

INTERNATIONAL SKI CLUB OF GENEVE (SCIG)

Nordic skiing section

Frequently asked questions concerning nordic skiing (cross-country skiing) with the SCIG

Nordic skiing (cross-country skiing) is a perfect winter sport for those seeking the sensation of sliding and looking to immerse themselves in nature. Furthermore, this activity is excellent for your health, as indicated in the benefits of nordic skiing, see <https://www.scig.ch/wp-content/uploads/Les-bienfaits-du-ski-de-fond.pdf> (in French only). Certain pieces of information on nordic skiing with the SCIG are available from SCIG's website, more particularly a calendar of nordic skiing activities with SCIG: <https://www.scig.ch/en/ski-nordique-raquettes/>. Other aspects are dealt with below.

Two different techniques exist, namely the classical technique and the skating technique; they are practised on nordic sites, in other words on trails specifically groomed for the practice of nordic skiing in more or less hilly terrains.

1. Is it necessary for a nordic skiing beginner to take lessons before joining outings of the nordic skiing section of the SCIG?

Nordic skiing being a rather technical discipline, it is indispensable to take several lessons (at least 2 lessons) before joining outings organized by the nordic skiing section of the SCIG. Whenever appropriate it is useful to check the situation with the relevant outing leader.

The nordic skiing section of the SCIG organizes group lessons (in both classical and skating techniques, but at different dates, see calendar) in La Vattay, in the French Jura. The lessons are given by professional instructors of the French ski school (ESF). Depending on the number of registrations, several groups with different levels are set up; each group, comprising 5 or 6 skiers, will have its own professional ESF instructor.

The first lessons of the winter season normally take place around mid December (depending on the snow conditions) and the last ones at the beginning of February. Lessons take place in the morning from 10 am to 12 am; in the afternoon the skiers can ski under their own responsibility but in groups with other skiers.

Furthermore, several ski schools exist in the Geneva area which provide private lessons (some ski schools are mentioned on SCIG's website).

2. What is the difference between the classical and the skating techniques?

- a) The **classical technique** resembles a gliding walk; this is the traditional technique of movement which is the origin of the discipline.

In general, it consists of moving forward in two parallel rails, on groomed trails; most of the time the skis keep contact with the snow.

The movements of arms and legs are like those made during walking or jogging activities.

Like walking the skier progresses by pushing forward from one foot and ski whilst the other foot and ski execute a stride followed by a glide along the snow before pushing off from the other foot and ski.

Professional instructors recommend to start nordic skiing with the classical technique which is the basis of nordic skiing; furthermore, it is easier to learn, because the movement resembles a gliding walk; however, perfect command requires a lot of training!

- b) In the more recent skating technique (introduced in the 1990s) both skis are at an angle to the forward direction, forming a characteristic letter V. Like ice skating and using the poles simultaneously the skier progresses by pushing off the edge of one ski whilst propelling the other ski into a glide along the snow before pushing off from the other ski.

A large majority of SCIG outings can be done in both techniques; only off trail outings can be done in the classical technique only. The SCIG organizes group lessons in both techniques, see above item 1).

It remains to be pointed out that the entire equipment (skis, poles, shoes) is different for both techniques. Therefore, when renting or buying equipment, skiers must specify the technique they wish to practice.

3. Where can one rent or buy nordic skiing equipment in the Geneva area?

It is recommended that beginners rent their equipment initially; once they have reached a certain command and started to enjoy the discipline and in case they wish to pursue this activity in a regular manner, they can buy their equipment.

In Geneva in the neighbourhood of international organizations, one can recommend Univers Sport (rue de la Servette 52), which offers a very professional service for rental as well as for purchase.

In canton de Vaud, one can recommend Raoul Sport in Nyon, and François Sport in Morges.

Most nordic skiing domains in the Jura and in the Alps also have rental shops. Before going to some domain, it is advisable to check by phone whether some rental equipment is still available in the shops.

4. For outings of the nordic skiing section of the SCIG, is it necessary to show up at the meeting point with the equipment?

The situation is different for group lessons organized by the SCIG in La Vattay and other outings.

Group lessons necessarily take place in La Vattay; the skiers may therefore come to the meeting point without any equipment and rent it in the rental shop in La Vattay.

For all other outings, noting that certain nordic skiing domains do not have rental shops, it is mandatory to show up at the meeting point with the entire equipment; no waste of time will thereby be imposed on other skiers of the group and furthermore this will allow the outing leader to change the destination at the last minute (depending on snow conditions).

5. Nordic ski passes

Nordic ski trails require continuous maintenance during the winter season, which explains why there is a charge for access. One can have daily, weekly and seasonal passes, with different fees. Furthermore, one can find passes valid for a single domain, and others valid at a regional or national level.

Beginners (particularly those attending beginner lessons) are advised to buy day passes for a fee of around 10 CHF or EUR. Once they have reached a certain command and in case they wish to pursue this discipline, they can acquire seasonal passes at the beginning of the upcoming season.

Skiers who ski frequently are encouraged to choose the seasonal pass, which helps save money and time, since they do not have to line up in the waiting lines to buy their pass (and impose delays on their ski companions).

The Swiss seasonal pass provides access to all nordic skiing trails in Switzerland. It also provides access to the nordic skiing trails of the French Jura (departments of Ain, Jura and Doubs), and offers a 50 % discount on day passes in Haute Savoie. The pass is available in digital form (160.- CHF) and in paper form (165.- CHF).

For additional details see <https://rsf.skidefond.shop/fr/?tid=438468d9> (in French only).

Further information on nordic skiing with the SCIG can be obtained from the coordinator of the SCIG nordic skiing section: Charles Jacquemart (charles.jacquemart@sunrise.ch).

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