

Waxing Your Skis or Snowboard

By Malcolm Judd

The steps for waxing a ski or a snowboard are essentially one and the same.

Before starting, check the base and edges of your skis or snowboard, you may want to send your equipment to a ski/SB workshop where they can put your skis or board through a commercial grinder to flatten the base and sharpen the edges. This doesn't need to be done every time you wax but if your bases have any deep gouges or scratches or your edges are blunt or have burrs then it is worth doing. If not fixed this could affect the ski or snowboard performance.

Step 1

Clean the ski or board's base, you can use a citrus based cleaner, methylated spirits or you can use lemon/orange peel. Just remember to wash down the base afterwards if you use peel. Allow the base to thoroughly dry.

Step 2

Determine which wax to use. I recommend that you use a universal wax as the primary wax since it has a wide range of temperature applications. This means that it will work in all snow conditions, both warm and cold snow. In this way you will have a general purpose base coat that if necessary you can always re-coat with a specific temperature wax such as a fluorowax. Highly fluorinated waxes as the second coat help with swing and speed, but wear down faster than universal wax. Hence having a good universal base coat is essential.



Step 3

Heat the wax stick with your iron until it begins to melt. Slowly move along with the iron a few inches above the base dripping the wax evenly onto the base. You want a drop of wax every 2 cm or so.



Step 4

Next smooth the wax onto the base with the iron - allow it to penetrate the base whilst keeping the iron moving. If you haven't waxed your skis or board in ages, or it is brand new you may find that the base absorbs almost all the wax. In this case you should drip more wax on and repeat the process. Do not apply heat directly to the base for too long. This is especially true for unwaxed parts of the base. Make sure you cover entire base.



Step 5

Turn off waxing iron and allow the wax to cool and solidify to become part of the base. Using a plastic base scraper, scrape off the excess wax from the base. Most of the wax will appear to come off; this is fine since what we really want is the thin layer of wax that has soaked into the base. Most of the wax has actually been absorbed into the base material.



Step 6

After you have scraped off all of the excess wax from the base, polish the base. Cheapest and easiest way to do this is with a green kitchen scouring pad that you buy from your local supermarket. Work from tip to tail to remove any uneven areas of wax and create a healthy shine on the base.



If a second wax coat of a temp specific or fluorinated is desired, wait until you scrape off excess from the first coat, then apply the second coat.

Tips & Warnings

- An iron with no steam holes on the base works the best for waxing. Do not use your mother's iron from the laundry room. Once you use an iron to apply wax, you've relegated it to that purpose forever.
- Overheating the base of your skis or snowboard can lead to blistering and destroy the ski surface. Keep the iron moving when waxing.
- Avoid burning the wax - it will smoke if it is burning. You only want to melt the wax - however, a small amount of smoke is okay. But if you can smell burning that is bad.
- For summer or other long periods away from snow, store your skis with a thick layer of wax on. Do not scrape off wax until you are ready to ski again.

For advice come and speak to myself or one of the technicians at Base, our ski and snowboard workshop located at Aberdeen Snowsports Centre. We can cater to a whole range of servicing and repair needs you may require. See you soon.