

How to Identify Snow Skis

By Allen Smith, eHow User

Skis come in a variety of models and functions, some with bindings, some without, some for alpine skiing and some for cross-country, Nordic or backcountry skiing. Since few of them will work under all conditions, it's important to take adequate time to choose the best product for your needs.

Difficulty: Moderate

Instructions

- 1 Choose alpine skis if you enjoy downhill skiing on groomed runs at commercial ski resorts. Alpine skis have bindings that secure both the heel and toes to the skis and are equipped with ski brakes. Some of the skis are designed so that you can mount any binding you wish on the ski. Others are designed with rails impregnated into the the design of the ski so that you can only use their model of binding that fits on the rails. They also come in a wide variety of models, colors and widths. Almost all alpine skis are "shaped" skis, meaning that they are wider at the tips and tails than they are at the waist.
- 2 Buy Telemark skis if you enjoy going into the backcountry to blaze your own terrain. Telemark skis are similar in design to alpine skis but are typically of lighter weight and use specialized bindings that do not secure your heel to the ski, so you can walk or "skin" uphill. "Tele" skis require a unique boot that can cost as much as \$600, so be sure to include that in your budget.
- 3 Purchase Nordic skis if your goal is the ultimate workout on either traditional downhill runs or in back country. Compared to alpine and Telemark skis, Nordic skis are of lighter weight, are thinner in profile, require different boots and poles, and have a unique construction. Nordic skis can be categorized into skate, classic, touring and combi skiing, depending on what type of skiing interests you. All Nordic skiing is done in prepared Nordic parks where specially designed [grooming](#) machines carve two grooves into the snow to track in wearing Nordic skis.

Tips & Warnings

- Try out skis at a shop that's near a resort. When you buy, check that they have a money-back guarantee.