

# THE CHAIR AND KNO SKI MOUNTAINEERING PROS SOUND OFF

**Who doesn't want to ski steep, fun lines in deep powder? Who doesn't want to push their limits and have new experiences?**

This is the essence of ski mountaineering, and as more people explore the backcountry, ski mountaineering objectives are becoming increasingly ambitious. From backyard summits to the Seven Summits (pg. 52), skiers and riders are taking their craft into the realm of traditional mountaineering—and succeeding—like never before. But to navigate technical objectives safely, it's not enough just to be fit, or a ripping skier or rider. These environments require an additional set of skills. The good news is that learning how to be safe in ski mountaineering situations is fun, and there are plenty of resources available. Hire a guide, or attend one of the growing numbers of ski mountaineering camps to maximize your education. There's no substitute for hands-on experience, but these four mountain pros provide a starting point to take your skiing and riding to the next level. —The Editors

Joe Wojciechowski chasin' some tail, Whitetail Couloir, MT Photo: Simon Peterson



## RESOURCES

To learn more about proper mountaineering skills, equipment, and history, be sure to add the following titles to your mountain library.

### Mountaineering:

**The Freedom of the Hills, Seventh Edition**  
By Steven M. Cox, Kris Fulsaa  
\$38 — mountaineersbooks.org

**Free Skiing: How to Adapt to the Mountain**  
by Jimmy Oden  
\$65 — freeskiing.nu

### Backcountry Skiing:

**Skills for Ski Touring and Ski Mountaineering**  
By Martin Volken, Scott Schell and Margaret Wheeler  
\$22 — mountaineersbooks.org

## KNOTS

### GIRTH HITCH:

For securing a looped cord or sling to a binding (pg. 46), anchor (pg. 50), or harness, it's tough to beat the easy, fast girth hitch. Use a carabiner on the other end of the loop for most applications.



### MUNTER HITCH:

This is a sliding knot that cinches onto itself when you tension the braking side, creating enough friction to hold a belayed fall, or control a rappel. Since it only requires a locking carabiner, it's a simple, lightweight method, but it twists the rope and can create unmanageable snarls.



### OVERHAND:

For quickly tying into an anchor on a bight, equalizing multi-point anchors, or creating hand loops for lowering (pg. 50), the overhand knot is an essential tool. But since it can cinch down very tightly when weighted, and be difficult to untie (especially while wearing gloves), it is often replaced by the figure eight loop or clove hitch (see "Resources" to learn more).



## SHARPENING ICE TOOLS

You should keep your crampons and ice axes sharp and clean for longevity and performance. **Don't use a bench-grinder**, as the heat it can produce will ruin the temper of the alloy. With a clean, sharp **mill bastard file**, file in one direction (toward the tip of your ice axe pick or crampon points) until clean, shiny metal is all you see and any burrs or damage are gone, leaving a knife-sharp edge.