

SKI YOURSELF SLIM FOR CHRISTMAS!

Contributed by Annelies Van de Velde
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We are only nine weeks away from Christmas, the shops are full of festive fare and the office party is in the diary - now couldn't be a better time kick-start your festive fitness routine, banish unwanted bulges and look great in your LBD!

A week-long ski holiday can be a great way to tone up and loose weight for Christmas. This fun but demanding sport can burn nearly 500 calories an hour and will use muscles you never knew existed! And, as it is recommend that skiers prepare for up to eight-weeks before travelling it can be a great motivator to kick-start your festive fitness.

But what if you've never skied before?

Don't panic, you won't be left at the top of a black-run on your first day! The wide nursery slopes are ideal for getting to grips with the basics and the structured lessons with English-speaking instructors will ensure you are confident on the snow. There are also plenty of other activities you can do such as snowmobile tours, husky-pulled sledges, ice skating and some well-earned pampering in a relaxing spa!

After a busy day on the slopes the popular ski resorts come alive! The infamous après ski provides a chance to recover from a tiring day and the traditional alpine fare of fondue and wine is easily available across many European resorts. There are some simple exercises you can start at home to help increase muscle strength and flexibility. Combined with a sensible diet, you could see yourself fitting into that LBD sooner than you thought!

Start with leg exercises to increase muscle strength, lunges and squats are great and can be done easily in the privacy of your home. If you usually use the lift at work try taking the stairs

Use light-weights to increase upper-arm strength. A cans of baked beans or 500ml bottles of water are inexpensive and effective

Walk! A few brisk walks to the shops can be a great way to build on your general fitness ability

And...stretch! Even expert skiers fall and the more flexible you are the more movement you have. Yoga is a great way to increase flexibility

High snowfall is predicted for December across Europe and there are many deals around for early-bookers. This year Mark Warner Ski Holidays cost up to 20% less then last year and many operators have deals including free lift passes, free child places and discounted ski hire.

For example, you can enjoy a week in the French ski resort of Tignes from just £499. Both beginners and experienced skiers can enjoy the picturesque high-altitude location and variety of runs. The Chaletotel Hauts de Tovièrè boasts a great location close to both the nursery slopes, lifts and village centre. The modern decor blends well with rustic charm and the 3-star hotel offers a swimming pool, large dining room and bar. Included in the price are flights and transfers, welcome drinks, breakfast each day, afternoon tea and a three-course meal with wine. Ski lessons, equipment hire and lift passes can be pre-booked. Visit www.markwarner.co.uk for details.