



Sports And Fitness

Cross Country Skiing For Kids!

Cross country skiing is a fun winter sport that is easy to get involved in, especially when you live in a place that gets lots of snow! The snow can be in a school field, your back yard or some trails. Cross country skiing also has many health benefits. It is an aerobic exercise and works the muscles in your legs, back, chest and stomach. Plus, its a fun social activity with your family and friends.

The equipment you need includes a set of skis, poles, warm clothing and boots. Make sure your warm clothing is also waterproof!

The following paragraphs offer some information on techniques, but the most important advice is to make sure you take lessons from a qualified instructor before you begin.

At first when you are learning how to cross country ski, make your outings short distances. You'll naturally end up using a technique some people call the "shuffle". It involves nothing more than sliding one ski ahead of the other, and repeating the entire process over and over again. Without even thinking about it, you'll be pushing off with a kick stride, moving forward with a glide stride, and vice-versa. At the same time, you'll intuitively use your poles for balance and to help push yourself forward with every stride. It's very easy to do, and you will get in the swing of things after five or ten minutes. What's more, you'll fit in with the many skiers who show up at popular trails on sunny weekends and use nothing more complicated than this shuffle technique.

Going up hills: Once a hill gets too steep, you will have to use the herringbone technique. You do this by pointing the tips of you skis outwards and walking up the hill. The trick to successfully using this technique is to make sure the inside edge of the ski is angled down. This allows the edge to dig into the snow giving the necessary traction to walk up the hill. Don't forget to simultaneously use your poles to help push you up the slopes and hills. It's called the herringbone technique because it leaves a herringbone pattern in the snow. You will probably find it awkward the first time you use it, but you'll get used to it after a while.

Going down hills: Going down a long gentle slope is fun and easy. Keep skis in the tracks and enjoy the ride. But coming down a relatively narrow trail on a steep hill can be scary and dangerous. Under these



conditions, it is important to use the snowplow technique to reduce your speed. You do this by keeping the tips of the skis pointed inwards. Again, the trick to successfully using this technique is to keep the inside edges of the skis angled downwards. This allows the edge to dig into the snow and maximize your braking power. As a beginner, you should start applying the snowplow technique at the very top of a hill before you have had a chance to pick up too much speed. If you do find yourself going down too fast, your only option may be to sit down.