

Fast Trax Run & Ski Shop
Second-Hand Equipment Advice
October 2020

With the booming popularity of cross-country skiing, we at Fast Trax know that the second-hand market is important for many people, and also a great way to contribute to the sustainability of the sport.

Having equipment that properly fits is a huge part of making sure you're ready to have fun on the trails.

And, while the following guide is not a substitute for a personalized in-store fitting, this will be a good starting place when buying and selling second-hand gear.

Skis

Adults / Juniors

For adults, the length and stiffness of skis is determined by body weight. In other words, your skis care a lot more about how much you weigh than how tall you are.

Therefore, for adults, it is best to ensure that the person selling the skis is approximately the same weight as you.

This applies to both classic and skate skis, but is particularly important for classic skiing where the grip zone needs to be compressed to the snow so that you can get the traction you need to move forward.

While much less important, the length of your skis does matter to some extent. If you are just starting out with cross-country skiing, the ski may well be chosen a bit shorter. For advanced skiers, longer models are suitable.

Children

Cross-country skis for kids are available in lengths between about 110 and 170 cm. In case of doubt, it is always better to choose a slightly shorter version - especially if the child is new to the sport.

The following rule of thumb can be used for kids:

- **Skating:** For beginners take the body size and subtract 5-10 cm. For advanced kids take the body size and add 5 - 10 cm.
- **Classic:** For beginners take the body size and add 10 cm. For advanced kids take the body size and add 10 - 20 cm.

Classic Skis

A brief word on the grip zone of classic skis. That zone may have one of a variety of mechanisms to get grip on the snow, each of which have pros and cons:

- Waxable - requiring the application of kick wax
- Waxless fish scales - no wax is required, the snow needs to have some softness for the scales to bite into
- Waxless skins - no wax is required, this tends to be the construction of more modern and/or higher end waxless skis, useful in a wider range of conditions. Waxless skins have become the low-maintenance choice for many skiers in recent years.

Boots

As far as boots are concerned, it is very important that you try them on wearing the socks you will use for skiing. A good fit with enough space (but not too much) is critical.

Ensure that the boots are not pinching or rubbing. Modern materials do not “break in”. If there is a spot that feels bad right now, that spot is going to be 100x more painful at the end of an outing. The boots need to feel good from the moment you try them on.

The boots need to match your expected technique:

Dedicated **skate boots** are tall and very stiff; perfect for the side to side skating motion, but miserable for classic.

Dedicated **classic boots** are low and flexible; made for diagonal stride, but too floppy for skating.

Combi (also known as skiathlon) boots generally have a flexible sole with a taller cuff and are suitable for either technique.

Lastly, ensure that the boots are compatible with your bindings. The systems to be aware of are:

- SNS
- NNN / Prolink

Poles

Just like the skis and boots, poles need to be the correct length. For both kids and adults a good rule of thumb is:

- **Classic cross-country skiing:** Body size x 0.85 (or maximum reaching the armpit)
- **Skating:** Body size x 0.90 (or maximum up to chin/nose height)

The length of most poles is marked on the shaft.

Selling Equipment

Fast Trax recommends sellers include the following information in an online post when selling equipment:

- Descriptive details (brand, model, condition, etc.)
- Price
- Size (and approximate weight range for skis)
- Binding system, when applicable (SNS or NNN/Prolink)
- Location

New Gear

Ultimately, nothing beats a new piece of equipment selected exactly for your needs and sized just for you. At Fast Trax Run & Ski shop, we love to share our passion for skiing and would be happy to help you with new equipment. For more information visit: <https://www.ftrs.ca/>