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Stay fit and beat the winter blahs

Learn to ski or snowboard

DAYTON, Wash.—Many New Year’s resolutions fade long before the last day of January. But it doesn’t have to be that way—especially when the goal includes getting fit, staying fit or hitting something new on the bucket list.

“There can be a tendency to hole up indoors during winter months while waiting for warmer weather, but our bodies aren’t designed for hibernation,” says Mike Peters, director of Snow Sports at Ski Bluewood. “We feel our best when we stay active all year.”

That’s where winter sports come into play.

“Right now we’re seeing a lot of new faces at Bluewood as people decide to give skiing or snowboarding a try,” Peters says. “It’s so much fun, they keep coming back! It even becomes a generational thing. Parents who learned to ski at Bluewood when they were young are now bringing their kids up.”

And these fun times are also good for health.

Skiing and snowboarding improve muscle tone and balance. Both sports utilize core muscles in the abdomen. They also work muscles in the calves, arms, hands, ankles and feet. Older participants enjoy skiing and snowboarding too, and find that it helps prevent muscle loss that can occur with age.

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BLUEWOOD: STAY FIT... (continued)

To top it off, winter sports enhance mood. Any physical activity triggers increased production of endorphins by the body's nervous system. These natural chemicals energize the body and increase feelings of happiness. Even occasional visits to the mountains for skiing or snowboarding improve a sense of well-being, according to a study published in *Applied Research in Quality of Life*.

"If you want to beat the winter blahs and have a blast doing it, give winter sports a try," Peters says. "The Pacific Northwest is having a great snow season, so it's the perfect year for beginners as well as for all those pros out there."

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