

Start training now for winter sports

By Claire Martin, Denver Post

If you're looking forward to hitting the slopes this winter, start training now to get the most out of that ever-steeper price on your lift tickets.

"When you buy a \$100 lift ticket, you kinda want to go all day," says Patrick Abramson, a longtime coach for the University of Colorado's snowboard team.

"That means thinking of October and November up to Christmas as time to get ready for a season that really gets going in January. I tell my team to use the fall to really get prepared. Training prevents injuries, and if you want to progress in your sport, you have to be stronger than you were before."

Snow sports involve a lot of lateral movement. They require balance and flexibility as well as endurance, said David Stewart, who coaches the Nordic ski teams for the University of Denver.

So even if you've sailed through Ride The Rockies, the Triple Bypass and other demanding summer rides, don't assume you're ready to step into your ski bindings.

All that cycling may mean your quadriceps are more developed than your hamstrings, creating an imbalance in your leg muscles that could put extra strain on your vulnerable ACL and other knee ligaments, Stewart said.

"Off-season sports, like long-distance running and cycling, are excellent, and great for the legs, but our sport is at least half upper-body as well, and that's where you generate a

lot of your force," Stewart said.

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