

Holiday gift guide for skiers and riders

By Tony Crespi

Holiday gifts are an integral part of the season. Whether you receive or give a new two way radio to use for communication at and on the mountain, a pair of skis, a down jacket, or a skier's watch to track vertical, holiday gifts can brighten a vacation memory.

Still need a gift for someone? Whether shopping at Killington or Okemo or exploring the shops which dot the landscape, the options are wide. Interested in gift ideas? To help we have put together a holiday gift guide. From stocking stuffers to major gifts we know what's fun, we know what's nice, but only you can decide on the gift which will entice.

Technology's toys

Have you ever tried to make a call to a family member but found that your cell lost service while on the mountain? Walkie-talkies, rugged two way radios built for snow, camping, and outdoor adventures, offer a unique option. The Motorola T800, one popular two-way radio, uses radio frequencies to keep you connected while off-grid. Offering the ability to connect over Bluetooth, the "TALKABOUT" smartphone app enables communication options using the T800 as a modem to send messages to fellow users. While the range can vary because of mountains, these walkie-talkies are more affordable than cells, are tough, and offer a fun alternative. Off season they are great on the beach or in campsites!

Boot heaters

Are your feet cold during ski

days? I understand. Years of coaching and frost bite have left my feet with poor circulation. One solution? Boot heaters!

The Hotronic Footwarmer (my choice), similar to Thermic, is easily installed in virtually any boot and features multiple temperature settings, include rechargeable batteries. My Hotronic batteries sit on the top of my boots and often offer two full days of heat while blasting my toes. If you're unfamiliar, know these heat a small pad under the toes.

Other options? Consider boot gloves!

The DryGuy Boot Glove is a neoprene cover which quickly covers the lower ski boot providing an insulating cover. It is reported to retain 20 degrees of warmth. I find it clearly maintains considerable warmth and is a daily item in my winter ski

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chest. These are available in many mountain shops.

Tuning tools

Racers and coaches know well-tuned skis turn, glide, and hold on firm snow more easily than untuned skis. Unfortunately, while periodic shop tunes may suffice for occasional mountain escapes, those who ski frequently know that one day of hard skiing can dull even the sharpest edge.

Hand tuning: Clearly, performance skiing requires that side edges receive constant polishing

and bases constant waxing. Fortunately, from Reliable Racing to high-end tools from such companies as Swix, FK-SKS, and Sun Valley Ski Tools, enthusiasts can purchase file guides for hand tuning and polishing similar to those used by many racers and pros.

Most side-edge holders can position a diamond file for easily maintaining a sharp edge. In fact, from approximately \$30 for a basic plastic side file holder to \$100 for a sophisticated guide with rollers, the options and choices are wide. My FK Pro has a carbide steel bit for side filing, has rollers to minimize base wear, and has a built-in guide to remove plastic side material prior to edge sharpening.

Interested in a more modern option? Edgetune, Inc. offers a unique tuning tool for home use. Using ceramic grinding technology, engineer Dave Hibbert produces a tool able to provide a machined, stone grind for side edges, using a dremel rotary drill. With bevel adjustments and a ceramic stone, this tool brings ceramic stone grinding to home tuning.

Mountain clothing: insulated jackets, shells, and layering options

Jackets & shells

No one retreats to the lodge because they are too warm! In the East insulated jackets – from down jackets to thinner Thinsulate lined coats – remain popular. While Western skiers often favor shells, the biting chill of Vermont makes an insulated jacket warmly