



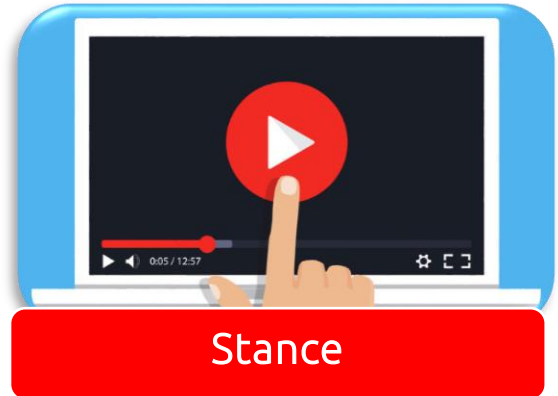
## Dry Land Training

### Stance

The stance used in snowboarding is slightly different than that used in sports such as skiing, because it is a countered position. This means that the athlete's feet will point off to the side, while the body is countered so that the torso is pointing downhill.

The athlete should start in a relaxed athletic stance, with the knees slightly bent and the feet approximately shoulder width apart. With the feet stationary, the athlete will then turn their shoulders slightly toward the front of the board (and toward the front foot).

Your athlete can practice this position first on a flat surface, and then on the snowboard with no bindings. Finally, have your athlete put on their snowboard and assume the correct stance. It is important to remind athletes that stances are too rigid to snowboard properly, and that they will constantly be moving while in their stance.



### Dry Land Skills

While on a flat surface, and practicing stance, your athletes can begin to become familiar with the skills required to snowboard, and with their equipment. This is a good time to quiz athletes on terms like nose, tail, heel-edge, toe-edge, etc. The more familiar your athletes are with equipment, the less confusion will arise as you try to explain movements while on-hill.

### Balance

To work on balance, simple drills can be used.

For example, have your athletes stand on a flat surface (without a board), and practice jumping up and landing in their stance. While in their stance (both with and without the snowboard), have your athletes feel what happens when they lean forward, and to the sides.

Have them practice leaning and then returning to a centered stance position. Remember to ask a lot of questions about how they are feeling.



As a coach, you may need to be close to prevent falls, especially when practicing balance while strapped into a snowboard. A lot of successful snowboard riding depends on how well an athlete can maintain balance, or recover balance when it has been lost.

### Rotation

An athlete can feel rotation by standing in a snowboard stance, and tuning the upper body to the left and right. The athlete should try to maintain a good athletic snowboarding position. Have your athletes experiment with rotation of the upper body first on a flat surface, followed by standing on the snowboard without bindings, and finally while clipped into the snowboard.

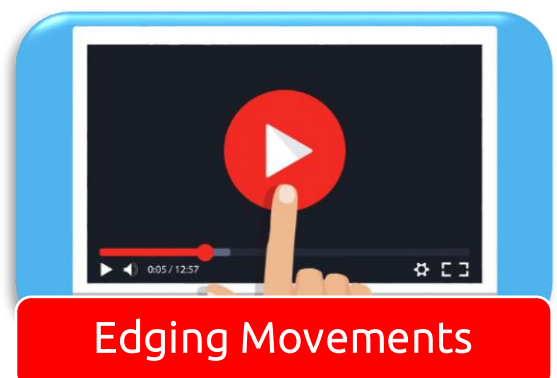
### Edging Movements

Start by showing your athlete the way a board moves when it is on edge. Start with a board lying on a flat surface. This is the position of the board when it is running straight. Tip the board toward the toeside and then the heelside to demonstrate how a board moves when turns are made. Show how a board starts by running flat, then edges on one side, goes back to flat, and then edges to the other side.

Next, have your athlete stand on a flat surface in a snowboard stance. Explain that this is the correct stance for running straight ahead. Have the athlete concentrate their weight on the toes, while maintaining balance (like pressing on a gas pedal). Follow by having the athlete concentrate their weight on the heels (like lifting off of the gas pedal or like digging in with the heels). It should be stressed that an upright position and balance are to be maintained at all times, even when weight is shifted. If the athlete is falling forward or back, they are applying too much weight, or leaning.

The athlete should follow each of these movements by returning to a centered stance with weight evenly distributed.

Finally, have the athlete clip in with one foot while standing on the board. Have the athlete place the free foot in front of the board on the toeside. Have the athlete tip the board onto its toe edge by standing on the ground and lifting and tilting the board with the clipped foot. Reverse this process for the heelside. Have the





athlete place the free foot on the floor on the heelside of the board, followed by tipping the board with the clipped foot.

## Pressure Movements

The idea of pressure can best be demonstrated rather than explained.

- Have your athlete sit in a chair.
  - Place one or both of the athlete's feet in your hands with the knees bent.
  - To show downward pressure, have the athlete push his or her feet toward you.
  - To demonstrate the effect that reducing pressure may have, ask the athlete pull their feet away.
- Next have the athlete stand on a flat surface in a snowboard stance.
  - Have the athlete practice lowering (increasing pressure) by bending the knees while in an upright position – not by bending over.
- Next have the athlete practice rising (reducing pressure) by rising up – without standing up straight).

Have the athlete practice these movements on a flat surface, then on a board with no bindings, and finally while clipped into the board.



## Snowboard Set-up and Stance Adjustment

It is best to have the snowboard set up by a qualified technician at a reputable shop; however, it can be done by a coach.

Start by inspecting all of the equipment for loose screws, missing parts, etc. Next, determine the athlete's stance.



## Determining Stance

While many boards are made to be ridden forward and backward (fakie), each athlete will have a dominant foot that will remain forward in most situations.

Most people have their left foot forward when riding a board. This is known as a *Regular Stance*.

Some athletes will prefer to ride with their right foot forward. This is known as a *Goofy-foot Stance*.

It is not safe to assume that all of your athletes will ride with the same foot forward. Each rider has an individual preference that is not related to hand dominance. A good way to check your athlete for foot preference is to ask if they have engaged in similar board-sport activities (i.e., wake boarding, skateboarding and slalom skiing). If they have, they will most likely ride a snowboard in the same way. Another quick way to check stance is to use one of the following simple tests:

### Method 1: Push Test

1. Have your athlete stand up straight with both feet placed together.
2. Gently push your athlete forward from behind until he or she is forced to put a foot out to maintain balance.
3. In most cases, the foot that is used by the athlete to catch himself or herself will be the forward foot when riding

For uncomfortable athletes or those with balance problems, have another coach stand in front to prevent falls.

### Method 2: Ball Kick Test

1. Have your athlete kick a ball for you.
2. In most cases the foot used for kicking will be the preferred front foot for your athlete.
3. The final check will be to communicate constantly with your athlete as he or she learns to snowboard.

It may take some time for your athlete to get comfortable with the equipment, and some measure of trial and error to be sure which foot should be forward.



### **Method 3: Push-up Test**

1. Have your athlete get down in the push-up position.
2. Ask the athlete to stand up out of the push-up position; the foot that steps forward first will be the dominant leg.

### **Method 4: Slide Test**

1. Have your athlete, while wearing socks, take a few steps and slide on a gymnasium floor.

In most cases, the foot that is the dominant leg will be the forward foot when sliding.

### **Method 5: Skateboarding Test**

1. If available, have your athlete ride a skateboard. Assistance with support may be necessary from the coach.

The stance that the athlete finds most comfortable will be their stance.

### **Determining Stance Angles**

Modern bindings have marks on the mounting pieces to help you determine the binding angle. In simple terms, you want both feet angled toward the front of the board with the front foot angle slightly more.

Snowboarders riding racing boards may use stance angles of up to 60 degrees, while freestyle riders may use a more neutral stance. Start your athletes with a stance angle of 3-12 degrees for the back foot and 12-24 degrees for the front foot, as determined by what feels comfortable for the athlete.

If, while riding, the athletes' toes drag in the snow, the stance angle should be increased. Once the basics have been learned, stance angles can be changed according to comfort and preference. As with stance, a certain amount of trial and error may be necessary.

### **On-snow Training**

One word of caution before you begin practicing skills on the snow: Snowboarding is more difficult than it looks at the beginning stages. The natural assumption of most students is that the on-hill movements will be as easy to perform on the snow as they



are on dry land. This is simply not true. Almost every student will be tempted to start out by going straight to the top of the hill, and our athletes are no different.

**RESIST THIS TEMPTATION!**

If there is one piece of advice that should be followed when learning to snowboard, it is that snowboarding skills are best learned at slow speeds on shallow terrain. If you progress up the hill too soon, you will only increase the likelihood and severity of falls. Please remember that one bad fall can end your lesson, and in some cases can cause an athlete to quit snowboarding!

The teaching progression that has been outlined here has been designed with the safety (and success) of the athlete in mind. Learning to snowboard safely can seem slow at first, but extra time taken to practice and master skills on shallow terrain will pay off by helping the athlete adjust more quickly later.

