SKATE SKIING BASIC TECHNIQUES

V Skating

The basic V skate starts with a skier standing in a slight V position without poles (as with classic technique this aids in developing balance). Edge one ski to the inside edge and simultaneous push off that ski while driving out onto the other ski. Repeat the other direction. Keep on going until you can build rhythm enough to ski a full 50 meter loop without stopping.

This is the basic V skate. After awhile you can do the same test to feel the **high hip** position as described in the Classic Diagonal Stride section. After you have the basic edge and glide idea, you'll want to practice the same principles with an emphasis on driving over both skis utilizing the high hip forward concept. This essential V skate motion with the legs is the root of ALL the various V techniques used in Skating. Once you've got V-skating down you are halfway home with any technique. Now you are ready to add poles.

V2 Alternate (aka--Open Field Skate)

In the V2 Alternate the skier utilizes a double pole arm motion on one side of the V skate and an arm recovery swing on the other side. Thus, the skier pushes on one side with the upper body and glides on the other side. I have found this is the most natural Skating technique involving arms for beginners to master. This is due to the relatively low amount of balance needed to generate forward motion. V2 Alternate is excellent for gradual up and down as well as flats. Start by simply thinking of a verbal "push and glide" rhythm. "Push" comes on the double pole AND skate side; "and" refers to the quick weight transfer motion to the other leg; "glide" means you drive your weight unto the glide side while recovering your poles to restart the sequence.

V1 (aka--Off Set Skate)

Once a skier learns to V2 Alternate they will quickly find any kind of significant grade is pretty grueling in terms of maintaining momentum. Hence, the V1. Here the skier uses a slightly off-set double poling motion starting out almost identical to the V2 Alternate. The skier starts to compress over their poles, as in the V2 Alternate, but instead of quickly completely a double pole motion the skier continues the poling motion until the torso and trunk has shifted the drive onto the other ski. (See photo sequence) Then comes a quick pole recovery and drive shift back to the original side of emphasis. The off-set poling motion and the continuation of the poling motion are the primary differences between the V2 Alternate and the V1 (at least in a beginners eyes).

Here is a great look at the three phases of the V1 technique. Watch the lead skier in each photo!

1) Poling side with excellent upper body compression and weight shift.

2) Lateral weight transfer with continuation of the poling motion.

3) Superior weight transfer onto the glide side.

V2 (both sides)

This is the most balance intensive of the skating motions and thus, it is generally the most difficult to master over a long distance. In the standard V2 motion, the skier makes a double pole motion on *both* sides of the V-skate... meaning they will pole on every skate glide.

Start out just like the V2 Alternate with a nice double pole compression as well as hip drive/weight transfer onto the ski side you double pole on. After you compress the double pole motion, you immediately recover your poles--while still gliding on the original glide side. Once your poles are into position, you then repeat the motion on the other side of the V-skate.

The hardest part of the V2 motion is being able to balance long enough (while gliding on one ski) to get your arms in position to pole on both sides of the V-skate. Most folks will find themselves doing fine for a couple strokes and then all of a sudden their balance goes south and they start doing a V2 Alternate--meaning they start to simply pole on one side of the V-skate and just glide on the other side. V2 is a fantastic technique for flats and gradual uphills as it provides a "middle gear" between V2 Alternate and the V1.

Diagonal V Skate

Occasionally, conditions or individual fitness or just a wicked steep uphill will make the V-1 impossible. On these steep sections you can either use the classic Herringbone technique or you can use a combination of the classic Diagonal Stride and a basic V-skate.

Diagonal V-Skate simply involves V-skating with your legs while using a single opposite arm-opposite leg motion with the upper body. I find students learn this technique fastest when they think of a "one-one-one" verbal rhythm as they combine upper and lower body motions. Once you get it going, this is a really easy technique and a great way to get over just about any size hill.

HIGH HIP FORWARD POSITION

One useful and very easy drill to "feel" how much you want to drive forward is to stand still on a perfectly flat area. Have your poles in your hands, plant them comfortably in front of you, and lean on them with most of your weight. Now put all your weight on one ski while drawing the other ski back behind you as straight as possible. With the leg you are standing on, flex your ankle and knee very slightly and go as far forward with your weighted hip as you can. Keep your hip and butt high (not sitting) as you go forward! That position - called a "high hip forward" position - is the ideal position for getting maximum drive out of the classic motion. Although it generally takes awhile before skiers can confidently execute this ideal position, knowing what you are after feels like when you start out can be very useful. When practicing your slide and glide always try to "lead" the motion with this high hip position.