

## HELPING YOU TO STAY SAFE ON THE SNOW

## Use your head – wear a helmet!

*The Doctor:  
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Wearing a helmet can prevent many of the most common skiing injuries, but are less effective against the main head injury – blunt trauma.

Studies have failed to show that increased use of helmets has reduced the number of serious head injuries – but this is not surprising, as there are many other variables to consider.

But experts do agree that people are taking more risks in ski parks and on advanced equipment that permits faster skiing and tricks. Ordinary ski

helmets are not designed for falls from height or high-speed collisions. For protection in these circumstances, full-face, motorcycle-type helmets are needed.

Wearing a helmet may reduce your hearing or peripheral vision, impeding your awareness of other slope users, and increasing chances of a collision.

To some extent this has been mitigated with modern helmet design, but still no substitute for keeping your wits about you on crowded slopes.

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Snowsports helmets are important safety equipment, absorbing shocks and resisting dangerous penetrations.

To be sure you are buying something that is suitable, always look for certification from either the EU (CEN 1077 class A or B) or North America (ASTM F2040). Racers need to select helmets with a FIS certification and sticker.

Pay attention to the fit. It should feel snug without exerting any pressure points – many modern helmets have

adjustable sizing systems that let the wearer fine-tune the fit.

You may also want to consider extra safety features such as MIPS (multi-directional impact protection system), tougher materials like carbon fibre, or simply the weight and venting.

When you come to purchase it's worthwhile trying various models and sizes to find the most comfortable, and also trying the helmets with your preferred goggles. Find a retailer with plenty of choice and take your time!

<https://www.ellis-brigham.com/equipment/ski-equipment/ski-helmets>

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When I started skiing the only people wearing helmets were ski racers. Tourist skiers simply didn't need to, as speeds were so much lower.

Over the years there has been a significant change in equipment, piste grooming and fitness, enabling skiers to ski at far greater speeds.

Helmet wearing began in the 80s and 90s with a requirement – mostly by ski schools – that children wear them. Now, in some countries it is a legal requirement for under-12s.

But for adults, a helmet was considered a bit weird; it simply wasn't 'done'. Things were changing by 2000 and after much resistance I first donned 'the hat' in 2010.

Are you insured if you don't sport a helmet? Usually, yes – but check your insurance. We know of one that excludes all ski accidents if no helmet is worn; there may be others. Also for a liability claim a judge might reduce a payout suggesting contributory negligence if there was no helmet.



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