

telemark@experience - t@x The innovative way of learning Telemark



The aim of the telemark@experience project is to develop an innovative and unconventional way of learning Telemark. More specifically, this new method benefits from the motive specificities of the Telemark skiing and exploits the interaction between the skier and the surrounding spatio-temporal environment.

In this regard, the proposed method follows a sensory-experience-based approach: it focuses the attention on the identification and progressive improvement of the motor abilities through the sensory perception of balance (and centrality), timing (rhythm), gradualness and dynamism, rather than on the “mechanical” repetition of a movement or a series of movements.

Lastly, the goal this on-field-tested method sets for itself is to grant a straining-free and balanced posture, naturally related to the skier wellness and to his confidence in the telemark skiing.

Telemark according to the Telemark Snow Events – TSE

Telemark is closely linked to a feeling - that dizziness you can feel in an unspecified moment of the skiing process - a sensation difficult to pinpoint in space and time.

When one discovers this feeling he simply gets dazzled by it (just like S. Paul, but on his way to... Telemark) so much so that he turns from vestigial stiffness!

The moment when the telemarker has perceived this feeling is the moment in which he has essentially learnt Telemark. The main goal of TSE is to show you how you can perceive this feeling.

Learning progression and sensory approach applied by TSE aim both at this goal: the success of the TSE activities is the virtual proof of it.

Through the imprinting process the Telemark neophyte gets in direct contact with the sensory experience. That strong connection between the skier and Telemark in just a few hours of practice (by the way, with the subsequent achievement of indisputable style improvement) cannot be explained otherwise.

The essential steps of Telemark according to t@x

Moment of Discovery

- The skier enters the world of Telemark by making his first steps towards a sensory-focused behavior, by way of a few simple moves:
 - ~ Walking while sliding
 - ~ Practising the basic telemark body stance
 - ~ Changing direction

Moment of Understanding

- The skier analyses the main notions based on the sensory approach:
 - ~ Telemark body stance
 - ~ Naturally upright standing position
 - ~ Switching the opposite Telemark positions
 - ~ Foot-ski control

Moment of Awareness

- In this phase, the skier gains a deeper understanding of the basic notions by relying on sensations:
 - ~ Telemark body stance definition
 - ~ Definition of the feet weight distribution
 - ~ Foot-ski control
 - ~ Voluntary action, mind-body interaction

Moment of Quality

- The main notions get more and more analysed while the sensations get improved and sharpened.
- the arc of the turn regulation gets defined according to the slope and available equipment, in order to meet the needs of each individual
- different experience-guided approaches and solutions shall be applied to face the problems caused by the snow and slope condition.

« Your feet are all-important in surfing. It is important to know how to use your heels and toes when riding a wave.

Your back foot is your accelerator pedal. Your front foot does not assist at all in the turning process, but is basically there for balance.»¹

¹ Mark Richards, Australian surfer, four-time world champion.

Source: <http://www.surfertoday.com/surfing/9256-the-importance-of-the-back-foot-in-surfing>

Moment of Discovery (Imprinting) – BALANCE

<i>Action</i>	<i>Understanding</i>
Walking while sliding	Weight distribution and feet pressure points. The upright standing position
The basic Telemark stance	Equilibrium and stability perception.
Changes of direction	Voluntary body action
Natural foot-ski control	Ski leading without straining, rotating or lifting the feet.

Implementation - Exercise and workout examples

<i>How</i>	<i>Why</i>
Walking on level ground with and without skis.	to feel the sensation of typical continual walking and upright and relaxed body posture.
Body position on a sloping ground.	for natural upright position and weight on the sole of the foot.
Switching different Telemark body stances while crossing a slightly steep piste.	to gain the balance sensation by transferring the weight from one foot to another, as while walking
Crossing the piste while using the uphill ski as foothold	for active understanding and perception of foothold while parallel skiing
Sideslipping while controlling the uphill ski	
Sideslipping while crossing forward up to the steepest point and backwards.	for ski control
Taking advantage of the natural body rotation (arms-shoulders-hips-feet) during the changes of direction	to feel natural during the changes of direction, without straining or lifting the skis from the ground
Sideslipping and linking the opposite directions of travel, by transferring the weight from one uphill ski to another.	for balance perception and ski control
While assuming the Telemark position, crossing the piste by letting the front foot sink toward the direction of travel.	for foothold perception and weight distribution on both feet

All above mentioned examples can depend on the skier's sensations during the joined body-feet action, vital to the ski and speed control.

Moment of Understanding – TIMING

The basic level is essential for understanding whether one who has come to know about Telemark has adequately comprehended its fundamentals.

<i>Action</i>	<i>Understanding</i>
Telemark position	Weight distribution and feet posture
Switching the opposite Telemark body stances	Feet-body coordination while switching from one to the opposite Telemark position.
Active ski control	<u>Conscious control of the foot</u> or both feet in order to lead the ski in the wanted direction.

Implementation - Exercise and workout examples

<i>How</i>	<i>Why</i>
Gradual opening and closing of the Telemark position while crossing the slope	for balance perception and weight distribution between the feet and on different regions of the foot
Crossing the piste by interchanging turn openings with closings, while maintaining the telemark body stance.	for active ski control and perception of weight distribution
Snowboard turn. Maintaining the telemark position during the changes of direction, while taking advantage of the voluntary body action.	
Sequence of changes of direction while controlling the breathing rhythm. The inhalation corresponds to the closing phase of the Telemark stance during the first half of the turn that culminates in the feet finding themselves close to each other. On the other hand, the exhalation corresponds to the opening phase of the Telemark position during the second half of the turn and ends with the maximum feet distance when another turn is about to begin.	for connecting the natural breathing rhythm with the continual body movements This exercise is preparatory to the following step (Awareness)
Postponing the switching of Telemark stances after the maximum slope gradient is reached.	for balance perception and weight distribution between the feet and on different regions of the foot.

Moment of Awareness - PROGRESSION

The intermediate level is vital to understand whether one who has come to know the fundamentals is able to put them in practice.

The basic-level actions stand alone and end in themselves: only if we learn to know them well and we understand how to apply them with intended force, they will turn into joined, effective and conscious movements. On the previous level, the movements start from a precise point and end in the opposite position, whereas on this level, once the movements are triggered, the sequence will proceed uninterruptedly to the final turn.

Although the changes of position are rather rough, the coordination with the active foot-ski control along the trajectory gets achieved.

<i>Action</i>	<i>Awareness</i>
Overall coordination	Sensitivity acquisition and balance maintaining in order to achieve progression and vice versa.

Moment of Quality - DYNAMISM

A so-called Advanced level!: having fully understood the basic *level* and having linked all the elements of the *intermediate level*, the skier can now attempt to put everything together, through a continual and fluid movement, trying to reach the right feet weight distribution, constant ski control and natural body position maintenance, according to the chosen arc of the turn:

- The wide-arc turn shall be accomplished by using the front foot as foothold. Therefore, the inside ski shall wait for the outside one to complete the overtaking until the weight is fully redistributed between the feet.
- The medium-arc turn will require either both feet to do a sort of scissor kick or the front foot to slide backwards to permit the inversion in a slightly smaller amount of time.
- During the narrow-arc turn the front foot should steadily slide back to permit a much shorter arc.

<i>Action</i>	<i>Quality</i>
Overall stability	Increasing sensibility and progression management, based on balance. Adoption of different approaches according to the different arcs of the turn and slopes.

