

Clinic

SKI STRONG. SKI SMART.

Barilla

SHOULDERS SQUARE

Notice that Shiffrin's left hand hasn't crossed the center of her body. This keeps her from over-rotating her shoulders, which could cause her outside ski to skid.

Practice Makes Perfect

Sure, she has innate talent, and lots of it. But without a lot of hard work, Mikaela Shiffrin probably wouldn't be the best slalom racer in the world. BY MICHAEL ROGAN

Much has been written about Mikaela Shiffrin's "meteoric" rise to the top of the World Cup standings, but if you ask her, she might dispute the speed of her success. Despite her youth, Shiffrin's rise has been a steady progression of struggle, improvement, and constant learning, based on

her sheer determination and a solid work ethic.

Consistent with her development, Shiffrin's skiing is precise, accurate, disciplined, and very much practiced. There's a lot to be learned from studying photos like this one—much we should try to emulate in our own skiing.

But the real lesson might be this: If you want to get good, you have to put in the effort, and nothing happens overnight. There are stories of Shiffrin working on drills for days, weeks, even months—honing and studying her technique so that she knows everything there is to know about it.

It's a case of practicing until you can't get it wrong, rather than practicing until you get it right. That allows her instincts to work with her abilities.

The good news is that effort does not require talent. And as the saying goes, "It's hard. That doesn't mean it isn't fun."

LOOK AHEAD

There's about to be a violent collision between Shiffrin and the gate, but she's already focused on the future. The process of blocking will not compromise her technique.

LEVEL THE SHOULDERS

Keeping your shoulders as level as possible when your skis are in the fall line keeps you balanced against the forces of a carved turn.

BEND AND STRAIGHTEN

Allow your legs to flex independently at different places during the turn. Bending your inside leg promotes moving your body inside the turn.

MOVE INSIDE FOOT OUT

Try to get your inside foot out from under your body. Think about aligning your inside ankle directly beneath the knee of your outside leg.

STAND HARD

Stay committed to the outside ski right through the fall line. Notice how Shiffrin's left ski—especially the front of it—is solidly pressured and bent into an arc.

TIP AND RIP

Get your skis up onto their edges and utilize their sidecut to carve. The higher the edge angle, the tighter the turn.



SKI's director of instruction, Michael Rogan, is a PSIA Alpine Team captain, USSA Team Academy coach, and Heavenly, Calif., instructor. He spends his summers enjoying more winter at Portillo, Chile, where he's resident manager.

Mikaela Shiffrin, reigning world championship, World Cup, and Olympic slalom champ, fondly remembers daily after-school training sessions at tiny Storr's Hill in Lebanon, N.H., where she would run the same 20 or so slalom gates over and over.