



# Ski-to-Ski Balance Progression to Gain Efficiency in V2

By: Brenda Winkler, PSIA/AASI # 219822



Photo #1. Pelvis Level, Body Stacked Over Left Foot. Left ski is flat.



Photo #2. Pelvis Tilted, Body Not Stacked Over Left Foot. Weight is on the inside edge of the left ski.

V2 is a technique that is generally used in fast conditions in downhill, flat, & slightly uphill terrain. Many racers are using V2 in all but the steepest terrains. However, in order to execute an effective V2 you must have good ski-to-ski balance. The following progression or sequence of activities was developed to help students master V2; but will also help the novice to advanced skier increase ski-to-ski balance. I have seen two reoccurring body position issues with students trying to execute a V2: the student skis are in a wide V, similar to V1; and the students' center of mass remains between the skis, keeping their body weight on the inside edge of both skis.

The key is a **good body position** starting with a flex in the ankle, soft knee and a **stable panel** which includes a quiet upper body, **pelvis level and body stacked** over the your base of support (foot); not tilted forward (breaking at the hips) or tilted to one side or the other. Breaking at the hips puts the skiers weight back reducing core stability, decreasing glide and efficiency. Tilting to one side or the other causes the skier to counter balance with other body parts (hip, knee, shoulder) creating instability while gliding. Excessive twisting from side-to-side is also a no-no as it is an unnecessary body movement wasting precious energy.

A great way to visually observe or feel a level pelvis is to try the following in a **static** position while either looking in a mirror or you can try this on the snow with your skis on. Put your hands on your hips, feet hip distance apart, flex your ankles and soften your knees creating a slight forward lean. Lift your right foot slightly off the ground. Did you remain stacked (ankle, knee, hip, shoulder in line) over your left standing foot (**Photo #1**)? Can you bounce up and down comfortably on the standing leg? Or did you lead with your shoulder causing your hip, knee alignment to fall apart (not stacked; **Photo #2**)? If you fell to the left side try this again but, before you pick your right foot up really stick your left hip out. This will help keep a level pelvis and remain stacked over your left foot. Now try the other side. You may notice that it is easier to balance on one side. Remember to practice both sides to obtain good ski-to-ski balance.

**Ski-to-Ski Balance Practice Drill.** Maintaining a level pelvis on a flat gliding ski (**dynamic**) is challenging especially if your body position is off and you are moving fast. The following progression begins in a safe setting, then incrementally adds levels of complexity to gain confidence in executing ski-to-ski balance while performing a V2.

1. Start with flat to slightly uphill terrain with your skis in groomed classic tracks. Put both skis in the tracks, maintain a good body position as described above.
  - Lift one ski slightly off the snow, keep the gliding ski flat and ski tips in line. If you feel yourself falling to one side really focus on pushing the hip out so your pelvis remains level and body stacked over the gliding ski.
  - Perform 5 easy double poles with complete poling follow through. Switch to the other ski. Repeat multiple times to gain confidence.
  - As confidence builds, increase propulsion with more dynamic poling.
2. Practice drill #1 out of the tracks. Maintain a flat ski and keep a narrow V.
3. Practice drill #2 but only pole twice on each side. Add a slight kick before weight transfer to the new ski to increase propulsion.

Once you gain confidence balancing on a flat ski progress to practicing V2 timing and increasing your propulsion (stronger kick and pole plant). By practicing ski-to-ski balance on a flat ski, while maintaining a narrow V keeping your skis directed more down the trail than diagonally, you will gain speed and efficiency. As a self check look at your ski tracks in the snow to see if you are landing on a flat ski and compare how long you can maintain balance on one ski at a time. I have found V2 to be one of my favorite techniques, it is fast, relaxing and fun.