

# SNOWBOARDING INJURIES

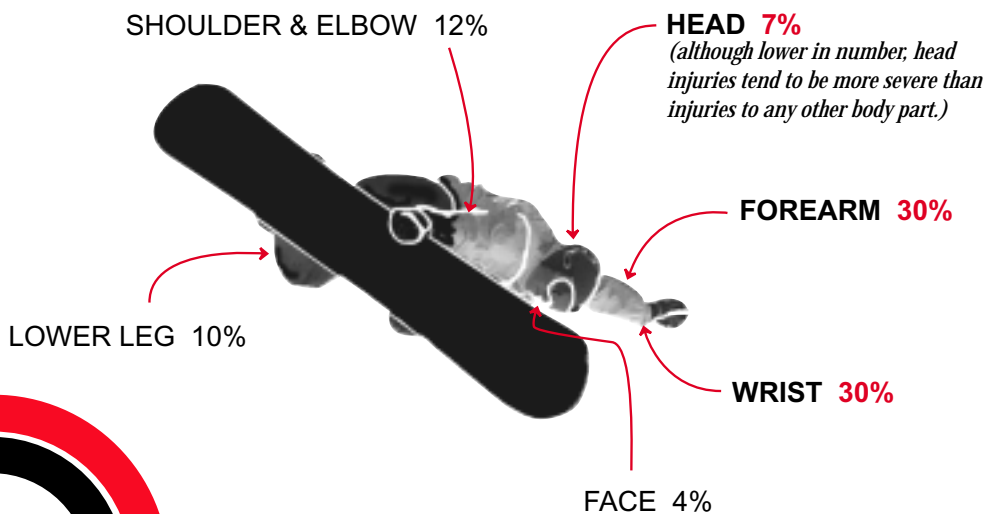
## IS SNOWBOARDING SAFE FOR YOU?

- ✓ Are you a beginner?
- ✓ Are you male?
- ✓ Are you 20 years old or younger?
- ✓ Do you like living on the edge?

If you answered yes to *any* of these questions and plan on snowboarding, then take a minute to read the following and decrease the chances of breaking bones in your body.

Like any other sport, there are risks when you head to the mountains and strap on your snowboard. Your chances of getting hurt increase when you're unfit and physically unprepared for a day of snowboarding. Beginners and intermediate boarders are more likely to get hurt, especially boys between the ages of 10 and 19 years old.

**What gets injured the most?** The arms, wrists and hands are the body parts most often sprained or fractured, as these are what we use to break our falls. Next most injured is the head; particularly when you fall and slam backwards on hard snow.



A grade 12 Freestyle aerialist suffered repeated concussions due to falls. Four weeks after his fifth concussion he continued to suffer from mental and memory problems.

Two males in their early 20's were found laying unconscious on the snow 20 yards apart. One had a cut on his ear, the other a bruised forehead. Neither remembers the collision. Neither was wearing a helmet.

A 16 year old female racer began experiencing long lasting effects and mood disorders following her 3<sup>rd</sup> concussion.

more on next pages..

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SAFE RISKS & PRACTICES

## WHAT CAN YOU DO TO PROTECT YOURSELF?

So how do you make the most of your day and avoid a trip to the hospital? Here's some tips:

- **Wrist guards:** Use them to protect and it will make your learning more fun.
- **Helmet:** a “brain bucket” is a small investment compared to the damage you could cause by hitting your head on something hard.

Tips on buying a helmet:

- a) **Size:** Try on several different helmets before you buy one.
  - b) **Strap:** Pay attention to the chin strap. *The helmet should not move or rotate on your head.*
  - c) **Straight:** Know how a helmet should fit. *A helmet is meant to be worn low on the forehead, just above your eyebrows.*
  - d) **Sticker:** Look for a certification sticker. *There are a few certifications like Snell or CSA.*
- Look into releasable bindings for your snowboard. As with skiing, this will decrease your chance of knee and ankle injury.
  - Board with a buddy and stay away from tree wells. A tree well is the hollow in the snow immediately around trees. These can trap a snowboarder upside down and make it extremely difficult to get out. Skiers and snowboarders have suffocated and died like this.
  - Wear knee pads under your waterproof pants. These help prevent bruised knees and will make your day more comfortable.
  - Use protective padding in ‘fall’ places like your butt and elbows, especially if it's hard pack snow or ice conditions.
  - Wear appropriate clothing. Dress in layers so that you can take off one layer at a time.
  - Warm up before you start. Run in place for a few minutes, then stretch large muscle groups like your calves, thighs, back, arms and hands.
  - Exercise in the preseason. Get in shape before heading up the mountain. You'll have more control of the snowboard with a strong, fit body that doesn't tire out.

## **CONCUSSION** (What you get when you whack your head)

- Dizziness
- Headache
- Sleepy feeling
- Urge to throw-up
- Blurry or double vision
- Ringing in the ears

If you have any of the above symptoms after hitting your head, see the Ski Patrol immediately. A concussion is a serious injury.

## **DOS AND DON'TS**

- Learn to fall so that you don't hurt your wrists. Falling on a fist can help.
- Don't fall on an outstretched arm. Shoulders and collar-bones can be broken or dislocated in this way.
- When you're tired – *STOP!* Injuries happen when you lose concentration and your tired muscles won't do the things you want them to anymore.
- Board under control. This protects both you and others.
- Stay within the ski area boundaries. Out-of-bounds play is never a good idea.
- If you fall getting off the chairlift, get out of the way of those behind you as quickly as possible.
- Take lessons. Stay within your abilities. Most snowboarding injuries occur when someone tries to go beyond his or her level of skill.
- Remain on slopes that are suited for your level. If you get caught on a slope that is too steep or difficult, take it slowly or take off your board and walk down.





## SAFE JUMPING

Flying through the air is fun. However, if you're unprepared, a jump can land you in the first-aid room. Beginners and intermediates trying difficult jumps are a big cause of snowboarding injuries. Getting used to speed, heights and impact *before* attempting tricks is crucial.

Remember: **the higher the height the more severe the injury.** Falls from heights are the greatest causes of broken wrists and concussions.

- Before going into the terrain park, learn to 'ollie' on flat snow. Ollie-ing is jumping up with your board without going over a jump. The front edge of your board should come up higher than the back edge. Get comfortable doing ollies on a flat surface.
- Get comfortable doing ollies on a **sloped groomed run.**
- **Landings:** Check out the landing of a jump before going over it. Stumps, rocks and people below are extreme hazards. Land on a **downward slope.** Landing on a flat surface impacts hard on the ankles, knees and back.
- Start jumping on a 1-2 foot high jump. Approach the jump with a **flat board**, not on your edge. When you reach the jump do an ollie to get a boost.
- In the air, concentrate on 2 things:
  - a) keep your body upright, and
  - b) look immediately for a **landing spot.**
- Land flat on the board, not on the edges. Help absorb the shock by **bending your knees.**
- Once you've mastered small jumps, you can progress to bigger ones and mid-air tricks.

**Not getting hurt while snowboarding is your responsibility. Even protective equipment is not foolproof. A helmet, for instance, is useless if you don't use the brain inside it to make smart, safe decisions.**


## ...IS SNOWBOARDING SAFE?

*Yes, provided it's done with proper preparation, proper equipment, and awareness of warning signs and potential hazards such as those described above. It's up to you!*

**KNOWING IS HALF THE BATTLE... THE OTHER HALF IS YOU.  
PLAY IT SAFE AND SMART**

The British Columbia Injury Research and Prevention Unit (BCIRPU) is committed to meeting the challenge of making BC a safe place to live and work by coordinating efforts that will prevent or reduce injuries, their consequences, and costs.

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*Never jump without checking the landing first.*

*In an experiment in which ten volunteers were temporarily placed upside-down in a simulated tree-well, none were able to rescue themselves.*

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