

My Killer Level 1 Wedge Turn Progression

I went out and did training with the Level 1 candidates last night and I decided to come up with a killer wedge progression for them – as a gift. It's something they can copy and use on their Level 1 exam if they want. It turned out pretty well. I think if they presented it well, it could help them pass PSIA Level 1 Alpine.

So here it is. Here are my notes and description about what I did – my gift for you!

The lesson assignment would be something like this: "Your students can effectively stop in a wedge, but do not know how to make turns. Guide them to making turns in a wedge and lead them toward skiing in parallel their next lesson."

Introduction

I went over how what we're going to learn is how to make turns using a wedge. They already knew how to stop in a wedge. We went over names. We went over the athletic stance and they showed me how to do a wedge as we stood still (didn't move) on the snow.

Static #1

"To make a turn in our wedge, we guide our ski tips together and push the tails out. Now, if you can flatten your right ski you'll go to the right. To flatten it, push down on the pinky toe."

I then watched to make sure they just tipped using the pinky toe push – not by moving their body over the ski to flatten it. Had they done that, I would have said, "Let's instead try lifting the arch of our foot and tip it toward the little toe." in that case. Feel free to mention this if you want since saying it more than one way is fine, and will help you on the exam.

Traverse Right

We put it in motion and started in a medium wedge (gliding wedge), then pushed down the pinky toe of the right foot to flatten it and we went to the right, uphill (low intensity). I gave them feedback (good and what to improve).

Traverse Left

We did the same thing to the left, but flattened the left ski, going uphill (the quick static was flattening the left ski). I gave them feedback (good and what to improve).

Increase the Intensity

Next, I added some “D.I.R.T.” to it (duration, intensity, rate, and timing) in the form of increasing the intensity as we aimed more down the fall line and did turns left and right.

Static #2

I wasn't sure if this would work, but I figured it out as I did it and it worked great.

I had them pop out of their skis, and we walked an “S” line in a wedge. Yes, it worked (I had never done this before). To simulate a wedge walking, we slid the foot that was flat and stepped the foot on its edge (stepping the inside edge). When we went left, we kept the left foot flat, then both feet went flat at transition, then the right foot was flat going into the right turn.

After I demonstrated it, they did it. During the demo, I emphasized how the transition worked where we went back to our normal wedge, then flattened the other ski to start the next turn.

OK, so our feet weren't really in a wedge, but the point was how to get through transition. And this worked fine. We then got back into our skis.

Connect Two Turns

I then demonstrated what we just did statically, making two turns with a transition between turns. They did it and I gave them feedback (good or what to improve).

Increase the intensity

We then connected two more turns on more of a slope and we used a smaller wedge. The emphasis here was turn shape. If we come across the hill, we can use the hill to slow us down before we make the next turn, resulting in a rounder-looking turn.

I statically moved my skis closer to show them, then I did my turns, controlling my speed by traversing across the hill in my transition before making my next turn. They all followed and I gave them feedback.

Optionally, if you have time, you can do left and right traverses again with a smaller wedge, then go into linking turns with smaller wedges.

Wrap Up

We all gathered, and I pulled information from them by calling them by name and asked then what we did first, what we did after that, etc. I filled in some other points, then mentioned how, in our next lesson, we can work on making our wedge even smaller (parallel), and make turns that way. When we do that, we'll be able to ski more efficiently, and be able to explore more of the mountain. I then thanked them for coming.

That's it. It's pretty simple, it was effective, and it took about 20 minutes.

Key points:

- Remember how I applied D.I.R.T. (duration, intensity, rate, and timing)? That's important.
- Think about where I started with everyone, then where I took them to. We started just in a stopping wedge, then we ended up where we were ready to start going parallel in the next lesson. My lesson filled in the gap between those two points because that was the assignment.

How did I construct this progression?

I took the wedge turn, made it simpler (brought down intensity) by traversing, then we got into doing 2 turns with a transition, then I increased intensity with a smaller wedge, getting them ready for the next lesson.

Which fundamentals did we use?

1. Control the relationship of the center of mass to the base of support to direct pressure along the length of the skis
2. Control pressure from ski to ski and direct pressure toward the outside ski

To do a wedge, having your center of mass over your skis (more forward) will help direct pressure onto the inside edges of the skis. And you can emphasize that, in a turn, they'll need to have more pressure on the outside (downhill) ski. To flatten a ski, they should have weight (pressure) off of it, which puts pressure on the correct ski in a turn.

Study this lesson – I hope it makes sense writing about it and not seeing it. Feel free to use it for your Level 1 or in your lessons with the public. I think it'll help you pass – but you have to lead the class well and present it well, of course (so, no guarantees).

I need to update [my book](#), and I will soon. I'll be shadowing a Level 1 exam soon, so I'll make updates after then, but I've heard my books are still really helping people and many people have been ordering them, so get on that!