

Proper Right Ski Pressure

Written by Freddy Krueger

Photography by Scott N. Atkinson

About a month ago I met a young man who asked me how much pressure he should be feeling through his right leg as he is cutting to the ramp. He said that he was trying not to move before the jump, but no matter what he tried, he could not get his lift. He said that on ramp impact the right ski actually would slide and that his coach had explained that he just needed to have a more progressive start and everything would be fine.

For the most part, the answer given to our young jumper was correct, but it was what I call a Band-Aid® fix; not a proper understanding of why the problem is arising in the first place. I actually struggled with convincing myself that this would be a good article to write, because people have a tendency to "over correct" when they get a "fix." So as you read this article, please be sure to read the entire thing and try to gain an understanding of the concept. Remember, a little goes a long way and too much of a good thing is still bad for you, even in jumping!

Now back to our young jumper's question. How do you have pressure but still create lift? The answer comes from one of the

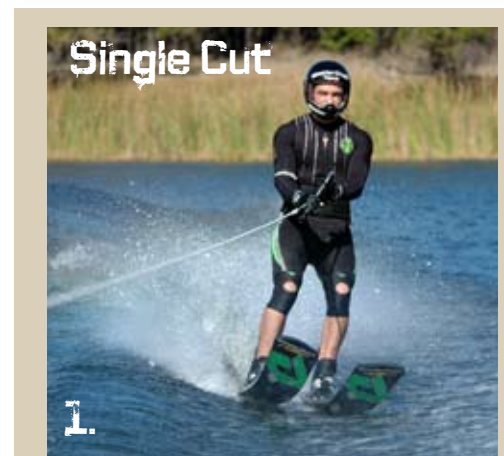
most basic concepts of jumping – proper body position combined with a strong cutting position will create load/pressure in your right leg so that once you hit the ramp the pressure that was in your leg will inevitably transfer into lift off the ramp. It's not a matter of having too much pressure, it's that the body position isn't correct. If the right ski is sliding when you hit the ramp, you can almost always assume that it is because the right ski is not supporting the left shoulder. The upper body has moved ahead of the right ski, and though some pressure is created, it is nearly impossible to move out of this unbalanced position to create lift.

If we can step away from skiing for a minute and look at the anatomy of the human body as it pertains to riding a bike we can find another way to apply this simple concept. If you look at the pictures of me on the bike, you can see that the first thing to move when I initiate my turn is not my shoulders, but actually the bike itself. In reality, to make that left-hand turn into my driveway, my upper body actually had to move to the right ever so slightly so that I could start to lean the

bike to the left. This movement right to go left is my body's way of staying balanced, and I do it without even thinking on a bike. Once the bike starts leaning, I start to move the handlebars, and because of the inertia of the turn, I can lean into the turn with my body and the bike will only feel me continuing to press down on it through the tires. The snapshot of me halfway through the turn shows that my shoulders are basically parallel with the angle of the bike through the turn.

In jumping we have nearly an identical situation, but it is complicated exponentially by the fact that the boat is connected to our upper body through the handle and rope rather than just gravity pushing me down on the tires. So our natural instinct is to be in a constant struggle with the boat. This is why our young jumper's coach was telling him to start easier and be more progressive. The easier you start, the less likely you will be to engage your upper body before your skis. If you don't engage your upper body, your skis can keep moving through the turn and you can get to a position on your skis that you can kick from and not slide to the boat with your right ski.

INSTRUCTION



Double Cut



...our natural instinct is to be in a constant struggle with the boat.

If we take a look at the single cut pictures, you will see that at the start of the cut that my shoulders stay parallel to the water even as my skis are starting to roll over and begin edging. (Now this is where I want you to be careful. This is all about balance and the end result you are looking for is great lift off the ramp! If you try to not engage your upper body at all, you will start having issues where you feel "stuck" on your skis and can't get your lift from there either.) Just like the turn on my bike, I'm trying to let my skis get moving first and create a "turn" that creates some momentum and inertia that I can then allow my shoulders to match the angle of my skis. When this is achieved properly, I feel like the load is going down my left arm out my right leg and I could kick any jump in any conditions. And that load through my right leg can never be

too much when I do this correctly.

If we look at the pictures of the double cut, you will again see that about three quarters of the way through my turn my shoulders are starting to match up with the angle of the skis. The "S-Turn" we do in jumping is very helpful in allowing that left shoulder to stay up and not engage the rope before your right ski can get a chance to start coming through the turn. Even when I'm doing a three-quarter cut and I'm not wide enough to do a true "S-Turn," I still do that slight "out movement" with my body so my skis can move first; just like I'm riding a bike and getting ready to turn into my driveway with speed.

This concept is one of the most basic and fundamental building blocks of jumping. From here, you can improve on your personal technique to help you adapt to various weather conditions, tournament site setups,

etc. It is an invaluable tool to help increase your consistency and undoubtedly your level of safety.

If you have a topic you would like to see Freddy write an article about, please go to his Web site at thenightmare13.com and send him an e-mail.

