the stance is key to good skiing. Hence, we make it the center piece of ski instruction.

By being in continuous motion, the stance, must be dynamic. It is a position which changes continuously. However, it is also an ideal position to which the skier return continuously. The beginner seldom manages to return to this dynamic stance, as a result loosing balance.



Resultant Force and the Base of support

The Forces in skiing

The point of departure for the Danish Ski School is that skiing is all about managing and adjusting to the outside forces.

The key factor in progressing as a skier is the ability to combine successfully the inner forces of skiing (those that you create through movements) and the outside forces (those that are determined by the laws of physics). One can say that as you progress as a skier you are becoming better at adjusting to the outside forces and using them to your advantage. You move from a situation where you work against the outside forces, to working with them. This is the reason why we focus on understanding the forces at work in a turn, in order to better utilize them in our skiing.

In order to manage and adjust to the outside forces that influence on a turn a solid stance is paramount (upper picture to the left). In addition it is the key that the skier is in good balance, with the point of balance centered between the skis (lower picture to the left)

Steering the skies

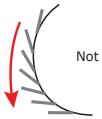
Steering includes the rotary movements, which are done to make the skies turn, as well as the movements, where the skies are being guided through the turn. Correct steering initiates with the feet being pivoted. This pivoting of the feet and skies shapes the turn, and is used to control the direction and speed.

During the last decade, we all have experienced more and more skiers become very passive. They've become passengers instead of pilots. The Danish Ski School wants to change this by focusing on the dynamic stance and the shaping of the turns through active steering.

Shaping the turn

When you're steering the skies through the turn, it has to be done gradually. If you only rotate the skies in one part of the turn, then the skies will start sideslipping and you'll loose control.

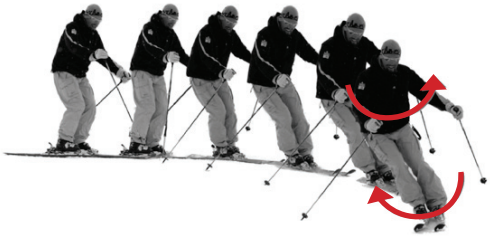
As a part of this, the Danish Ski School focus on round turns, instead of zig-zag turns. A round turn provides a nice flow in the skiing, and the ability to use the forces better.



Separation of the movements

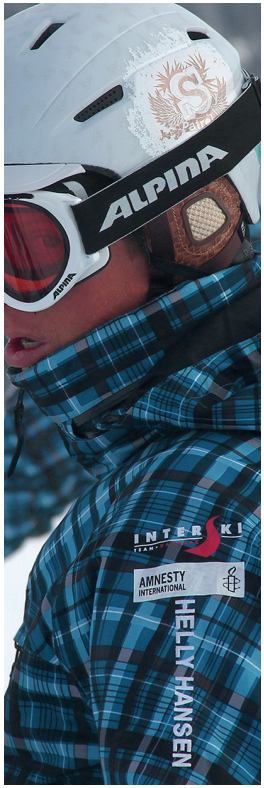
Closely related to the focus on steering the skies, we also focus on separating the upper and lower body parts while skiing. We experience that skiers who aren't able to separate these movements, tend to loose control of their balance and edging, as well as having problems doing quick maneuvers; for example in short turns.

The ability to separate the movements in the body is crucial for steering. Good steering is turning the feet first, and then gradually turn the rest of the body. This requires you to be movable in your hips, and letting the legs and upper body move independently of one another.



Course structure

	A- TECHNUQUE COURSE (96 hours)(no compulsory)
BASIC SKI INSTRUCTOR	B - BSI 1 (96 hours)
	C - BSI 2 (96 hours)
	D - FIRST AID COURSE (12 hours)
	SUPERVISED ON SNOW TEACHING EXPERIENCE (50 hours)
PROFESSIONAL SKI INSTRUCTOR Fully certified ISIA Ski Instructor	E - PSI 1 (48 hours)
	F - PSI 2 (84 hours)
	G - PSI 3 (96 hours)
	H - OTHER SNOW SPORTS (Snowboard, telemark etc.)
	SUPERVISED ON SNOW TEACHING EXPERIENCE (80 hours)
EURO SKI PRO *Euro Test by way of enrolment via the French Ministry of Youth and Sports.* *Euro Security via École National de Ski et Alpinisme in Chamonix*	I - EURO TEST
	J - EURO SECURITY 1 (70 hours)
	K - EURO SECURITY 2 (35 hours)
	SUPERVISED ON SNOW TEACHING EXPERIENCE (80 hours)
EURO TRAINER Internal National Level	L - EURO TRAINER COURSE (96 hours)
NATIONAL EXAMINER Internal National Level	M - NATIONAL EXAMINER COURSE (96 hours)



Teaching and Learning

In our way of thinking we mean that the ski instructors primary role, is to make sure that every single skier has the best possible base to work from for developing his or her potential as a skier.

In the Danish Ski School we firmly believe that the best possible foundation for developing ones skills as a skier, takes place through active movements and use of ski terrain. We also find that our clients need to be active in the learning process as well. We believe that good skiing – and quick progression of skills – takes places when proper movements are taught through a pedagogical process that is linked to active involvement of the client.

The ski instructor must assist the client in experiencing new sensations (feelings). Yet, we can only get the client to enter a situation where they are really open to new sensations when we create an environment characterized by trust, by joy and by enthusiasm for skiing. We know that clients do not progress if we do not make every day on the slope an unforgettable one!

The ski instructor's main tasks:

- To inspire to the joy of skiing.
- To meet, and exceed, the student's wishes, demands and goals.
- To understand the laws of physics, the principles of biomechanics, allowing the instructor to analyze complex movements patterns.
- To vary and individualize the teaching methods to accommodate difference in age, technical capacity and equipment of the client.
- To give precise and meaningful feedback, so that the student becomes a better skier.
- Create memorable experiences.

The following presentation focuses only on selected elements of the complete Danish Ski School's approach to alpine skiing. The selected focus areas presented here will be subjected to further elaboration at the Danish Ski School workshops at the Interski Congress.

Go with the flow!

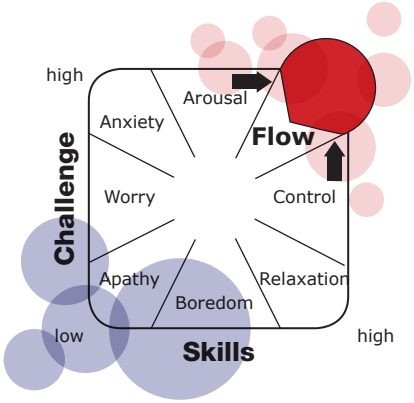
We love skiing!

There is no such feeling, than to feel fresh powder in the face, to feel the forces of a smoothly carved turn or simply just the thrill of speed.

We love when everything just fits. When we're able to maintain balance, even though we're skiing much more challenging terrain, than we've ever done before. When everything just fits; that's when we feel the flow.

The best thing to share with the students is this love. To help them find the flow.

FLOW is the mental state in which a person in an activity (e.g. skiing) is fully immersed in a feeling of energized focus, full involvement, and success in the process of the activity.



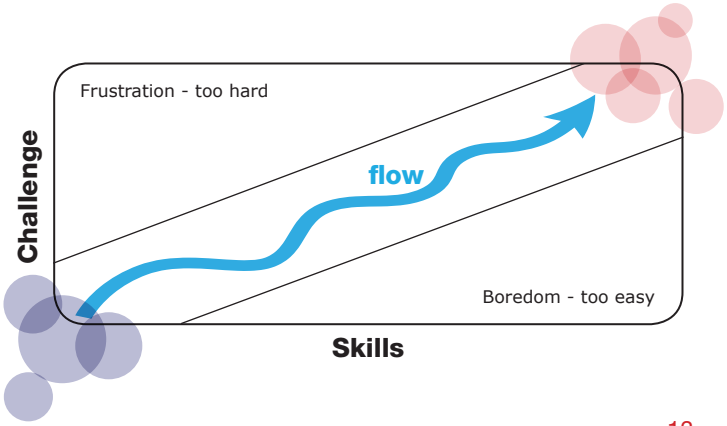
Flow

Flow is completely focused motivation. It is a single-minded immersion and represents perhaps the ultimate in harnessing the emotions in the service of performing and learning. In flow the emotions are not just contained and channeled, but positive, energized, and aligned with the task at hand. The hallmark of flow is a feeling of spontaneous joy, while performing a task (e.g. skiing steep offpiste).

You're able to feel the flow, when your skills match the challenges you ski. It is such a great feeling, when you suddenly realize, that you are actually able to manage the challenges you meet.

This feeling of joy is important to help the student to find.
To make a successful lesson, the skiinstructor must keep the student in 'the flow-channel'. If the challenge gets to big, the student might become anxious. If the challenge is too easy, the lesson is boring – and the student doesn't become a better skier. Even if the student is too much in control, he will never get the buzz.

The skiinstructor must therefore always match the skills of the student to the challenges skiinstructor provides. Not too easy, not too hard.

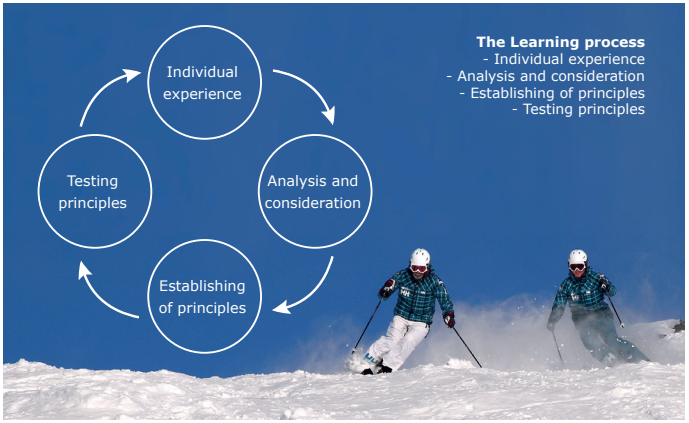


Learning through movements

The learning process tells us, how we, as individuals, learn something new, when it comes to movements.

The body learns through movements and remembers things we don't even think about, and this kind of learning through movements, feelings and experiences, is by the Danish Ski School considered to be the most efficient way to learn how to become a better skier.

The learning process is not only movement orientated but also strongly experimenting. We find it crucial that our clients are encourages to experiment with different movement patterns, and through this are able to develop their own experiences of the different movements.



Less talk, more skiing

It is not the Danish approach to dictate everything the client shall do. We do not see it fit to always describe everything in detail. Instead we wish to have the client learn by himself. This takes place by exposing client to different exercises and terrain. Our motto is "less talk, more skiing".

One of our objectives is to have the client early on in their skiing careers skiing most of the mountain, both on-piste and off-pist.

New conditions = new focus

Skiing is a sport where the conditions changes all the time. Conditions can change from icy to bumpy, from flat to steep, etc. The client should therefore not learn to repeat the same movement pattern regardless of the situation. The goal is to make the client able to control all sorts of different situations, by being able to change the focus and adapt movements to the conditions. When it's icy we focuses on edging and when it's bumpy we focuses on pressure control and steering.

Instead of making the client an expert on the green slopes, it is our goal to let the client (if he is physically and mentally prepared) be familiar with as much terrain as possible. This is accomplished by gradually changing the conditions, terrain, sizes of the turns, speed etc. This way the client gets a feel from himself which stance and movement patterns are the best for him in a given situation. What is right on a steep slope are not always right on a flat slope.

Group lesson = eight private lessons

The Danish Ski School focus on the individual skier, even when the individual is skiing in a group (the "individual" group lesson). This requires very well-developed analytic skills, knowledge of biomechanical movement patterns and precise individual feedback and focus; which are all central themes in the Danish ski instructor education. We therefore induce to differentiate all our teaching.

The principles of Learning through Movement places high demands

For an inexperienced ski instructor the above described methods and tools can be a big challenge, as they force the instructor to continuously reflect on the approach taken. Nevertheless, we take this approach because it provides for the best learning results for our clients, by continuously creating new learning experiences.

AUTORISERET SURF & SKI SPECIALIST

H/H HELLY HANSEN

VIL DU VÆRE BEDRE PÅ SKI?

Er du en dygtig skiløber, der savner udvikling og udfordring, kan du tage på ski med Danmarks bedste skiinstruktører. Tilmeld dig et ugekursus med intensiv træning hos Danmarks Skiforbunds uddannelsesafdeling.

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