

Ski Gram Newsletter

Sunday March 27, 2011

Life is Different at 8,100ft

Snowmass Village is located more than a mile and a half above sea level and has an atmosphere that us “flatlanders” just aren’t used to.

You may begin to find yourself gasping for air with even the slightest physical activity. The higher you go, the less oxygen the air contains. On top of that, there is less atmospheric pressure up here, which makes it difficult for your body to absorb the little oxygen there is in the air.

As a result, your body is less able to transport oxygen through the bloodstream and you may develop a condition called altitude or mountain sickness. Symptoms can be mild - headache, nausea, fatigue, loss of appetite and shortness of breath. Or they can be quite serious, such as swelling in the lungs and brain. These symptoms may not appear for hours or even days after you reach high altitude. However, if you’re visiting a cold climate such as Snowmass, exerting yourself and suffering dehydration from dry mountain air, altitude sickness can become serious quite rapidly.

There are some things you can do to prevent altitude sickness or ease its symptoms. A mild case of altitude sickness very closely resembles a hangover, a reason not to drink alcohol the first day or two after your arrival here. Alcohol causes dehydration, which worsens altitude sickness. It’s important to drink plenty of nonalcoholic and decaffeinated beverages to stay well hydrated during your entire stay.

One of the primary causes of altitude sickness is a rapid ascent (such as flying in) combined with overexertion. If you experience symptoms of headache, nausea and shortness of breath, stop. If your symptoms get severe, begin to descend immediately to prevent the serious stages of altitude sickness from developing.

Because overexertion is a main cause, it’s a good idea to take it easy for a few days until your body can acclimate. Moderate exercise is better than bed rest however.

A diet high in carbohydrates such as fruits and starches can help increase blood oxygen levels and alleviates some of symptoms. A high-fat diet does the opposite.

Make your trip to the Clinic enjoyable. Take it easy the first few days, stay well hydrated, get plenty of rest, eat well and don’t kill yourself on the slopes. If you start to experience headache, fatigue, nausea or shortness of breath, it’s time to slow down.

Injuries occur more often when you’re tired, so if you can’t decide whether to get that last activity in, stop and have a cup of hot chocolate by a fire instead. The Clinic will still be there tomorrow!

When in doubt, and for severe symptoms, please contact a medical professional as soon as possible. Information for the medical room at the Clinic is presented on the back page of the Ski Gram daily.

Hometown News: Spotlight on First Timers

Is this your first visit to the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic?

If so, the hometown news team would like to publicize your participation. This year, the hometown news program will focus on first-time participants and their accomplishments at the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic. Individual news releases for first-time participants, who signed a consent form will have a hometown news release prepared and placed along with your photo, on our Clinic’s website (www.wintersportsclinic.va.gov) to make it available to your local media, family and friends.

While we cannot guarantee that the information we submit will be printed by your hometown newspapers, we will do our best to make the information available to media outlets throughout the country. We also plan to contact your local media by e-mail and phone calls to generate interest in this wonderful story. If you are a first-timer and requested a news release, you will receive a copy of the

release at the end of the week. All participants will receive a photograph of themselves skiing (if we were able to catch you on the mountain). We hope to have the photos on the website by Thursday, March 30, 2011.

Thank you for allowing us to tell your community about your participation in the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic this week. By sharing your stories, we hope to reach out to other Veterans like you, and perhaps inspire them to sign up next year!

Welcome from the Director

Hello and welcome to the 25th National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic! After 25 amazing years of watching this event grow from humble beginnings, I'm truly honored to still have the opportunity to welcome everyone gathered here in stunning Snowmass Village to the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic!

It's hard to express a fitting welcome in words, but as I look around I think about the old adage that a picture is worth a thousand words. The greeting I am searching for is all around us, the magnificent snowy mountains, the welcoming community of Snowmass Village and the camaraderie of all the participants here.

This Clinic began with the simple goal of showing Veterans with disabilities that there are opportunities out there that will allow them to soar. With the help of many people, that simple vision launched the careers of several Paralympians and changed the lives of thousands of disabled Veterans.

Every year, as this event draws near, I look back on all of the things the Winter Sports Clinic has accomplished, and I'm reminded of how important it is to take this time and give back to the Veterans who have given so much of themselves in defense of our Nation. Returning participants can tell you that this week will be an unmatched life changing experience of personal breakthroughs, triumph over challenges and learning.

Gathered here in this small corner of the world are some of the most remarkable people you could ever ask to meet, Veterans who served our country and who continue to face the challenges a life of service can present. It is with great honor that we are able to give back to you, our Nation's heroes. It's thanks to a deep commitment from our two generous sponsors every year, the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Disabled American Veterans, as well as the Snowmass Village community and the hundreds of wonderful, caring sponsors, staff and volunteers, that this event is able to come so together.

I know that you, our participants, as well as your families, therapists and coaches, have all worked hard all year to prepare for this week's event and are up for the challenge to make the 25th anniversary a year to remember. This is certainly a week of discovery for us all, but more importantly, it is a week dedicated to the strength and commitment of our disabled Veterans' service to our great country. This is your week to excel, and we will do whatever it takes to make sure the experience meets or exceeds your expectations.

Take a look outside and if you listen real close you can hear the song of these magical Rocky Mountains calling you to them. The song they sing is about challenge, healing and living life to the fullest. It's the same song that our Veterans heard 25 years ago and one that you will remember the rest of your life. Stay strong, meet every challenge and show the world the strength and spirit of the American Veteran.

This is your time, have a great week.

Opening Ceremonies

The 25th National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic officially kicks off during Opening Ceremonies. Join everyone at tonight at 6:30 p.m. in the Conference Center Ballroom. Tonight's ceremonies will give you a chance to welcome new participants and hear from some of VA and DAV's

senior leadership who are excited to be with us this week. Special guests include Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs, W. Scott Gould, as our keynote speaker, and Disabled American Veterans National Commander, Wallace Tyson.

After the ceremony, participants will meet with their team leaders and get to know their fellow team members a little better. You will also be provided with additional directions and instructions to help you in the upcoming week.

Welcome to the Clinic! This week will be the experience of a lifetime.

There's More Than Skiing

Participants come to the Winter Sports Clinic with a promise of skiing, but there is much more to do. The Clinic offers everyone lots of alternate activities that provide for new experiences and the opportunity to incorporate those experiences into everyday life. Not everyone is lucky enough to have the majestic Rocky Mountains in their backyard, but you can find ice rinks, pools and fishing holes just about anywhere in America. So grab an event schedule, sign up at the Alternative Activities desk and get ready for a good time off the slopes.

SNOWMOBILING Want the rush of an icy wind through your hair or the thrill of speeding through the snow? Take this opportunity to learn how to snowmobile at the T Lazy 7 Ranch. Every day, there will be two trips to the ranch. The first bus starts loading at 6:45 a.m. and departs by 7:15 a.m. The second bus starts loading at 9 a.m., departing at 9:30.

FLY FISHING Fishing is something anyone can do throughout the year. During this trip, you can learn how to fly fish or simply sit back and take in the beautiful scenery as the Crystal River's currents carry you along. The fly fishing float trip is available Monday through Thursday from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Wear warm clothes, bring sunscreen and sign up early as space is limited. A barbeque lunch is provided on the trip. Riders must be able to transfer independently.

HOT SPRINGS If the cold and snow doesn't do it for you, then take a trip to the natural wonder of the world's largest outdoor mineral pool where 3.5 million gallons of geothermally heated water are waiting to ease sore muscles and chase away the chill. The trip to Glenwood Springs is available from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. daily. Tuesday through Thursday. Bring your own swimwear, but towels and lunch will be provided at the lodge.

CROSS COUNTRY SKIING, SNOWSHOEING AND BIATHLON INTRODUCTION It's not always easy to get to the slopes, but if you live where it snows, cross country skiing is the next best thing. Learn how to glide the trails with this fun activity that will work your muscles and lift your spirits. Or, if you just want to work in a little target practice without leaving the mountain, then take a hike with state of the art snowshoes. Instructors will happily take you along a trail at the top of the village with an air rifle target display set up at the end. The Elks Lodge will also be providing a barbeque lunch. Times are from 9 to 3 p.m., Monday through Thursday.

SCUBA DIVING Who says you can't swim in the winter? Learn how to scuba dive in a heated pool to the island sounds of Jimmy Buffet. Scuba lessons are available Monday through Thursday from 9 to 11 a.m., and from 2 to 4 p.m. Dive in at the Silvertree Hotel and pick up a new skill to suit you until the snow returns.

SLED HOCKEY For those Veterans who like contact sports, sled hockey is for you. This rough sport offers up tough competition and team building in a fun environment. Get down to the Lewis Ice Arena Monday through Thursday from 9 to 11 a.m., and learn to play real hockey on specialized sleds. Enforcers wanted.

ROCK CLIMBING After spending so much time going downhill, why not try going up? A rock-climbing wall will be set up just a stone's throw away in the conference center circle from 10 a.m. to Noon, and from 1 to 3 p.m., Monday through Thursday. Discover your strength and a challenge worth trying again and again.

GONDOLA TRIP TO ASPEN If you appreciate the scenery of the great outdoors, then a gondola ride to Aspen is the perfect ticket. Enjoy lunch at the Elks lodge before heading back in a Snow Cat. Veterans must be able to independently transfer for this activity, taking place Monday through Thursday 10:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

SHOOTING SPORTS/ARCHERY Being a marksman is something most Veterans are proud of. Participants are invited to refine their shooting skills at the Basalt Trap Club in Lake Christine. There, Veterans can grab their rifles or bows from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Thursday. Lunch will be provided.

CURLING If you've ever wondered what this Paralympic sport is all about, this is your chance to learn. All Veterans, including those in wheelchairs, are invited to the Aspen Ice Rink Monday through Thursday from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. to learn curling, a sport that is sweeping across America. Be sure to wear warm clothes!

What A Week It Will Be

Special guests and dignitaries drop in all week long to help make the 25th NDVWSC the best yet.

Not only do you have an exciting week of skiing, fishing and snowmobiling ahead of you, you also have a host of special events and guests at the 25th National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic.

It all begins tonight at Opening Ceremonies, where the Deputy Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs delivers the keynote remarks. Disabled American Veterans National Commander, Wallace Tyson, will also be there to kick-off this milestone Clinic.

Monday night brings Sponsor Night in the Conference Center Ballroom. Not only will you get the chance to meet the various sponsors who help make the Clinic happen, such as the Veterans Canteen Service, this is your chance to win a 52" Sharp LED TV and an Apple iPad! Make sure you're there!

The Instructor Appreciation party swings into gear Tuesday night. Hob knob and rub elbows with the instructors and let them know how thankful you are for their work here at the Clinic. You'll also be able to enjoy a beloved local celebrity, singer Hazel Miller and her band. Hazel will bring a night of live Jazz, Blues and R&B. Rocky Mountain News declares Hazel's voice as "stunning, moving and powerful." Surely a performance not to be missed!

Wednesday brings us a cavalcade of celebrities. The one, the only, the original Chubby Checker arrives and performs Wednesday night in the Conference Center ballroom.

Actor John Corbett and the beautiful Bo Derek also arrive at the Clinic on Wednesday to mingle with participants. Bo Derek loves coming to Snowmass Village to visit our veterans and cheer them on as they discover more Miracles on the Mountainside. Corbett, star of "My Big Fat Greek Wedding," "Sex and the City" and Showtimes hit show "United States of Tara" will make another stop to the clinic.

Country superstar, and fellow Veteran, Craig Morgan will perform many of his top ten hits, such as "Almost Home" and "Redneck Yacht Club" at the Conference Center on Thursday night. The Clinic may be winding down, but Craig is sure to fire you back up just in time for Race Day on Friday.

Special guests throughout the entire week include special guest athletes from the United States Olympic Committee Paralympics and VA's new Paralympics Sports Program. One such athlete is Chris Devlin Young, a US Coast Guard Veteran paralyzed in a plane crash, went from NDVWSC participant to a full-fledged Paralympics and X-Game medalist. Chris Nowak, disabled Veteran, Clinic alumni and newly appointed Director of the VA Paralympics Program Office will be here as well to educate you about VA's partnership with the US Olympic Committee.

It's an exciting week, so be sure to keep your eye on the Ski Gram! We'll present more detailed information about the visiting guests and special events presented above! And keep your eyes peeled and cameras ready, you never know whom you might be skiing next to!

What's For Dinner Tonight?

Veteran Clinic participants already know that Snowmass, a tiny resort town sitting atop a mountain, boasts a number of excellent restaurants and cafés. These superb dining spots offer everything from

mouth-watering pizza to sushi, from juicy black angus burgers to scrumptious stews and salads – and all things in between.

Snowmass is so proud of their culinary delights that every year at the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic the Village opens its heart and its kitchens to our Veterans, and all of the staff, coaches, instructors and volunteers taking part in the Clinic by presenting a Taste of Snowmass. The Taste of Snowmass takes place in the lower level of the Snowmass Village Mall today from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. You'll be able to stroll the outdoor mall and smell the delicious aromas and delight in the many flavors of some wonderful, home-cooked foods at today's event. Vouchers are provided for two entrees and a dessert. Taste of Snowmass will serve as your dinner meal before the Opening Ceremonies, which begins at 6:30 p.m.

So enjoy the sights, sounds, smells and flavors of Snowmass Village, decide which places you want to visit again later on this week and be sure to browse the local shops while you're there. All of the foods are prepared especially for the Clinic, and quite frankly, there is no better way to be welcomed to Snowmass and kick-off another great Clinic. A second Taste of Snowmass will take place at lunchtime on Friday.

Connect With VA

The Department of Veterans Affairs welcomes you to the future! We are using new social media tools to provide Veterans with content about the Winter Sports Clinic you can't find anywhere else!

Follow the links at www.va.gov, or search each site for the Department of Veterans Affairs to Watch for news, and important information about the activities surrounding the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic.

Prosthetics Post

The Prosthetics Post is the place to get the answers for your most frequently asked prosthetics questions.

Dear PDP:

This is my first Winter Sports Clinic and I can't wait to ski, play sled hockey, go snowmobiling and scuba diving! I heard the VA provides equipment for recreation and sports. Where do I sign up?

Signed, Ready to Rip

Dear Ready to Rip: Welcome to the WSC! Yes, you can work with your clinical team and the Prosthetics Service at your VA medical center to pursue adaptive sport equipment. The key word is "adaptive." The VA can provide equipment that specifically compensates for your physical disability . . . like a mono-ski, handcycle, tennis wheelchair, etc. Specific criteria must be met to receive equipment. Prosthetics staff are available this week to answer your questions. Tomorrow we'll have a booth from 6:15-7:30 p.m. in the Convention Center, and we will also be available at meal times Monday and Tuesday. Prosthetics.va.gov is also a great resource.

MASSAGE

Complimentary massages are available by scheduling an appointment. Massage is located in the Elbert room in the Silvertree Hotel. Please call (970) 980-7772 for an appointment beginning today at 1 p.m., and then Monday beginning at 9 a.m. until all slots are full.

WHEELCHAIR AND PROSTHETICS REPAIR

Located at the Host Room in the Conference Center.

Hours are:

6:30 a.m. - 8:45 a.m.

11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

4 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.

In between these hours this person (Don) can be reached @ 970-430-9417. Please do not call after 6 p.m. unless it is an emergency. If you need to contact the Prosthetics Repair person (Joe) please call 970-430-9415.

Medical Room

For emergencies dial 911

Medical room phone:

(970) 923-8330

Location

The medical room is located in the Bedford A conference room, one level below the mall, across the street from the Mountain Chalet Hotel. Stairway access from the mall is next to **Christy Sports**. Wheelchair access is by elevator at the far end of the mall above the bus terminal.

Transport

Van transport is available from the Silvertree Hotel to the medical room. Find the medical van in the front of the hotel or call the medical room to arrange transportation.

After Hours

Call the medical room for recorded instructions on how to contact the “on call” medical provider. If unsuccessful, call the hotel operator.

Transportation Schedule

Snowmobiling

First Trip 6:45 a.m. 7:15 a.m.

Second Trip 9 a.m. 9:30 a.m.

Please make sure to load at the correct time for your assigned trip.

Sled Hockey 7:45 a.m. 8:15 a.m.

Fly Fishing 8:30 a.m. 9 a.m.

Cross Country Skiing

First Trip 8:20 a.m. 8:45 a.m.

Second Trip 1 p.m. 1:30 p.m.

Buses will run up and down the mountain throughout the day. The 1 p.m. bus will pick up any participants from

Hot Springs 9:30 a.m. 10 a.m.

Shooting Sports 10 a.m. 10:30 a.m.

Aspen Gondola 10 a.m. 10:30 a.m.

Curling 12:45 p.m. 1 p.m.

Event Schedule

8 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Registration Team Leaders, Alternate Activities, Medical, Transportation, Tech Team, Communications, Ski Instructors & Volunteers: Host Room Conference Center

8 a.m.

Sponsor Registration: Campground Room, Wildwood Hotel

8 a.m. – 3 p.m.	Participant Registration: Conference Center Ballroom
8:30 – 9:30 a.m.	Mandatory Downhill Ski Instructor Safety Refresher Course: Eldorado Room in the Silvertree Hotel
9:45 a.m. – Noon	Mandatory Downhill Instructor Orientation Clinics: Eldorado Room, Silvertree Hotel
9 a.m.	Cross Country Orientation Clinic: Top of the Village Lobby
12:45 – 1:45 p.m.	Mandatory Downhill Ski Instructor Safety Refresher Course: Eldorado Room in the Silvertree Hotel (Must attend Saturday or Sunday session)
2 – 4 p.m.	Downhill Instructor Orientation Clinics: Eldorado Room, Silvertree Hotel
3 p.m.	Boot loader Mandatory Meeting: Silvertree Hotel Lobby
3 p.m.	Tech Team Mandatory Meeting: Equipment Truck
3:30 - 5:30 p.m.	Taste of Snowmass: Snowmass Village Mall
5 p.m.	Coaches' Meeting: Max Park Room, Wildwood Hotel
5:30 p.m.	Transportation Meeting: Janss Room, Conference Center, Second Floor
6:30 p.m.	Opening Ceremonies: Conference Center Ballroom
7:30 p.m.	Ski Instructor Mandatory Meeting: Eldorado Room, Silvertree Hotel
8 p.m.	Team Meetings: Conference Center Ballroom