

In our 5<sup>th</sup> weekly VARA series, Holmenkol takes a look at making your skis fast in the turn.

Today's race technique emphasizes clean carving, and since only a marginal percentage of the base will actually contact the snow during the turn, it is therefore important to look at preparing the sides for maximum speed.

The trick then, is how to make the side of the skis fast while turning.

Start by inspecting the "clearance angle" of the ski. What is the clearance angle? Simple – imagine your ski on its side at about 60 degrees (the most mechanically efficient angle – just look at Bode!) Nothing but pure steel edge should engage the snow. Now look closely at the side of the ski above the actual point of the edge. Is there any part of the skis sidewall structure even remotely close to the snow at this angle? Does the sidewall structure bevel back at a consistent angle away from the edge to provide clearance? Chances are, the sidewall must be removed or smoothed out.

To do this you will need a few simple tools, some that you may already have lying around.

- Dull cross file (aka panzer file)
- Sharp cross file (aka panzer file)
- SideMaxx Sidewall planer
- Pro Edge Champion tuning tool
- Gloves
- 120 grit sandpaper or drywall screen
- file brush

Start with your sharp cross file in the side edger. Set your side edger to an extreme angle – 7 to 10 degrees of bevel. With this much bevel, you will be assured to cut the material just above the actual steel edge, rather than the edge itself. You should pull this combination just until you begin to cut steel edge. Note that some skis have an aluminum layer mounted just above the steel, and this layer must be beveled back, too.

Next, take a dull cross file, and while wearing your gloves, begin to "shape" the

top and side of the ski. The goal here is to actually file away the plastic material so that you create a consistent "clearance angle" that departs away from the edge. Most skis, even those with some angle to the sidewall, are very square near the tips and tails. Be especially sure that the top sheet & sidewall here are angled well away from the edge.

Third, take your sidewall planer out. Many people mistakenly use the sidewall planer from tip to tail. The previous step should have left you with a strong angle in the side of the ski, particularly in the tip & tail. The purpose of the sidewall planer is to remove the tall, meaty sidewall in the thick part of ski that you cannot file into an angle. Again, pull the sidewall planer thru this portion of the ski. Cap ski owners should skip this step.

Lastly, take out your sandpaper or drywall

screen. Smooth out your work from tip to tail using the abrasive.

When you are done, the side of your skis should be buttery smooth, and you have achieved the “clearance angle” needed to go fast with modern technique.

The good news is that you only need to perform these steps one time per ski. The better news is that you will be faster & smoother than ever before!

For race day, apply some Holmenkol Board Crème (a high fluor paste wax) directly to the sidewalls, polish, and hang on!

*Dave Peszek is the product manager for Holmenkol USA, and a member of the World Racing Service Team. He can be reached at [DPeszek@UvexSports.com](mailto:DPeszek@UvexSports.com)*