



WOMEN getting with the program:

Mastering your body can help you master the slopes says Rachael Oakes-Ash.

The ski gods did not create us equal. Men and women ski differently and yep, it's all to do with the natural shape of our bodies. Few men could get down the hill with the hips of Marilyn and the chest of Jordan. We women, on the other hand, need to master our ski curves in order to carve up the snow with style.

Mister may be racing to the bottom but he's not watching Missy's perfect turns in his wake. For blokes it's all about being king of the hill and first to the bottom. For chicks it's about looking good while you get there.

Women wanting to break through the powder ceiling and make it to the next level need not bother training with the men. Female-specific ski programs can be found at most ski fields of Australia, designed to get Missy skiing alongside or in front of Mister come the week's end. But don't get us wrong; it's not a competition. Yet.

A man's centre of gravity is in his shoulders, for a woman it's in her hips. Women's hips and pelvic bone structure causes weight to go backwards and skis fly out from underneath. The natural shape of female curves means women tend to ski with their knees bent inwards which makes rolling into turns difficult but correct teaching and ski equipment can help this immensely.

Girls need a safe supportive environment in which to step out of their comfort zone and an all female camp provides just that. A social program provides collaborative bonding and a chance to knock back some Jagermeisters and cut some moves on the dance floor away from hubby, boyfriend or family.

Female ski instructors take women through their paces in small groups of similar level, building confidence and supporting each other with each challenge over three or five days. Video analysis provides detailed personal instruction to help the process.

Throwing yourself off Mary's Slide at Mt Hotham can be a terrifying experience but do it with crowd support to pick you up should you fall and the terror turns to laughter. Mixed classes traditionally work towards the common denominator in the group and with more males than females on the snow the women lag behind. All-female ski camps allow the one ski technique to be taught and are designed for the woman's body and psychological makeup.

By week's end women in these intensive programs find they have gone up at least one level, though most jump two or more. Friends are made for life, or at least a season, and Missy now gives Mister a run for his money. ❄️

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FAST FACTS

Women must be an intermediate or above skier. All prices quoted include lift passes.

THREDBO WHIP

Women's High Intensity Program

DURATION: five-day program

WEB: www.thredbo.com.au

COST: \$964

DATES: August 7, 14 and 21

PERISHER BLUE

Women's Program

DURATION: three day intensives.

WEB: www.perisherblue.com.au

COST: \$624

DATES: August 8 and 22

FALLS CREEK

Mim Sodergren Women's Program

WEB: www.falls creek.com.au

COST: \$980 (five days) \$599 (three days)

DATES: July 31 – August 4, August 5 - 7

MT HOTHAM

L'Oreal Paris Visible Results Women's Program

WEB: www.hotham.com.au

COST: \$799 (five days)

DATES: 24 – 28 July

TREBLE CONE

Women's Clinics

WEB: www.treblecone.co.nz

COST: NZ\$498 (three days)

DATES: August 23, September 6 & 20

WHAKAPAPA

Ladies Week

DURATION: four out of five days

WEB: www.mtruapehu.co.nz

COST: NZ \$269 plus lift pass

DATES: July 25, August 14, September 4

TUROA

Ladies Week

DURATION: four out of five days

WEB: www.mtruapehu.co.nz

COST: NZ \$269 plus lift pass

DATE: September 5 - 8