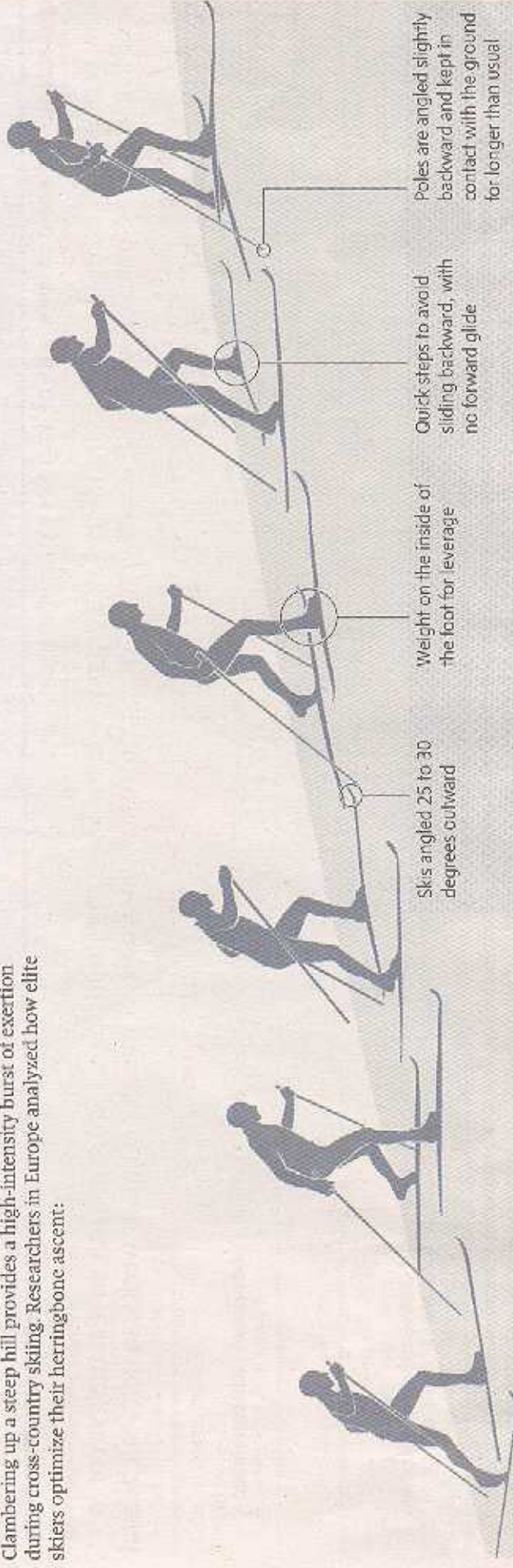


Clambering up a steep hill provides a high-intensity burst of exertion during cross-country skiing. Researchers in Europe analyzed how elite skiers optimize their herringbone ascent.



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The jaw-dropping benefits of cross-country

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The options for aerobic exercise during the Canadian winter can seem grim: slipping and sliding along icy streets, pedalling nowhere under the fluorescent lights of the gym, and so on. But there's a better option, one that, recent research suggests, actually offers unique advantages compared to the alternatives. When it snows, why not make for the cross-country ski trails?

STAY YOUNG

Researchers in Sweden and at Ball State University in Indiana assembled two groups of octogenarian men. All of the volunteers were healthy, lived independently and were capable of completing a vigorous exercise test to exhaustion. The difference was that one group comprised life-

per-cent faster at double-poling, 17-per-cent faster at skating, 14-per-cent faster at classic style, and just 12-per-cent faster while running. The results suggest that you should vary your technique on different types of terrain in order to maximize your workout.

CLIMB HARD

The occasional steep uphill on a cross-country course is a necessary evil. How else do you earn the downhill that follows? You can turn your skis perpendicular to the hill and side-step your way up, or even take your skis right off. But the quickest solution — like pulling a band-aid off — is to angle your skis slightly outward and herringbone up at top speed and Clambering up a hill in this style is like a miniature sprint, and it will send your heart rate shooting upward. That's a good thing: Researchers have shown that including some short bursts of intense activity while exercis-

