

For a break from the crowds, head to the **(cross)** country

NORDIC SKIING OFFERS FITNESS AND SERENITY THAT THE WHOLE FAMILY CAN ENJOY

BY LAUREN GLENDENNING | BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE TOWN OF FRISCO

DOWNHILL SKIING and snowboarding might be one of Summit County's primary winter draws, but bustling ski resorts can't touch the solitude you find when you strap on a pair of cross-country skis. "It's so peaceful and quiet. There aren't any chairlifts or people whizzing by you," said Vanessa Agee, an avid touring skier and Frisco's director of marketing and communications. There are two types of Nordic skiing, classic skiing and skate skiing. With classic, you scoot the skis along in narrow tracks, while skate skiing is done outside the tracks and looks more like ice-skating with long skis. And yet another option similar to Nordic skis are metal-edged touring skis, which are best used on steeper terrain and designed for both the uphill and downhill. Within each style, there are different techniques to use for going up, down or on the flats, said Whitney Hedberg, director



of the Summit Nordic Ski Club. "Summit County is an incredible place to cross-country ski," she said. For anyone looking for another option off the ski resort slopes this winter, here's what you need to know to get into the sport.

CLASSIC SKIS VS. SKATE SKIS

For excellent aerobic exercise, cross-country skiing of any kind will get your lungs burning. Through kicking and gliding motions in groomed parallel tracks, classic skiing is a full-body workout. The skis are longer than skate skis and have a tiny skin on the bottom to assist in climbing, Agee said. It takes time to master the technique, but a beginner can get around on the skis with relative ease almost right away. "Plenty of people have a

great time going out on the skis just being on the trails and walking around on them," Hedberg said. "You can do that with horrible technique."

Skate skis are shorter, smoother and narrower than classic skis so they can glide more quickly over the snow.

METAL-EDGE TOURING SKIS

A pair of touring skis is a great alternative for people who want to cover some ground and venture further into the hills. A touring setup feels more natural, akin to walking, Hedberg said. You can control your speed, how much you're pushing yourself and how far you want to go. "You can do it at any level," she said. "We love to use the groomed trails, but one of our favorite things to do is go (touring) on some of the

hiking trails around here. It's slower-paced and you get to explore a lot of terrain, but it's really accessible." Most Nordic centers rent touring skis.

GEAR AND CLOTHING

If you show up for a day of cross-country skiing wearing your regular alpine gear, you're going to get hot and it could spoil your time. Hedberg said a wool or synthetic baselayer topped with something that's breathable and not totally waterproof are best.

Hedberg likes to use a headband rather than a hat because her head gets hot. Helmets aren't really recommended because the terrain doesn't demand them, she said.

"Dress more like you're going out for a winter run," she said.

As for the equipment, the top-of-the-line gear can get expensive, but you don't need anything too fancy to go out and enjoy the trails. And in terms of renting equipment and trail passes, you can rent a complete setup, take a lesson, buy a trail pass and some lunch and still have money left over compared to a day at an alpine ski resort.

"I think that it's just a great way to augment going alpine skiing or snowboarding," Agee said.



LEARN TO NORDIC SKI

The Frisco Nordic Center is located on the Peninsula Recreation Area and offers 27 kilometers of ski trails. For information about lessons, rental equipment, trails and more, call 970-668-2570.

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