

# Ski Tips

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**By David Bezyk,  
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*I was asked recently when klister is appropriate. In this article I'll talk a bit about what klister is as well as when and how to use klister. If you have waxless skis none of this applies to you, but you might want to read it just in case you get waxable skis in the future.*

**K**lister is a type of very sticky grip wax that has the consistency of honey. It comes in a number of types of containers including tubes (much like a toothpaste tube), sprays, and press and rub type applicators.

Klister is used when the tracks are too slippery for regular grip wax to grip the snow. (The snow is so smooth that it can't embed itself into regular grip wax and provide grip.)

If the tracks are slightly glazed (have only sporadic shiny patches when you look down the length of the track), you should probably try regular grip wax before reaching for the klister. If you can't get adequate grip with regular grip wax then it's time to reach for the klister. Just scrape off the grip wax that you just tried and apply klister.

## Klister Conditions

**Snow Can Become Exceptionally Smooth For A Number Of Reasons**



**1** If the snow is very, very old (no new, fresh snow for weeks) and has been skied on by many, many skiers it will become very compacted and smooth. Although the snow in the tracks may still feel powdery if you touch it, the tracks will have shiny, glazed patches if you look down the length of the tracks. In extreme cases long stretches of the track will be glistening. This can also happen very quickly if the temperature has been above zero, but the snow hasn't melted and refrozen.



**2** The snow has melted and refrozen into ice (it is very hard and shiny; you'd describe these as icy conditions) or it has formed round, smooth balls of ice.



**3** The snow is very wet and slushy.

*continued*

# 1. Precautions

Many people are terribly afraid of klister due to all the horror stories they've heard about it. It is true that klister can be very messy if you aren't prepared, but with a few precautions the mess can be managed and it can allow you to avoid a lot of frustration due to lack of grip on an otherwise fast, skiable day. Before using klister be sure you have a method of removing it or preventing it from getting on everything you hold dear (your cloths, car, pets, children, spouse, house, etc).

## Before Using Klister

*Be sure you have a method of removing it or preventing it from getting on everything you hold dear (your cloths, car, pets, children, spouse, house, etc).*

## How to Use Wax Remover

You can buy wax remover which you spray on klister to make it easier to remove.



Various types of wax removers

To use wax remover, spray it on the wax you want to remove (only on the klister NOT ON THE GLIDE PORTION of the skis, i.e. not on the tips and tails), wait a minute, then use a scraper to remove the majority of the klister. Use paper towels and more wax remover to clean any remaining klister off your grip zone and sides of your skis. You can also use wax remover to make it easier to scrape very sticky regular grip wax off.

## The Moment You Buy Klister

*Put it in a zip lock bag and close it.*

Often after a day of skiing the last thing you want to do is mess with removing klister. In this case you can wrap your skis with newspaper and tape, or cover the edges of the klister with masking tape, before you put your skis in your ski bag. A ski bag goes a long way to making klister tolerable. Also, the moment you buy klister, put it in a zip lock bag and close it. Klister has a habit of oozing out of its container when it gets warm. The bag will also stop the sticky container from touching anything once you've opened the klister container.

## 2. How to Apply Klister

### Various Containers

Depending on what type of container your klister comes in the directions for applying it will vary.



The most common type of container is a toothpaste-type tube.

### Clean Your Hands

To clean your hands, use paper towels and hand sanitizer or hand cleaner, or just put your sticky hand in your glove. The klister will disappear and it won't damage your gloves. If you think you can just wash your hands with soap and water you'll find yourself out of luck so be prepared.

### The Basic Steps

Cold or frozen klister is next to impossible to apply smoothly. A cold klister container can be heated in warm water or with body heat. Don't place aerosol klister in hot water and don't place a klister container on the dash of your car to warm up in case the klister container leaks.

The following photos (from Toko) show the basic steps.



Apply the klister at even intervals along the kick zone in a chevron pattern.



If you have a hair dryer or torch gently heat the klister and use the klister spreader that often comes with klister or your thumb to spread the klister into a thin, uniform layer. Usually a single layer is adequate.

If you apply klister without a heat source then use the heel of your hand to rub the klister with

### The Grip Zone

Some people say you should shorten the grip zone (length of where you apply the klister) compared to regular grip wax while others say you should just use the same grip zone as you would for regular grip wax.

Experiment and see what length of grip zone gives you good grip and maximum glide for you and your skis. If you're having trouble with poor glide, use wax remover to take 5 cm off the front and back of your grip zone and see if that improves your glide while supplying good grip.

*Tips*

### FOR EASIER APPLICATION

- ▶ If you apply klister without a heat source then use the heel of your hand to rub the klister with some force.
- ▶ Klister also comes in a spray form and a press and rub type applicator that you may find less messy.
- ▶ Warm klister (in the tube) is much easier to apply than cold klister. If your klister isn't at room temperature, warm it with body heat or in a container of warm water before applying it. This will allow you to apply a smoother, thinner layer than if you were trying to apply cold klister.

some force. After a while the klister will warm and smooth out nicely. Be sure to pull your sleeve up a bit so your jacket doesn't get caught in the klister. **Try not to spread the klister outside your grip zone** (onto the tip and tail of the ski).



## 3. Additional Tips

### Let the Skis Cool

After you apply klister you have to let it cool and harden for 5 or 10 minutes before you use your skis otherwise the snow will embed itself in the soft, warm klister and turn to ice when you start skiing. Put your skis in the shade or next to the snow (don't let the klister touch the snow).

### Skiing With Klister

When you are skiing with klister avoid standing still for any length of time. If you do that your skis will begin to ice up and the klister will provide no grip or no glide once you get moving again. Either shuffle your feet every 10 seconds or take your skis off in order to prevent icing.

### Different Types of Klister

Just like regular grip wax, klister comes in a number of different colours. Some klisters work better in wet snow, some work better on icy snow, and some work better at colder or warmer temperatures. To make selecting klister easier Swix and Toko both make Universal Klister. **Universal Klister** works quite well in a wide range of conditions and will be the only klister most people will need.

### Finally...Enjoy Your Skiing

With the weather warming up significantly during the day and the sun shining hotter, the snow is tending to melt during the day and refreeze at night making this the time of year that klister can be a useful tool in making your skiing more enjoyable. **S**

## KLISTER FAST FACTS

### Buy

- Swix or Toko Universal Klister (tube, spray, rub on)

### Application

- Chevron pattern or two long stripes
- Smooth using heel of hand, thumb, or klister spreader if klister is warm

### Clean up

- **Hands** - paper towels and hand sanitizer or hand cleaner or just put gloves on
- **Skis** - wax remover, scraper and paper towels

### Speedy Exit

- Wrap skis with newspaper and tape or tape and place in ski bag

### Additional Precautions

- Put klister in zip lock bags to prevent leaking containers and sticky containers from getting on things you love

### About David Bezyk

David Bezyk is a frequent contributor of articles and instructional tips to the Calgary Ski Club's Nordic program. He is an avid cross country skier and coaches this sport for CSC. David is enthusiastic about getting new skiers involved in this sport and can often be found leading cross country skiing day trips for them.