

ADAPTIVE LESSONS

This is the second of four articles describing different types of lessons available at resorts. This article will focus on adaptive instruction for individuals with disabilities.

Description of Program: Adaptive lessons are designed for adults and children with disabilities and are taught by trained instructors. Lessons generally begin with an initial evaluation to determine which mode of instruction or specialized equipment will be used to assist the student.

Types Available: There are six types of adaptive lessons available and tailored to the need of the student. The following categories apply to children and adults.

Blind and Sight Impaired

Blind - For people who are visually impaired, instructors will guide the student with verbal commands and other equipment to help communicate and teach them the necessary skills to ski.

Developmental and Cognitive Disabilities

Developmentally Disabled – For people who can stand up and walk (unassisted), but who have cognitive limitations. Instructors may use adaptive equipment to help hold the ski tips together or apart, and they may also use tethering devices to help guide the student.

Three Track Skiing

3-Track - For people with the use of one leg, adaptive programs use equipment called outriggers (looks like a crutch with a mini-ski on the end) that help support the upper body and act as an extra ski.

Four Track Skiing

4-Track - For people who have lower limb weaknesses and may use crutches, instructors will show the student how to use outriggers for support while skiing.

Mono-Skiing

Mono-Ski – For people who use manual wheel chairs, a mono-ski (bucket seat mounted to one ski) is used with outriggers. The instructor will help the student learn to glide, stop, get up, and turn without assistance.

Bi-Ski - For people who use an electric wheel chair or need assistance with their wheel chair, a bi-ski (bucket seat mounted to two skis) is used by the student while the instructor tethers them from behind and guides them down the hill.

Benefits: Specially trained and adaptive certified instructors offer their guests an experience unparalleled by most other activities. Skiing is an exhilarating experience and fun at any ability level. Adaptive lessons offer adults and children with a disability an opportunity to learn to ski in a safe and supportive environment.

Equipment: Call ahead to find out if rental equipment is included in the price of the lesson, you may be required to rent your own boots, skis, and poles. Some resorts will rent equipment out of their adaptive facility while others will direct you to the general rental shop. Most adaptive programs will supply the additional equipment such as bi-skis, mono-skis, tethering straps, outriggers, ski bras and spreader bars. Take your time renting equipment, especially boots. If you have a significant leg length difference, wear custom foot beds or use other lower leg support, bring them with you to use with your ski boots as needed.

Recommendations: Call ahead or visit the resorts website to see if they offer adaptive instruction and to find out if it is integrated with the general ski school or located in a separate building. Find out if you can complete the required paper work ahead of time to shorten the registration process once you arrive. On the day of your lesson arrive at least an hour ahead of time to gather your gear, dress appropriately for the weather, and meet with your instructor to review your goals and expectations.