



Fitness Fun for Alpine Snow Sports Grades 4-8

Game: Snow Sport UNO

Objective: Encourage youth in grades 4-8 to “prep” for the ski and snowboard season; this game can be used as a secondary warm-up, i.e. students should already be breaking a sweat from a jog, or jump rope or scooter activity or as a circuit training activity where students would perform aerobic activities such as running, walking, jump rope, rollerblading etc. between the balance, strength, and agility exercises.

Materials: 2-3 decks of cards (depends on class size); exercise posters; mats; cones; duct tape for lines (or use painted lines on the floor if indoors); rubber bands or tubing; can also use foam rollers or balance cushions to make some exercises more difficult.

Directions: Remove the face cards and lower numbers from a deck of cards so that the deck comprises numbers 6-10 in each suit. If your classes are large, you’ll need several decks of cards. Print the activity posters that correspond to each suit in the deck. Hearts represent balance; spades represent core strength; clubs represent functional upper and lower body strength; and diamonds represent agility and quickness.

Students pick a card from the deck. The number on the card refers to the number of repetitions that the student must perform on the corresponding activity poster. If the exercise is a single leg exercise, perform repetitions on each leg. For example, if the student drew a ten of diamonds, then he would perform two sets of 10 repetitions of one of the exercises listed on the diamond/agility poster(s). There are several activities to choose from in each area.

The teacher should dictate the number of sets. If students are just beginning the unit, start with one to two sets times the number of repetitions on the

card. Recovery between sets should be 30-60 seconds. As they progress, move to three sets. Be sure to designate specific space for each suit or set of activities. Perform 4-8 rounds, depending on time. You can alter the basic plan to meet your needs. Students can choose 1-4 cards at a time. If they choose the same suit several times in a row, allow them to choose again or have the class trade cards with each other instead of picking from the deck for one round. The possibilities are endless!

If you choose do use this activity as a circuit, have students complete one to several laps or minutes of various aerobic activities between skill exercise bouts.

Activity Posters

Hearts: Balance

One-legged balance squats
Snowboard Stance to "Fakie" or Freestyle 180's & 360's
US Ski Team Balance Drill

Spades: Core Strength

Crunches w/variation
Toe Pickers
Bicycles
Emily's

Clubs: Functional Upper and Lower Body Strength

Push-ups w/variation
Crab push-ups
Two-legged squats
Three-way band
Lunge Walk

Diamonds: Agility and Quickness

Lateral hops
Tuck Jumps w/sprint
Backward run
Cone slalom

Activity Poster Descriptions

Hearts: Balance

One-legged balance squats: stand on one leg with the other leg flexed at the knee; keep knee over or slightly behind toe; squat as low as you can – up to 90 degrees. Repeat for required number of repetitions on each leg.

Snowboard Stance to “Fakie”: stand sideways in snowboard rider’s position with feet on a line; look over front (downhill) foot; jump and twist the lower body so that the reverse foot moves to become the front foot; keep looking downhill while arms are extended out for balance; land on the line; use a foam roller for the line to make the exercise more difficult. Repeat for required number of repetitions.

Freestyle 180’s & 360’s: stand in skier’s position with feet parallel on the line; jump up and twist entire body 180 degrees or 360 degrees and land on the line; try 180’s first. Repeat for required number of repetitions.

US Ski Team Balance Drill: sprint out 5 yards while touching right hand to the ground; then go 5 more yards with left hand touching the ground; then go 5 yards with both hands touching the ground. Repeat sequence for required number of repetitions.

Spades: Core Strength

Crunches: lie on back with feet flat on the floor and knees bent; cross arms on chest and keep neck in line with the spine (pretend you have an orange under your chin) and curl your shoulders and upper spine off the floor.

Crunch variation: keep knees bent and pick heels up off the floor; curl both upper body and knees towards each other; don’t let legs touch the floor for the entire set or required repetitions.

Bicycles: lie on back with hands behind head; keep neck in line with spine (orange under the chin); pull right knee to left elbow and back; then pull left knee to right elbow and back. Heels should not touch the floor during the set. Repeat on each side for required number of repetitions.

Toe Pickers: lie on back with feet raised in the air; raise shoulders and upper spine off the floor and touch toes with hands. Repeat for required number of repetitions.

Emily’s: lie on back with feet raised in the air; move legs laterally side to side, trying to touch the floor with feet. Keep shoulders flat on the floor. Repeat for required number of repetitions on each side.

Clubs: Functional upper and lower body strength

Push-ups: stand in toe touch position; put hands on floor and walk them out until your body is straight and your arms are bent and in line with your shoulders; drop chest to the floor without sagging in the middle and push back up; can be done on the knees if regular position is too difficult. Repeat for required number of repetitions.

Crab push-ups: get into crab walk position with hands on the floor behind you, knees bent and feet flat with bottom off the floor; lower arms until bottom touches the floor and then push back up; can also be done on small bench, stool, bar, chair or step. Repeat for required number of repetitions.

Crab Variation: crawl forwards 5 yards and backwards for 5 yards. Repeat sequence for required number of repetitions.

Two-legged squats: lift arms out in front of the body and parallel to the floor; squat until upper leg is parallel to the floor; keep knees over toes and push up through heels; can also do these on an incline board (isolates lower leg more) or with heels on a board. Repeat for required number of repetitions.

Three-way band walk: use a two-inch wide rubber band or tubing and wrap around ankles; pull one leg forward for hip flexion, back for hip extension and outward for hip abduction. Repeat on each leg in each direction for required number of repetitions.

Lunge walk: step forward on one leg and bend knee so that front upper leg is parallel to the floor and rear knee is just barely touching the floor; pick up rear leg and walk to forward position; continue alternating legs in lunge position. Repeat for required number of repetitions on each leg (count one for each time leg is forward).

Diamonds: agility and quickness

Lateral hops: with feet in parallel skier position, hop from side to side over a line or cone on the floor; to add difficulty, increase the height of the cone or have students jump over one to two pillows piled on top of one another. Hop to each side for required number of repetitions.

Lateral hop variation: place two-inch rubber band around ankles and hop from side to side keeping tension on the rubber band.

Tuck jumps with sprint: do three consecutive bunny hops in tuck position and then sprint 10-15 yards to finish. Go for distance on the jumps rather than height. Repeat this sequence for required number of repetitions.

Backward run: run backwards for 10-20 yards; concentrate on staying low and pumping shoulders and arms while backpedaling; for higher difficulty, do this on a slight incline and run backwards uphill; jog back down to the start. Repeat for required number of repetitions.

Cone slalom: set up cones in slalom (tight small turns) or giant slalom (bigger turns that are farther apart) configuration; students run through the course. Repeat for required number of repetitions.

Cone slalom variation: set up as a dual slalom and let students "race" side by side if they wish; or set up cones on a small incline; or change run to a skip or gallop or bounding movement.