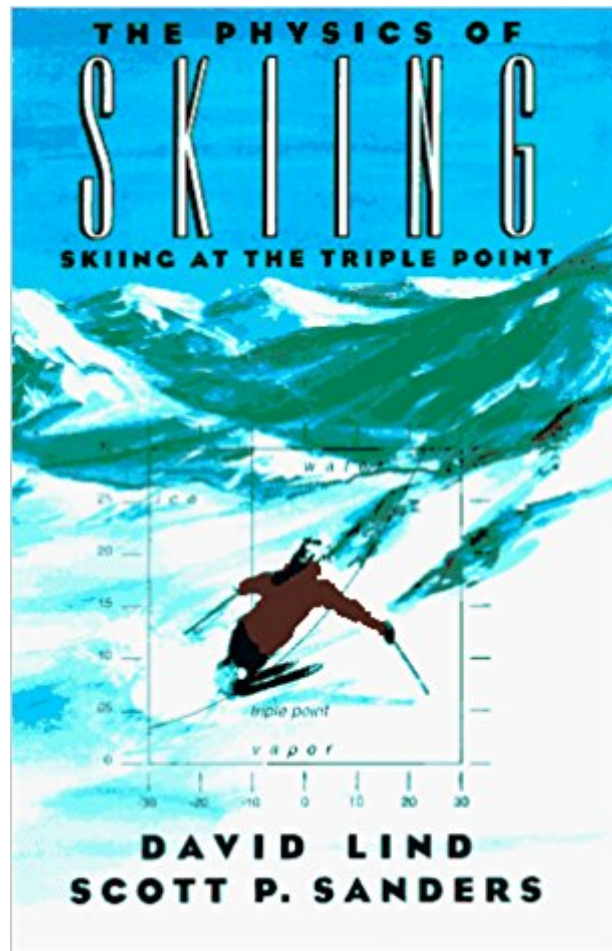




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The Physics Of Skiing: Skiing At The Triple Point



Synopsis

The earliest record of skiing is a 2,000-year-old pictograph from Rodoy, Norway. Only in the past 50 years, however, have the greatest advances been made in skiing technology. Now, *The Physics of Skiing* reveals what really happens when a skier hits the slopes, where the snow is always near the triple point -- the temperature at which the solid, liquid, and vapor phases co-exist. Dr. Lind explains the surprising phenomena that occur at the triple point. For instance, why will a downhill racer lose the race if he becomes airborne unnecessarily, while the winning racer pre-jumps drops in the course? And why does the winning slalom racer never skid his skis? These and many more slippery questions are answered in *The Physics of Skiing*. You will learn why alpine skis are designed differently from cross-country skis, how different types of snow affect one's skiing, and why cross-country skiers who step out of their bindings, then off the track, may fall up to their hips in snow. An historical perspective on the evolution of alpine skiing technique helps the reader grasp the now-universal concept of the carved ski turn and its relation to steered turns. And the book explains, once and for all, why ski instructors are forever telling their students to keep their shoulders perpendicular to the fall line.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Delivered with insight and clarity, this book deserves a spot on the shelf of any ski devotee and winter mountaineer. [It] presents a collection of ideas that has something to offer each time it's opened." -- Linda Crockett, Education Director, Professional Ski Instructors of America
"This skier and physicist found it a pleasure to read about the history of skiing and to have a well-written book

on the physics of snow, equipment, and skiing techniques." -- Ernest M. Henley, Physics Department, University of Washington

this book is literally about the physics of snow and skiing. I was a science major in college, have two advanced degrees, feel comfortable with high tech equipment and I felt like I was reading a college textbook when I read this book.

I am a firm believer that understanding of the mechanics of a carving ski and of the forces transferred between the skis and the skier as he makes his way down the slope are necessary to better understand why one or another skier's action may help to initiate a turn, or shorten its radius, or, in contrast, will lead to a skidded turn. "The physics of skiing" is the only book I could find which addresses the mechanics and physics of skiing. It starts with the physical properties of snow and its formation in the atmosphere, then discusses the properties of snow equipment (mostly downhill skis, briefly snowboards and cross-country skis), and then goes into dynamics of gliding, wedging, and carving. The book is written as a college textbook with numerous (although fairly simple) equations and diagrams of forces. It requires a sufficiently strong background in physics. Although it contains a large amount of interesting data, I was not quite satisfied with it for two reasons. First, it lacks a concept. It is more a review of different literature sources on skiing-related topics than an analysis combining understanding of physics of skiing with a discussion of how this knowledge is applicable to modern skiing techniques. It provides the readers with the background theory, but does not lead to any suggestions how to benefit from this understanding and improve their skiing technique. Too bad that the authors did not have a good ski instructor in their company to make the book more useful and down-to-earth. Secondly, since it is based on references published between 1977 and 1997, part of the discussion is more applicable to the old almost straight skis than to modern supersidecut skis.

I go skiing at least once a year; I am also a University lecturer in Physics. I bought this book several years ago with the expectation that it would be a fascinating read. Unfortunately, it has failed to "grab" me. Some of the problems are fairly minor: for instance, the illustrations leave a lot to be desired. The references are often not just outdated but also obscure. For example, the main reference to the phase thermodynamics of water is a "US Army Corps of Engineers Special Report No. 81-6" - surely, a more widely-available, mainstream reference could have been found for such a textbook topic! Other problems are more fundamental: (1) The book lacks a unifying approach and a

discussion of the basic concepts (this was also pointed out by one of the other reviewers). As a result, it reads more like a collection of disjointed technical notes than a book. (2) It fails to provide any insights into the practise of skiing beyond what one would pick up from a private lesson with an instructor. I am really not sure, what kind of target audience the authors had in mind when writing this book. But I do know that it has not been useful to me either as a skier or as a Physics lecturer.

As a ski instructor the subject of how and why these damn things work as well as how to set up your skis has always been of interest. This book will give you 95% of the answers to those questions. The book covers down hill, cross country as well as a category called adventure skiing. I will be ordering extra copies to give to my skiing friends W. E. M.

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