

## ACC OTTAWA SECTION TELEMARX SKIING LEVEL DEFINITIONS

V1.1, 4 Nov 02

Level	Skiing Ability (Telemark)
Beginner (B)	Links several telemark turns on Green runs under good snow conditions; limited off-piste ski experience; sticks to wide open gentle slopes
Low Int. (LI)	Links telemark turns on Blue runs under good snow conditions; prefers wide open moderate slopes; survival skis or walks down anything steep and narrow; gaining off-piste ski experience
Intermediate (I)	Good telemark style on Blue runs under most snow conditions and some Black runs; cautiously descends moderately steep and narrow trails with a mix of telemark and survival ski technique; has gone on numerous backcountry ski trips; has some exposure to avalanche safety training
Strong Int. (SI)	Good telemark style on Black runs under most snow conditions; uses parallel technique under favourable conditions; challenged but telemark skies steep and narrow trails with caution; extensive backcountry ski experience; has taken an avalanche safety course; understands the fundamentals of route finding and navigation in avalanche terrain
Advanced (A)	Good telemark style on Double Diamond runs under most snow conditions; interchangeably mixes telemark and parallel technique; extensive backcountry ski experience in mountainous terrain; confidently skis steep and narrow trails; skilled in route finding and navigation in avalanche terrain

While we use downhill ski slope designations for reference, backcountry skiing is by definition “off-piste” (i.e. off groomed slopes or trails) with widely varying terrain and snow conditions. It requires skiing with a day pack. The term “backcountry skiing” can be confusing as it has many uses. BC gear is much more robust than “cross-country” skis commonly used on groomed trails. BC has two broad categories – touring and telemark. There is also Alpine Touring equipment which is used in the same conditions as telemark gear. To add further confusion, you can tour on telemark skis and execute telemark turns on touring skis. We often do both. By touring gear, we mean robust metal-edged skis, with a typical waist of 55mm, modest sidecut of about 15mm, robust binding (NNN-BC, Salomon SNS, heavy duty 3-pin) and ankle height leather boots. By telemark gear, we mean fatter robust metal-edged skis, with a typical waist of 70-90mm, strong sidecut of about 30mm, robust binding (3-pin cable, toe piece with heel cable), stiff high-cut plastic or leather boots with straps and adjustable poles. Skins are used for steep ascents. For ACC Ottawa trips, touring gear is appropriate for the Gatineau Park backcountry, Papineau-Labelle, some parts of the Laurentians and Daks. Telemark or AT gear is appropriate for mountainous terrain found in the Laurentians, Daks, Green and White mountains, Chic Chocs, etc., not to mention the Rockies. Sometimes, both types of gear will be suitable for a given trip. In this case, the trip difficulty level will be about one grade higher for touring than telemark gear. BC skiing difficulty is mainly determined by snow conditions (highly variable), terrain and vegetation density. Skiing in avalanche terrain is hazardous, requiring proper training, equipment, experience, knowledge and, above all, sound judgment. Select trips within your current capabilities. See [Trip Participant Guidelines](#). *You are responsible for your own safety at all times.*