

WOMENS ADVENTURE PROGRAMS

This article is the first of 4 on specific ski school programs that specialize and tailor instruction for: women, mountain adventures (intermediate to advanced levels), adaptive (individuals with disabilities), and introduction to the terrain park.

Description of Program: At most resorts women's programs are taught for and by women. Lessons can range from addressing new skiers and intermediates looking for a break through in their ski ability, or backcountry adventures (ski touring), and heli-skiing trips. Lessons can vary from one to multi-day, and generally offer a small instructor to student ratio. Most programs give you an opportunity to discuss the type of pacing and terrain you'd like to ski depending on your fitness levels, so you can be grouped with other women who have similar interests.

Types Available: Some mountains offer clinics that have an on and off hill component. The website www.skilikeawoman.com lists a number of different programs across the country that just cover ski instruction and others that include spa packages, boot fitting services, and "tech talks" for a better understanding of how your equipment works.

How They Benefit Ski Improvement: Women only clinics lend to developing comradery which supports having fun and the necessary encouragement people need to break through to the next level in skiing. For most women a compassionate group format and being grouped with like participants, helps to overcome the obstacles and previous hesitation that they may have had in the past. Women only events combine skill development but most importantly lots of skiing mileage at a group designated pace. Participants in these programs often finish with a noticeable change in technique, and the willingness to challenge ones self.

Equipment: To get the most out of a women's program consider renting equipment for the snow conditions at the time of your lesson. If you are an advanced skier and want to learn to ski off-piste or in powder conditions, rent an all mountain or powder specific ski for that day. If you are new to skiing look for a good fitting boot and a short modern ski that will be easy to maneuver. For intermediates looking to improve their parallel turns on blue and black terrain consider renting an all mountain ski (wider underfoot) that will be more stable and make skiing in a variety of snow conditions more effortless. Last, if you are using your own equipment make sure it has been properly tuned (edges sharpened) and waxed. Depending on the number of days you ski each year your skis literally need a "tune-up" to keep them in tip top shape. Just like putting snow tires on your car, a fresh tune will make a noticeable difference particularly on firm and icy conditions. Call ahead to see if your resort offers women specific rentals and if equipment is included in the lesson price. A good fitting boot and modern well tuned equipment can make a huge difference in experiencing a new sensation in skiing technique.

Recommendations: If you are interested in signing up for a women's adventure program make a reservation early in the season, most programs have a limit on the number of participants. On the day of your lesson plan to arrive early so you can take your time putting on your boots and ski gear, store personal items in a locker, and locate your group. Finally, take advantage of the resorts website and locate a program that meets your needs and goals for skiing improvement.