

Making Sense - Outside Ski

Why Sense Making? I strongly believe that 'sense making' is important to learning. When you make sense of something, you can then use it creatively, grow and expand. If you don't make sense of something that you are doing, then you just do "things" because someone told you to.

Outside Ski



The outside ski is dominant. Transfer weight to the outside ski. Pressure the outside ski. Move to the outside ski. Move to the outside ski early... Why? Why are we told to make the outside ski dominant?

After the apex of a turn, nature (aka physics) will make that outside ski dominant. Why do you want it to be dominant before the apex? I have repeatedly asked this question to many instructors of high cert levels and examiners. Probably the most common answer is "to stay in balance over the outside ski."

Yes, balance has much to do with the outside ski being dominant in that we always want to be balancing, moving in balance, to the skis on the snow.

Regarding the outside ski, here is what I explain to even first time skiers.

First concept: To stay in balance, we need to move with the skis. Imagine a skateboard. If you stepped on a skateboard and it started to roll, you would move with it, not lean backwards.

Skis are similar. You need to move with them as they slide down the mountain.

Second concept: When you steer skis into a turn, you turn them down the hill. Gravity will make them start moving down the hill, where you pointed them. That is where they are going, so you need to go with them too - down the hill.

Third concept: How do we move down the hill? Imagine that you are standing without your skis on with your feet pointing across the hill. If you wanted to jump down the hill off of one foot, which foot would make it easier for you to move down the hill? Try it. It's the uphill foot. You can easily jump off of it down the hill. So, when we start to make a turn and want to move with our skis, if we are more dominant on our uphill (new outside foot), it's easier to move our body down the hill and keep up with our skis.

So, if you want to stay in balance and move with your skis, it's easier when you move there with your new outside foot being dominant, more weight on it. I shoot for being about 50:50, foot to foot pressure at, or near edge change. After that, I progressively move more weight to my outside ski, BEFORE the apex. After the apex, where nature/physics is putting more weight on the outside ski, I then start to take it off that foot so that I can again be about 50:50 near edge change. More on this foot to foot concept in another Making Sense article. The point is that while we are usually very two-footed, the outside ski should always be dominate - from edge change to edge change. Two-footed is the focus and always moving. How much weight is allotted to each foot depends on the speed, turn size, shape and conditions.

Conclusion: Focus on balancing on your skis and "going there" (down the hill into the next turn) with more weight on your outside foot right around edge change.