

Preventing Snowboarding Injuries

Facts on snowboarding injuries

Snowboarding is a popular sport in many alpine resorts, offering the participant feelings of exhilaration and freedom.

How many snowboarders?

- ◆ Australia has about 20,000 snowboard users.
- ◆ The estimated growth rate of 20% exceeds that of other alpine sports.
- ◆ More than 95% of Australian ski resorts now allow snowboarding and excellent facilities are provided.

How many injuries?

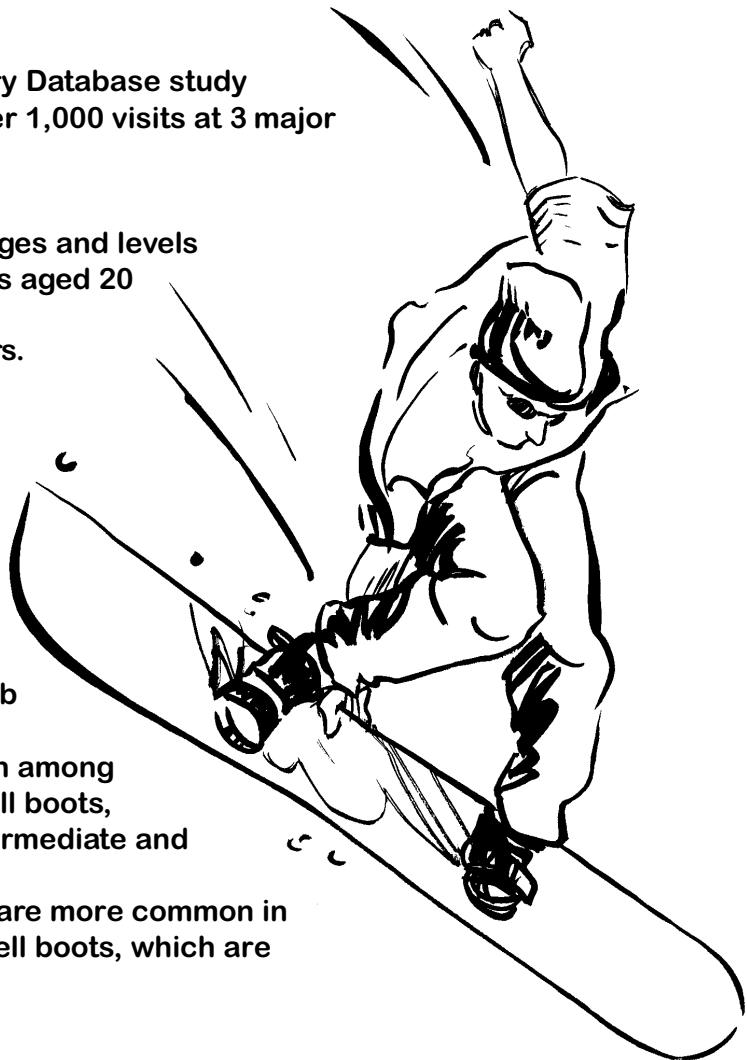
- ◆ The Australian Snowboard Injury Database study reported an injury rate of 4.2 per 1,000 visits at 3 major Australian resorts.

Who is injured?

- ◆ Although snowboarders of all ages and levels of experience are injured, males aged 20 years and novices are the most commonly injured snowboarders.

The cause and type of injuries

- ◆ Falls are the most common cause of injury.
- ◆ Injuries are most commonly sprains, fractures and contusions. The majority of injuries are to the upper limbs, followed by the lower limbs.
- ◆ Ninety-one percent of lower limb injuries are to the leading leg.
- ◆ Ankle injuries are more common among snowboarders wearing soft shell boots, which are typically worn by intermediate and advanced riders.
- ◆ Knee and distal tibial fractures are more common in snowboarders wearing hard shell boots, which are typically worn by novices.



References

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- ◆ Kelsall H, Finch C. A review of countermeasures for snowboarding injuries. Monash University Accident Research Centre. Report No. 94. 1996.

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Safety tips for snowboarding

Good preparation is important

- ◆ Undertake pre-season conditioning and training.
- ◆ Prospective snowboarders should undertake lessons to learn correct riding and falling techniques.
- ◆ Establish what the snow conditions are like, don't ride in poor conditions.

Equipment: suitability and maintenance

- ◆ Choose carefully equipment to suit your skill level and size.
- ◆ Soft shell boots, for novices are recommended.
- ◆ Keep equipment in good working order.
- ◆ Ensure all rental equipment is properly fitted and adjusted
- ◆ Wear clothing, including gloves, that is waterproof and breaths and head coverings to prevent excessive heat loss.

Increase safety with sound techniques and practice

- ◆ Be aware of, and adhere to, general snow conduct and safety codes.
- ◆ Only snowboard on slopes suitable to your level of ability.
- ◆ Stay on main trails and groomed runs.
- ◆ Be cautious if boarding in deep powder among trees. Never do this alone.
- ◆ Young or beginner riders should be well supervised.

Other safety tips

- ◆ Snowboards should be attached to the rider by a leash to prevent injuries to others on the slopes.

If an injury occurs

- ◆ Ensure all injured snowboarders receive adequate treatment and rehabilitation before resuming snowboarding.



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