

PREPARING FOR YOUR FIRST CHAIRLIFT RIDE

Riding the chairlift is one of the most exciting and rewarding parts of alpine skiing. The experience of being transported up the mountain gives you an opportunity to watch other skiers from above and admire the beauty of the mountains. One of the best ways to learn about using the lifts is by taking a lesson with a professional ski instructor. A little instruction goes a long way to helping you feel confident and ready to use the lifts on your own.

During your first ski lesson you will eventually need longer practice runs to help master turning and learning how to control your speed. This is generally when your instructor may guide you to one of the lifts that accesses beginner trails. Before heading up the hill remember to carry a trail map, and understand the symbols that identify beginner terrain.

Here are some quick tips for using a chairlift:

1. While you're in the lift line waiting to ride up the mountain, read all the signs and familiarize yourself with the lift. If you still have questions about using the lift, ask your instructor or the lift attendant before moving to the loading zone.
2. While moving in the lift line use your poles to help push you forward. Most lifts have a sign or marker that designates where to wait before entering the loading area.
3. Once you move forward to the loading area, grasp the poles in one hand, and look over your shoulder for the chairlift. When the chairlift reaches the back of your legs sit down onto it. Once your skis begin to leave the ground, lower the bar that rests in front of you on the way up the mountain.
4. Nearing the top prepare to unload by checking for loose clothing, keeping the ski tips up and raising the bar.
5. At the landing zone there will be a ramp for you to slide on. This area is covered with snow so you can stand up and slide away from the chair you were riding on. Help yourself to stand, by pushing off the chair with your hand.
6. As you slide away from the chairlift look out for fallen skiers, snowboarders, and equipment. Continue to move well away from the landing zone before stopping.

Chairlifts are an essential part of alpine skiing. The ski resorts have creatively designed it this way so all you have to do is patiently wait to be carried up the hill, and then enjoy yourself sliding down. To order a video for new skiers that includes how to use chairlifts visit: www.gearingtogo.com.

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