

Course offers slope longevity

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If you've got skiers' knees, then "Bumps for Boomers" may sound like the last type of self-improvement course for you. However, an Aspen instructor has perfected a new approach to teaching mogul and powder techniques to increase the skiing longevity of the mature skier.

Joe Nevin, founder and coach for Bumps for Boomers, has been teaching baby boomers (46-64 age range) to ski longer and safer in both bumps and powder for the past seven years. Nevin first got the idea when a research study revealed that baby boomer skiers were primarily interested in skiing longevity. "But the boomers are getting older, slowing down and concerned about injury. They are also worried about skiing on overcrowded runs where they could get knocked down," said Nevin.

Throwing away all pre-conceived notions on how to teach off-piste skiing, Nevin decided to make older skiers feel safer in bumps and powder than on groomers where 80 % of skiers congregate and the chance of a collision is highest. "The single biggest differentiator is teaching people to ski moguls without the need for fast reflexes," he explained.

The secret to his success: 95cm long ski boards - sometimes known as "blades" - which he uses for the first two days of the four-day courses. The truncated boards challenge auto-movement patterns and help define and eradicate bad habits on traditional skis. "I take skiers outside the box and put them on equipment they've never seen before. They become the most attentive students and are able to break the old connection between the brain and the feet. They go on to learn new skills very quickly," says Nevin.

Within the first hour students figure out their new centre of balance and two hours into the first lesson are skiing slowly on bumps with control. The four-day course also incorporates powder-skiing technique which Nevin says is very similar to mogul skiing. "Groomed run technique is one category, and then there's off piste technique which is similar whether it's moguls or powder," he explains.

Around 87 % of Bumps for Boomers students are 50 or older and 68 % come to Aspen specifically for the program, having seen it online through the website or social media. The course is backed up by weekly online ski tips as well as a ski fitness training series developed by Aspen physical therapist and personal trainer, Bill Fabrocini.

A four day clinic – taught by boomer-age instructors - costs \$1,196 per person. Call 970 989 2529 for details or go to www.bumpsforboomers.com.

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