

# **Skiing Simplified: Ankle Flexion and Separation**

## **Ankle Flexion and Separation for Balance**

The purpose of this document is to define the ankle flexion with separation used to balance when skiing. In other words, it defines a forward hip position in relation to the feet for balance. Understanding ankle flexion with separation requires the definitions in yesterday's document "Skiing Simplified: Separation, Curves and Lines". Ankle flexion needs to be defined in relation to those lines and curves. Because, when our skis are on edge we can't balance with our chest facing the same direction as our skis. Separation requires ankle flexion and vice versa. Obviously, balance is important, and this understanding of flexion, separation, lines and curves is required to maintain balance when skiing. Because we balance in the center of the ski, everything described here applies to all kinds and levels of skiing: beginning to expert; all types of racing: slalom to downhill, and all types of snow conditions from powder to ice.

## **Ankle Flexion and Hip Position**

Ankle flexion and a forward hip position in relation to the feet when balanced are two ways of describing the same thing. But because we use independent leg action in skiing, the better focus is ankle flexion, the same on both feet throughout the process. We don't pull or push ourselves forward. We relax to get forward. We balance to get forward. We use separation and gravity to keep our ankles flexed. Like tripping, allow yourself to be tripped a little; and, control the trip by balancing with your ankles. Relax and let the bump trip you a little while you control the trip with your ankles.

## **For Example: Skiing On One Ski**

Skiing on one ski (with the other ski left at the top or bottom of the hill) is an advanced drill. But, it cannot be done without proper ankle flexion. And, we don't have to do it to be able to think about how it is done. The key is keeping hips over feet. We do this by using those lines and curves we talked about yesterday. It takes rhythm, it takes continuous movement (without pulling or pushing), and it takes separation. What is continuous movement? We have to stay forward. But, how do we stay forward? And, what is forward? Staying forward is ankle flexion. With only one ski it is hard to stay forward, hard to keep that ankle flexed, but easy to separate. Easy, like falling off a log easy. The key is to relax and use gravity and separation to stay forward. If the upper body is heading more down the hill than the feet, it will move forward in relation to the feet. Flexion is relaxing the ankles to allow the hips to stay with the upper body. Like tripping, allow yourself to be tripped a little; and, balance by controlling the trip with your ankles. So, continuous movement is using separation to trip yourself forward while you balance on those two curves of momentum, while pointing at those two focal points.

## **The Free Leg**

Another way skiing on one ski is a good example: it forces you to work the free leg to stay in balance. Even though there is no ski attached, the same action is required to balance. In other words, the whole lower body from the hips down is on its curve

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while pointing to the next rise line point; and, the heart is on its curve while pointing to the next fall line point.

### **Summary: Ankle Flexion and Separation for Balance**

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