

# Cross Country Skiing

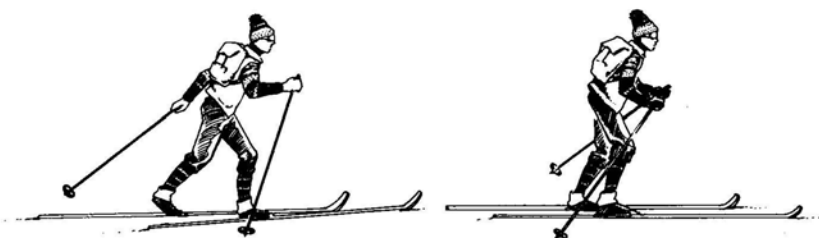
*Featured Website of the Month*  
Cross Country Ski Areas Association  
<http://xcski.snowmonsters.com/>

## How Cross Country Skis Work

### Kick and Glide

You've dressed for the weather, clamped your boots into the bindings of your skis, and pointed the tips down the track. Now, use your knowledge of the way skis work to kick and glide over the snow.

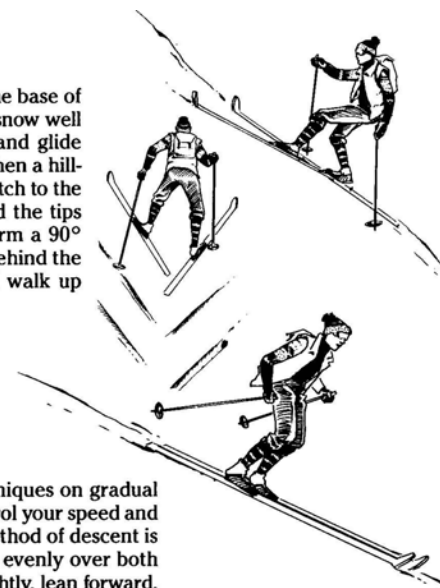
Begin by striding forward, putting your weight on your left ski while you slide the right one out in front. Shift your weight to your right foot just as if you were taking a step and, as the right ski grips the snow, slide the left ski ahead of it. Repeat the sequence rhythmically—kick and glide, kick and glide, using your skis as platforms from which you propel yourself along.



As you get the knack of kicking and gliding, improve your balance and control by leaning forward as you ski. Check the way you use your poles; rather than gripping the handles, let your wrists press against the straps. As the right ski comes forward, plant your right pole ahead of yourself and push backwards with it. Do the same with the left pole as the left ski glides ahead. The power of your arm and shoulder muscles will enhance your speed, and the smooth, rhythmic use of the poles will help you master the basic forward motion of cross-country skiing.

### Skiing Uphill

The pattern or wax on the base of your skis should grip the snow well enough for you to kick and glide up gradual slopes. But when a hillside becomes steeper, switch to the herringbone step. Spread the tips of your skis until they form a 90° angle, plant your poles behind the skis with each step, and walk up the snow.



### Skiing Downhill

Practice downhill techniques on gradual slopes until you can control your speed and direction. The easiest method of descent is to distribute your weight evenly over both skis, bend your knees slightly, lean forward, and let gravity do the rest. Watch ahead for hazards, and keep your legs loose so they can flex as you go over rough spots in the snow.



### Double Poling

On slopes too gentle for a downhill run, you can make headway by double poling—that is, using both poles in unison to push yourself along. Leaning forward at the waist with your knees flexed and feet together, plant both poles a little ahead of your boots. With a light grasp on the poles, push against the wrist straps and let your skis slide down the track. Recover the poles by swinging your arms like pendulums and plant the poles again, repeating the sequence with a relaxed, steady rhythm.