

Skijoring: the extreme winter equestrian sport

Never heard of skijoring with horses? You're in for a treat.

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Looking for a new way to spend time with your horse during the winter? Welcome to skijoring, a winter sport that combines the thrill of skiing with the fun of equestrian.

Skijoring originated in Scandinavia, originally as a mode of winter transportation. Today it is a recreational sport, often done with dogs providing the pull. In canine skijoring, the human has regular cross-country skiing equipment, including poles, and wears a belt attached to a dog harness. In equestrian skijoring, the human wears skis and holds tug lines attached to the horse's harness.

In some versions, the skijorer holds long reins for steering. Think ground driving on skis. Skijoring races are serious business in parts of Europe, where horses wearing special winter shoes gallop around a snowy track, pulling their drivers at remarkable speeds. In North America a popular variation is to have a rider on the horse while the skijorer holds a line attached to the saddle horn. With this western twist on the Scandinavian sport, skijorers compete behind galloping horses, steering themselves over sizable jumps.

If you're not an adrenaline junkie, you can still enjoy skijoring. At a slower pace, skijoring is a good way to provide your horse with some winter activity while giving you a chance to get outside the arena. Of course, strapping on some skis and putting yourself at the mercy of your horse is not something to do without proper instruction, or with a horse who is not accustomed to being driven. As with any winter workout, make sure your horse has appropriate footwear for working in potentially slippery conditions, and remember that trotting through the snow is a lot more work for your horse than trotting on flat ground, so don't overdo it.

Now, grab a mug of hot chocolate and enjoy some videos of skijoring in action.

[Skijoring races in Switzerland](#) [Skijoring competition in Colorado](#) [Conditioning horses at Bowers Farm](#) [More from Bowers Farm](#)

To learn more about the sport of skijoring, check out these sites:

[North American Ski Joring Association](#)

[Northeast Ski Joring Association](#)

[Association Skijoering \(France\)](#)

[The Skijorer's Source](#)

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