

Jackrabbit Level Two Skills

Master fundamental movement skills, develop overall motor skills. Acquire basic cross-country ski skills; equal use of techniques; develop downhill abilities. Focus on balance, agility and rhythm.

Diagonal Stride

In the progression of the Diagonal Stride this is the called the “gliding step”. It is practised on flat terrain with set tracks.

- Some glide occurs with each stride
- The skier lifts skis off the snow when kicking. There is a weight transfer about 50% of the time, and the recovery foot lands beside or in front of the glide foot.
- The skier can perform five successful strides in a row, but balance may be insecure and unnecessary movements may occur
- Poles are typically not yet used for propulsion, but are used in an alternating arm action. (*Think marching soldiers swinging their arms*)
- The body is mainly upright in the Ready Position



Herringbone

This technique should be practised on a moderate uphill slope that is packed, but not too icy.

- The skier steps up a moderate slope, alternating arms and legs
- Tips are kept quite wide apart (in a “V” shape)
- The inside edge of each ski is angled into the snow to eliminate slipping
- Arms swing comfortably
- The pole tips are planted behind and to the side of the feet, and the hands are just below shoulder height
- There is good weight transfer from ski to ski
- The skier completes five steps with each leg



Double Poling

This technique should be practised on a slight downhill slope with set tracks.

- The skier pushes down the track for five metres using only the upper body
- The skier reaches their hands forward to plant the poles
- The pole tips do not come ahead of the pole handles when they are being planted
- The upper body flexes at the waist just after the poles are planted to provide additional propulsion
- The upper-body movement is completed by extending the arms to the rear
- The legs remain fairly straight, but not rigid, through all phases of the movement



Free Glide

This technique should be practised and assessed on a moderate downhill slope that is packed but not too hard or icy. Ideally, the bottom of the hill should be flat in case of emergency landings.

- The skier starts at the top of the hill in the Ready Position; the body is generally upright; knees and ankles are relaxed and slightly bent
- Hands are kept forward
- Skis are kept parallel
- Pole handles are down in front of the body and the tips are angled behind, so the pole shaft is generally angled down and backward without dragging on the snow
- The skier is able to glide five metres down the slope maintaining the Ready Position

**Kick Turn**

This technique should be practised on flat terrain, in loose snow

- The skier stands in the Ready Position
- The skier then reaches back with the right arm outstretched and plants the right pole on the outside of the left ski, near the tail
- Both poles are now planted on the same side of the left ski
- The skier faces to the right
- The skier now lifts the right ski, bending at the knee and hip so the tail of the ski drags on the snow and the ski is perpendicular to the ground
- The skier now moves the right leg so the skis are parallel but the tip of the one ski is beside the tail of the other
- The left leg and pole are now brought around so the ski tips are together and the skier resumes the Ready Position, having completed a 180 degree turn
- The skier performs the technique in both directions
- At this level the skier may require some assistance.



Snowplow Stop

This technique should be practised on a moderate downhill slope that is packed, but icy.

- The skier begins by demonstrating Snowplow Braking
- The skier returns to the top of the slope
- The skier moves down the hill in the Ready Position showing a good wedge and keeping the ski tips together
- By applying equal pressure on the inside edges of the skis (rolling inward with the ankles) the skier is able to safely reduce speed to a full stop

**Half-Snowplow Braking**

- The skier Free Glides down the track on an easy to moderate hill and in softer snow conditions
- Part way down the skier lifts the right ski out of the track and places it in a wedge position with the tip close to the tracks and the tails farther away
- Pressure is applied to the inside edge of the right ski by shifting much of the skier's weight to the ski and rolling inward on the ankle
- The pressure is applied until the skier is able to significantly reduce speed
- Both skis are then placed parallel in the tracks
- Repeat with the left ski

Agility:

Jump turns. Keep skis parallel. Turn your head in the direction you want to jump. Rotate and hop as high you can, twisting lower body to 90°, 120°, 180° or even 360°

[Skill Videos - Agility Hopping and Spinning.mp4 \(coachseye.com\)](#)

Balance:

Glide on one ski as long as possible on a mild downslope; then ski back up and alternate the leg

[Skill Videos - Balance One Foot Glide.mp4 \(coachseye.com\)](#)

Balance

Glide on one ski down a mild downslope and intermittently hop up and land on the same ski. Repeat with the alternate leg.

[Skill Videos - Balance One Foot Hop.mp4 \(coachseye.com\)](#)

Ski Exercises

These activities are designed to improve the balance, agility, coordination, rhythm and confidence on skis that will establish the foundation on which ski technique skills can be developed. The exercises are generally listed in order of difficulty.

Flea Leaps. The skiers jump into the air (on their skis) and land softly in a balanced position.

Stork Stance. The skiers practice standing on one leg while remaining balanced. They are allowed to extend their hands sideways to steady themselves. Alternate legs. Definitely no poles.

Rubber Leg. The skiers first stand tall on one leg/ski, and then relax it, letting it slump into a flexed position at the ankle and knee. Alternate legs.

One-Legged Pops. The skiers pop/spring off one leg, which is bent, and then land on the same ski. Alternate legs

Jackrabbit. Each letter represents an activity. Have the participants guess the next letter and activity:

J Jump and reach for the sky 3x

A Angle forward as far as you can without tipping or slipping, 3x

C Crouch down as far as you can and stand back up 5X

K Kick each leg out slowly to the front and back, 3X each side.

R Reach to the left and right extending far enough to pull your opposite leg off the ground – 5X each side.

A Achilles tendon stretch – slide your right ski forward and bend your knee parallel to the ground. Keep your left leg straight with your ankle locked. Repeat with the other leg.

B Bounce on your toes 10X

B Balance on one ski. Then alternate. Hold as long as you can!

I Itch – scratch each shoulder.

T Tips - touch the tips of your skis with your hands.

Back Leg Lifts. The skiers extend one leg/ski rearward and off the snow while bending forward at the waist. They then move the same leg/ski forward, without weighting it, and return their upper body to an upright position. Repeat with the opposite leg.

Poison Peanut Butter. The skiers lift one ski and then the other off the snow so that the “poison peanut butter” (i.e. the snow), doesn’t stick to their skis. The coach encourages the skiers to keep moving by saying “quick, don’t let the peanut butter stick!”

Stepping Movements. These movements are the basis of the Side Step and Star Turn. They follow on from the “Poison Peanut Butter” exercise above. This exercise should be introduced on packed snow, but it can also be practised in deeper snow when the skiers are ready for the challenge.

To begin with, have the ski poles lying on each side of the skier, parallel to their skis. The skiers step over the poles going first in one direction, and then the other. As the skiers gain competence, several poles can be lined up for them to step over, or they can be placed farther apart to require a longer step. The skiers can also try to jump over the poles with both feet.

Pushaways. Two skiers (partners) face each other, standing on their skis with their feet wide apart for solid balance. One ski is placed between the partner’s skis, with the tips reaching behind the partners’ heels. The skiers can improve their balance and agility skills by trying to push their partner off balance.

Snakes. Skiers form a line, one after the other, with about two metres between each. The skier at the end of the line weaves between the other skiers until he/she comes to the front of the line and then becomes the new leader. For advanced skiers, this exercise can be practised with all the skiers moving slowly forward while the skier from the end of the line is trying to weave forward to the front of the group. Variations can be done on the flat, on a slight downhill, or by skiing around other skiers or other objects.

Rubber Knees. The skiers descend a slight incline using rubber knees and ankles to help absorb bumps.

Tip and Tail Touch. While skiing down a gentle slope, the skiers alternate between touching the tips and tails of their skis with their hands.

Slide Tall and Slide Small. The skiers descend a slight slope, exerting pressure on the tongues of their boots by bending their legs slightly. *Easy* - they alternate between putting a lot of pressure on the tongues (slide small) and a little pressure (slide tall). *Novice* - Challenge the skiers to touch the ground and lift their arms in the air while coming down the hill. *Medium* - Ask them to throw their mitts in the air and catch them while coming down the hill. *Harder* - ask them to catch a glove and throw it back to you (the coach) when they get to the bottom of the hill.

Hinge Hop. While skiing down a gentle slope, the skiers hop, lifting their ski tails and leaving their tips on the snow.

Luge. While skiing down a gentle slope, the skiers first lie back on their skis. Next they practise squatting on their skis until they almost touch the snow with the seat of their pants.

Terrain Leap. Using their poles, the skiers practise a small upward and forward jump, tucking their knees up towards their chest.