### Learning to Train

**Major skill learning stage:** all movement and sport skills (physical literacy) should be learned before entering the training to train stage.

- Develop good technique habits through repeated practice.
- Utilize games to develop skills, speed, power and fitness endurance.
- On snow focus is balance, agility and rhythm.
- Optimal window of trainability for speed occurs at the start of this stage for females and the end of this stage for males.

**Optimal window for trainability of strength development occurs (females).**

**Optimal window for trainability of strength development occurs (males).**

- Emphasize group interaction, team building and social activities.
- Optimize sport specific training 3-4 times a week.
- Focus on being physically active for life, with a daily minimum of either 60 minutes moderate daily activity or 30 minutes intense activity for adults.

**Transfer from one sport to another.**

### Learning to Compete

**Training to Compete**

**Training to Win**

- Further develop technical, tactical and mental skills.
- Develop event specific tactical preparation.
- Physical activity reduces the risk of many conditions, including heart disease, obesity, high blood pressure, Type II diabetes, osteoporosis, stroke, depression and colon and breast cancer.

**Long-Term Athlete Development**

**Compelling scientific evidence demonstrates** that physical activity plays a key role in improving health and in preventing disease and premature death. Physical activity reduces the risk of many conditions, including heart disease, obesity, high blood pressure, Type II diabetes, osteoporosis, stroke, depression and colon and breast cancer.

**Physical Activity and Health, Population & Public Health Branch, Health Canada**

**The objective is to take advantage of the high receptiveness to motor learning in young children by providing learning situations that work for this age group. In early childhood the emphasis should be on play and discovery with limited formal instruction.”**

**NCCP Introduction to Community Coaching Reference Materials**

- “For those young skiers who doubt the value of a full commitment to becoming the best – now is the only time in your life when it is possible. Later is too late. Then you will always wonder how good you could have been.”

  **Dave Rees, President of Cross Country Canada**

- “Athletes with a disability go through the same stages as all children. They need support and challenges from their parents and coaches to reach their potential.”

  **Colin Higgins, PhD, Canadian LTAD Sport Expert Group**

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### Active for Life

**Focus on physical literacy and sport experiences for all.** The next four stages focus on competitive excellence and the final stage encourages life-long physical activity.

**The first three stages encourage physical literacy and sport experiences for all.** The next four stages focus on competitive excellence and the final stage encourages life-long physical activity. Following is a general overview of the LTAD progression for cross-country skiing.
Cross-country skiing is a late specialization sport. During the first three stages of the LTAD, children grow and improve within the sport through programs permitting a broad exposure to activities that develop overall motor and sport skills. Following the first three stages there is a transition to either further development and excellence in cross-country skiing or life-long participation in skiing and/or other sports at the recreational or less competitive level. For athletes who wish to pursue excellence, increasing specialization in cross-country skiing and an expanding focus on competition permit them to mature athletically and aspire to national and international podiums. Regardless of the level of excellence or sport-mastery achieved however, participation in cross-country skiing – a “sport for life” – can enhance the health, fitness and mental well-being of Canadians of all ages.

“As a child growing up in the Canadian Rockies the outdoors was my playground and my skis were my toys. I can’t really quantify the importance of being outdoors during that period because I can’t imagine what my childhood experience would have been like without it. It has shaped my family, the person I became as an adult, and the community I now choose to surround myself in.”

Sara Renner, Olympic Silver Medalist in Cross-Country Skiing

“As a youth I was always encouraged to participate in a wide range of sports. In time, however, cross-country skiing became my main sport focus and ultimately my passion. Positive role models then and now helped fuel my love of skiing and my desire to seek excellence. I continue to believe that I can reach my goal of Olympic medals”

George Grey, National Ski Team

“Ultimately, top level performance comes down to athletes believing in themselves. Along the way they must commit to their plans, their support team and to hard work. But when the gun goes off, it is their belief that they will prevail that will make the difference.”

Dave Wood, Head Coach, National Ski Team