

A skier in a red jacket and yellow pants is skiing through a snowy forest. The skier is in the middle ground, moving from left to right. The forest is dense with trees, and the ground is covered in a thick layer of snow. The lighting is soft, suggesting an overcast day.

TELEMARK POWDER IN TREES

Don't let those closely-knit pines put you off – telemarking in the trees needn't be a knee-quivering experience. It just takes a little planning, flow and skillful rotation...

Fed up of waiting for the perfect blue sky powder day? Instead of holding out for the storm to clear, wrap up warm and head into the trees to grab some freshies while everyone else stares out of the window in anticipation of a break in the clouds.

Forests can offer exciting terrain to those telemark skiers brave enough to venture into the trees. Even in the height of a storm visibility is always good and the snow usually light and deep,

being sheltered from the wind.

Tree skiing isn't all plain sailing though; you need to be able to turn where the trees dictate and maintain flow. If you miss-time a turn then straddling a tree isn't something you'll easily forget. Wear a helmet, know your limits and be aware that avalanches still happen in forests.

The key to powder skiing in the trees is planning-ahead, maintaining flow and skillful rotation. Here's how to do it...

MEET THE TALENT

Name: Ben Langridge

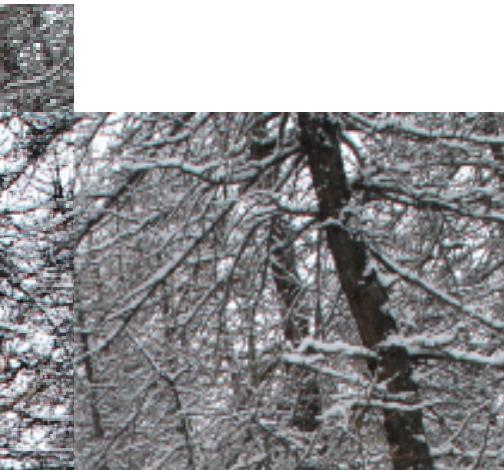
Sponsors:

Scott UK

Number of years telemarking:

20 years

Exciting stuff: Ben's first telemark kit consisted of leather lace-up boots and 205cm skinny skis, and he still enjoys getting out on old equipment ("because it's great for your technique". Nutter). Ben is the co-founder of Tele Tracks (telemarktracks.com), a British telemark ski school based in Tignes/Val d'Isère where he coaches all levels of telemark skier both on and off-piste (this season they have a stock of Scott NTN kit for their clients to try). He also runs telemark training camps for the British Development Squad. In other words, when it comes to free-heel skiing, he's your man.



PLAN YOUR LINE

Find some well-spaced trees with a clear channel to slalom through, and always plan two-to-three turns ahead. Accept the acceleration in tighter spots as you increase your arc length to squeeze through gaps, but maximise open sections to close your turns and reign in your speed. Try using a short telemark stance in the tight spots and a longer stance when closing your turns; the short stance will enable a quicker lead change and the longer stance will increase breaking.

MAINTAINING FLOW

Controlling your speed is key to maintaining flow. In the powder there are only two effective methods of speed control: use of snow and control of line.

USE OF SNOW

The resistance in good powder snow is always consistent, so let your skis charge through the deep stuff as much as possible. Maintain flow by anticipating the resistance of the snow and make adjustments to your line and telemark stance accordingly.

CONTROL OF LINE

The trees are always irregular, so it's important to be able to vary your turn radius to avoid the trees and adapt to changing terrain. Skillful rotation is essential for controlling line, and since the trees impose a narrow corridor it's necessary to separate the upper and lower body. Keep the torso floating down the fall-line while the legs rotate under the body. In a tighter radius, this can translate to an aggressive counter-rotation of the upper body into the fall-line as you initiate the next turn.

If the upper body swings round to follow the skis then the skier won't be able to stay in the narrow corridor, maintain flow or potentially follow the well-planned line through the corridor. Shoulder swingers beware – get yourself a cricket box! **FL**