

happy skiers start with warm socks

As parents, we all make mistakes, but with our limited skiing days (remember, winter is short), it's important to put some effort into making sure our kids are having the best experience possible.

Cold feet and hands are the most common problem for young skiers. Use this checklist for success:

Dry socks

A dry pair of socks needs to be put on right before you put on your boots. This makes a big difference.

Wool socks

No cotton, no blends. Really. I mean it.

Dry boots

Boots need to be dried out near a heat source between uses. They can't stay in the car or garage.



photo: Jennifer Larson

Warm hands, warm feet, smiling skiers.

No updrafts

Cold hands can often mean your body is too cool. Make sure jackets are not too big and billowy. To stop drafts, stuff jackets into pants, tighten drawstrings, or wear a drink belt.

Put on a hat (and a neck gator)

We all know we lose a lot of heat through our heads. But making sure your ears and neck are covered is just as important. I'm not sure how we used to survive without neck gators, because they seem like a necessity now.

Good gloves

Good ski gloves/mittens are an investment and can only be found at ski retailers, but they are worth it. Keeping track of these should be in your job description.

Hand/Foot warmers

I only use these when I have to, but I'm usually very glad I have a few in my pocket. These are oxygen activated and you can "turn them off" by putting them in an airtight container. I get about three uses out of each pack.

Lose the poles

Let go of that cold plastic grip and your fingers will be surrounded by the uncompressed insulation of your gloves. Skiing without poles also forces you to swing your arms, getting blood out to the tips of the fingers.

Calories

A skier that is low on calories will have a hard time staying warm. Bringing back up snacks and drinks is always a good idea.

Get into the woods

Wind is a big deal. If there is any breeze at all, you will have a harder time getting and staying warm. You can alleviate this effect by getting into a wooded section of ski trail as soon as you can. It is well worth checking wind speed and direction when planning your clothing and your first few moves on the snow.

Ski when its warm

If its sunny and above 25 degrees, your kids will have a good time. So, on those rare days in the Midwest when its warm and you can ski when the sun is high, drop everything and get outside. You won't regret it. And don't forget about those precious weeks of spring skiing in late February and early March. These are often the highlight of the winter.

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