

THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO TOBOGGANING



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Foreword

Have you ever tried tobogganing? Well if you haven't you definitely should. Tobogganing can be a great way of turning a dull winter in to a fun time. The thrill that you can get from flying down a hill on a toboggan can be unmatched at times. Anyone can enjoy tobogganing, even beginners. You even see young children who do toboggan runs, and they are quite good at it to.

There are some truly amazing places around the world that offer some of the best toboggan runs around. You can find runs for all skill levels from beginner to intermediate.

It is important that you always remember to wear the proper safety equipment and that you always dress warm. You do not want to get sick or injured as this will surely take away the ability for you to toboggan. The last thing you want is to just get in to the sport and discover how fun it is just for you to suddenly have to stop doing it for a while

If you like to do exciting things and love to do things that get your adrenaline flowing, tobogganing will be perfect for you. In order for you to have the best experience possible while tobogganing it is important that you know the basics of tobogganing and understand a few basic principles.

The Complete Guide to Tobogganing

Chapter 1:

What is Tobogganing?

Synopsis

With all of this talk about how great tobogganing is, some people may be wondering what tobogganing actually is. Well to answer this question tobogganing is the act of sledding down a hill or slope. Toboggans are a bit different than regular sleds or skis however. They are different because there are no skis or runs on the bottom. The bottom of a toboggan rests on the ground. In some cases, places will have designated run areas where only toboggans can go. These runs can be compared to bobsleigh courses. They are a bit more packed down and closer to ice than snow.

Toboggans actually have more than one use. People have used toboggans for many different things for a very long time. They can be used for work purposes as well as recreational activities and they can also be used for means of transportation. There are different types of toboggans and you will have to make a choice on what type you would like, depending on what you are planning to do with the toboggan.

The following chapter will go over the basics of what a toboggan is and what the many uses of a toboggan are.

The following chapters in this book will go over some of the basic guidelines there are when it comes to tobogganing for the beginner. Always remember, you may not master the skill of tobogganing right away but if you keep

practicing you will be great at it in no time, especially if you use the tips that will be provided in this book.

Tobogganing Basics

An interesting fact about tobogganing is that toboggans were actually used as a means of transportation a very long time ago by the Innu and Cree tribes in Northern Canada. Early toboggans were designed to carry one or more people and were traditionally pulled by dogs.

Modern toboggans are a bit different. They still sit directly on the snow just like the early ones did but the design is completely different besides that. One or more people can still sit on the toboggan at once, but now they are used primarily for entertainment purposes instead of a means of transportation. There are still places in the world where the toboggan is used for transportation but it is quite rare.

The traditional toboggan design consists of parallel wood slats that are bound together. All of these slats are bent forward at the front and come in to the shape of a sideways j. A toboggan will also have a thin rope that is ran through the loop in this serves the purpose of allowing you to steer. When riding with more than one person the person who is furthest to the front will steer. They do this by sitting in the flat bed and placing their feet in the loop. Everyone else sitting on the toboggan will grasp each others waists in a line formation.

Modern forms of toboggans come in different types of materials. The most common are wood or plastic. Both are very durable but for most, wood is the preferred choice.

As mentioned before, toboggans are hardly used as a form of transportation any longer. They are now primarily used by people who live in areas with snow that are looking to have a good time while getting some fresh air. People flock to slopes that offer toboggan runs because those who have experienced it cannot get enough. One thing that makes toboggan riding a little bit better for the whole family to do over something like snowboarding or skiing is the fact that you can all ride down the run together on the same toboggan. This will create an experience that is fun and exciting for the whole family and will surely bring you all closer together.

There are also people who participate in toboggan racing. These people can get their toboggans up to break neck speeds and can really fly down their runs. They will usually be on two man toboggans that look similar to bobsleds.

The course or run that they go down will also look similar to a bobsled run. These people are not just sitting on a toboggan and sliding down a slope. They have to do all of the steering and each member of the team on the toboggan must use their weight to help the driver of the toboggan steer it in an effective manner.

If the team on the toboggan does not work together they will almost surely crash before they finish their run and at those speeds that is not a good thing.

You do not have to participate in such activities while tobogganing if you do not find that type of thing to be fun. There are plenty of beginner runs for toboggans that will allow you to go a comfortable speed and let you get used to how to handle your toboggan. Once you are comfortable with your toboggan it will be time to move on to more difficult and exciting runs. You want to challenge yourself but do not go overboard with it because this is how people get hurt.

It is important that you always remember to use your safety equipment. Some people may not think that it is necessary to wear a helmet or other types of protective gear because they are on snow and they think it will cushion their impact.

This may be true, but only to a certain extent. Snow can still break bones and hitting a tree is never pleasant no matter how fast or slow you are going. Tobogganing can be a relatively safe activity to do with your free time, as long as you do it safely.

No matter what you are looking for, whether it be an interesting form of transportation when there is snow or a way to get your adrenaline fix or just an activity to do with the family, tobogganing will have just what you are looking for.

Chapter 2:

Get Your Own Toboggan or Rent One

Synopsis

Now that you are beginning to become interested in trying tobogganing for yourself it is time to make the decision on if you are going to purchase your own toboggan or if you will just rent one. Both renting a toboggan and purchasing your own toboggan can both have their benefits, it just depends on the circumstances.

Toboggans range in prices depending on the size and durability that you are looking for. They can be moderately cheap or they can be quite expensive. You can even get custom made toboggans that are specially designed to your specifications. Of course you will pay more money for this option but if you are serious about tobogganing, that is the way to go.

The following chapter will go over the pros and cons of both renting and purchasing a toboggan. It will also go over some general guidelines that you should follow when purchasing a toboggan to make sure you are getting the most for your money. As well, we will go over how to make a toboggan for those people who would like to save some cash.

Weigh Your Options

As stated before, your decision on whether to buy or rent a toboggan should be based off of your circumstances. By this I mean simply that if you live in an area that snows quite frequently during the winter or live close to an area that offers toboggan runs you may want to consider purchasing a toboggan rather than renting one. Now on the other hand, if you live in a place such as Phoenix Arizona and never see snow unless you travel to another location, it would probably be a good idea for you to rent a toboggan only when you are going to go somewhere that you can use it. There is no point of purchasing the toboggan if it is hardly going to get used.

When purchasing a toboggan it is important to follow some guidelines to ensure the durability of your toboggan as well as to make sure that you get the most for your money.

The following are some basic things to look out for while making a toboggan purchase:

- **Age Recommendations**

Every piece of snow riding equipment that you find in the stores will come with an age recommendation. This is true for toboggans as well. It is very important that you follow these age recommendations, especially if you are purchasing the toboggan for a child. Ignoring the age recommendations that your toboggan comes with may possibly end in someone being hurt while on the toboggan. You also do not want to get a toboggan that is meant for someone younger when that person is older. This will just damage the toboggan and it won't be long before it breaks.

- **Weight Capacity**

The weight capacity of the toboggan is the weight load it is able to handle before damage will start to occur to the toboggan. Failure to pay attention the weight capacity of a toboggan will eventually lead to the toboggan being ruined if it is overloaded.

- **Materials**

There are a few different materials that modern day toboggans are made out of. The most common that are seen however are plastic and wood toboggans. Both have their advantages but in the long run it is probably better to go with the wood style toboggans. Plastic toboggans are light weight and can be transported easy but they are not as durable or as well made as wood toboggans. Plastic toboggans may actually be preferred for small children since they will be easier for the child to take back up hills.

- **Safety**

It is important to check to make sure that a toboggan is built well and sturdy before you purchase it. You want to make sure that there are no screws poking out or anything else that could cause injury such as loose parts. You should also make sure that you buy all of the recommended safety equipment for your toboggan at the time of the purchase, especially if you are buying the toboggan for a child.

There is of course the option of making your own toboggan and the following steps will tell you how:

- **Step One**

You will begin by taking four pieces of wood that are the same size and then you will bend the boards at the end to form a curve. Air dried wood is optimal because it is much easier to bend. However, if you have to use kiln-dried wood you should soak it overnight to allow easier bending.

- **Step Two**

Cut seven pieces 1-inch-by-1-inch-by-16-inch hard wood and two pieces 1/2-inch-by-16-inch hard wood. Sand the boards and round their top two edges. The seven 1-inch-by-1-inch boards become the sled's cross cleats. Bore a hole centered an inch from each end to accept the sleds rope. The 1/2-inch boards sandwich the very end of the bent portion of the sled. This strengthens the end and creates a good surface to link the bent portion to the first cleat.

- **Step Three**

You want your bend to form at a twelve inch diameter. It should be a cylindrical block and a good place to start would probably be a stripped piece of log. You are going to cut two boards that are six feet long and about one inch by six inches. You will then place these boards parallel to each other and their purpose is to ensure that there is no slipping in the form while bending. You then need to cut six boards that are one inch by one inch and are eighteen inches long. You will fasten these to the bent hard wood to be fastened on to the form while it dries. You will then nail to the round bending form an eighteen inch board that will be level with the ground. You now slide the sleds planks into the gap that is created for bending.

- **Step Four**

Now you will need to nail your four pieces of ten foot wood together at the end. It is important that a gap of a quarter inch is left between the boards. You need to steam the boards for about half an hour so that they will be flexible enough to bend around the form that you created.

- **Step Five**

Slide the steamed end into the form under the attached 18-inch board. Slowly bend the board around the form until the very end touches the floor. Nail another 18-inch board to the form, so it holds the 10-foot boards in place. Flip the bending form over and continuing bending the 10-foot boards until they touch the ground again. Attach the two additional 18-inch boards at even spacing.

- **Step Six**

At this point it is time for you to allow the wood to begin to dry. Once the wood is dry you will screw the half inch by one inch boards to the end of the bent boards. It is important that you install a crossbar directly under the bend. You will need this to ensure that the bend of the bow stays in its proper shape. Attach another crossbar along the toboggan evenly.

- **Step Six**

Add a rope to hold on to attached to the aft and you are done!

Chapter 3

Essential Toboggan Handling

Synopsis

If you are interested in getting a toboggan and going out and hitting the toboggan runs it is very important that you first have a proper understanding of how to properly control and handle a toboggan. There are some tips and tricks that you should be aware of that can greatly improve your ability to handle your toboggan. It is very important that you know how to properly control your toboggan, especially if you plan on taking it down large slopes or toboggan runs. You need to be able to avoid obstacles in your way such as trees or big dips in the snow. Tobogganing can be a very fun and exhilarating experience but you need to know what you are doing when it comes to controlling it.

Toboggans have a bit more control when it comes to going down slopes and runs than other forms of snow riding equipment's such as a saucer. Since you have the ability to control your toboggan you might as well use it to your advantage instead of flying out of control down a hill.

The following chapter will go over the basics of controlling your toboggan and making sure that you have control over it so that you can ride it safely.

Be in Control

As mentioned before, toboggans are a great way of having fun but it is important to ensure that you are always in control of your toboggan at all times. Going out of control on your toboggan can be very dangerous and can lead to undesired results such as someone being injured or your toboggan being damaged.

The following are some things to consider when trying to make sure that you will be in complete control of your toboggan while riding it:

- **Do an Inspection on Your Toboggan**

It is highly important that you do a thorough inspection of your toboggan and make sure it is in prime condition before you use your toboggan. There may have been minor damages that took place in your previous runs that you did not notice at the time and it is important that these damages are repaired before your next run.

Failing to do so will likely cause further damage to your toboggan and turn what could have been a minor problem into one that is much larger. As well, failing to make repairs to your toboggan when they are needed will also make your toboggan unsafe and it will only be a matter of time before something bad happens due to your negligence. The last thing you want is for your steering rope to break in the middle of going down a large slope because you did not check the condition or it prior to riding your toboggan.

- **Polish the Toboggan**

It is also important that you polish your toboggan before each time that you take it out to ride it. Polishing it is not so much for making it

look good, although it does make your toboggan look nice. You want to polish the bottom of the toboggan because this will lower the amount of friction it has while sliding across the snows surface. The less friction you have the faster and more controllable your toboggan will be. You want to try and use the same type of wax or polish that you would put on a snowboard.

- **Choose Your Path**

It is important that before you do any run with your toboggan that you carefully survey where your run will take place. While surveying this area you need to try and make a plan for how you would like to come down the run. You want to try and plan a route that avoids any obstacles. It is important that you try and find a path that steers clear away from trees and other things that you can crash in to. You may also want to try and avoid areas that may have brush sticking up through the snow as well as areas with a lot of ruts. Ruts in snow can throw you right off of your toboggan and if you are on a large hill your toboggan will continue without you, until it runs into something or reaches the bottom.

- **Clear Your Path**

Once you have chosen your desired path you need to go over it and remove anything that might get in the way while you are coming down your run. This will mostly include moving small logs or sticks and clearing any brush poking through the snow. You of course want to avoid trying to move objects such as trees because cutting them

down just to get a perfect toboggan run would definitely be frowned upon by some people.

- **Watch for Water!**

Often times, where there is a lot of snow there is likely to be water somewhere whether it is in the form of a pond, a lake, or a creek. The problem is that at certain times of the year when it starts to warm up, running water can be under the surface of the snow and can be hard to spot. There are certain signs to look for however such as gaps in the snow. This is very important to look for because the last thing you want to do is fly down on a hill on a toboggan just to be swallowed by a running creek filled with ice cold water. This would be miserable as well as very dangerous.

- **Sit Properly**

It is important that you sit the correct way on your toboggan when you are about to do a run. You want to sit or kneel on your knees in a forward position. Trying to go backwards may seem like it will be fun but it will give you little to no control of your toboggan and on top of that you will not be able to see what is coming. Another thing to avoid is lying down while doing your run on your toboggan. This will also give you little to no control of your toboggan and will almost certainly end in a crash or an injury. The biggest thing that you need to stay clear of attempting is trying to go down a run on your toboggan lying down facing head first. This is absolutely crazy and even though it seems like a good way to get an adrenaline rush it is also a good way to get a concussion. Crashing while lying down facing head first will almost certainly end in an injury even if proper protective equipment is being worn.

- **Appoint a Leader**

Before beginning your run on your toboggan it is very important and absolutely necessary that you appoint a leader for the toboggan. The leader for the toboggan should be placed in the front and will be responsible for giving directions to the other members of the toboggan team to ensure that the toboggan stays in control at all times.

- **Steer Your Toboggan**

There are a few different methods that can be used to steer a toboggan and these would include using a brake or a rudder on one side or a stick brake or even a foot controlled steering system. Try all of the different methods and see which one works best with you and what you are most comfortable with and are in most control of.

- **Know How to Slow Down Your Toboggan**

It is important as a leader of a toboggan to know when you are going too fast and are losing control of your speed. At this time you need to instruct the rest of your team to put their feet down to slow down the toboggan.

- **Shift Weight**

It is important that everyone on the toboggan knows how to shift their way in order to point the toboggan in one direction or another. This technique may not be completely effective but it does work and can make a difference in the direction of your course.

Chapter 4:

Safety Tips for Riding a Toboggan

Synopsis

Tobogganing is gaining in popularity; more and more people are taking part in it every winter season. This is probably due to the fact that it can be very exciting, can be low in cost, and for some people it can be done nearly right out their back door. As well, it is an activity that can be enjoyed as a family and that is something that is hard to come by these days.

No matter how much fun tobogganing is, it can be dangerous if the proper safety guidelines are not met. It is very important for people to be aware of the dangers involved with tobogganing and also be aware of ways in which to minimize that danger.

The following chapter will go over the importance of being safe while operating a toboggan as well as some safety tips you should keep in mind. There will also be some dos and don'ts that will ensure that you have a fun time but remain safe at the same time.

Always Be Safe!

Safety is always important and should always be your number one priority. There are certain guidelines that if followed will greatly heighten your chances of having fun with your toboggan without anything bad happening like a crash or an injury.

The following are some examples of things that you can do in order to ensure that your tobogganing experience will be a fun and safe time:

- **Check the Weather**

You want to make sure that you check the weather before you go out for some toboggan runs. You also want to make sure that you are checking the weather around where you will be doing your toboggan riding if it is in a different location than where you are now. The purpose for checking the weather is to make sure that you do not get caught in the middle of a blizzard or other dangerous winter conditions. You also want to make sure that the hill or slope that you plan on going to is safe. Check to see if there are any alerts for possible avalanches in the area or spots with thin ice. The last thing you want to do is get hurt or have a member of your family get hurt while trying to have a good time.

- **Stick to the Daytime**

I know that sometimes it seems as if there are not enough hours of daylight to get done what we want to get done, this is especially true in the winter time. The fact is, tobogganing in the dark is extremely dangerous and should be avoided whenever possible. The safest time to enjoy a toboggan run is during the day. There are times when it is

safe to ride a toboggan at night but that is only on a well-lit course and never on a course that you made yourself in the middle of nowhere. Most of the injuries that happen on toboggans occur during the hours that the sun is down and visibility is low.

- **Pick Something Comfortable**

You want to select a toboggan that feels comfortable to you. It is important to make sure that the toboggan is the right size and is the type of toboggan that you are used to. Avoid choosing a toboggan that goes speeds that are too fast for you to control or toboggans that are too hard for you to control. This is especially important when you are going to have more than one person on the toboggan since they will be depending on you for a safe ride.

- **Wear a Helmet!**

It is extremely crucial that you wear a helmet at all times while riding a toboggan. Even if you are on a small decline and you feel like there is no danger, you must wear a helmet! This is especially true when it comes to children riding toboggans as you want to make sure that they are in the safest of conditions at all times. It is important that you do not try to cut corners with what type of helmet you get. You need to make sure that the helmet that you purchase is approved by the correct organizations for safety standards.

- **Know How to Bail**

Just as it is important to know how to operate a toboggan properly, it is also important to know how to bail off of one in the case that you

need to get off of it in a hurry. It is important that you roll to the side until you come off of your toboggan. Do not try to jump out or go any direction besides to the side. As well, avoid trying to stick out your legs and feet and just roll with the impact. Doing this much absorb much of the shock of the impact and it will barely even feel like you just hit the ground.

- **Keep the Decline Shallow**

It is important that you look for areas that offer a decline that is not too steep. As well, you want to make sure that there is not too much ice. Ice can cause the toboggan to pick up a lot of speed and become out of control. Besides that, ice is much harder than snow and falling hard on ice can cause bones to break or other injuries such as concussions, even if helmets are worn.

- **Pay Attention to Warnings**

If you ever come across closed areas or areas with warning signs it is extremely important that you pay attention to what they say. Never go into a closed portion of a course because it is closed for a reason. It may be because there is threat of an avalanche or because there are jagged rocks poking out of areas with low levels of snow. Whatever the reason is it is just best to stay away from these areas.

All of the previous mentioned are some very valuable safety tips and none of them should be taken lightly. The difference between a fun toboggan ride that is problem free and a dangerous one that ends in bad results is the safety equipment worn and the precautions taken. Use your brain and protect it at the same time, always be safe!

Wrapping Up

Tobogganing can truly be one of the most exhilarating experiences you will ever have in your lifetime. It is something that you can do alone or bring your family or friends along with you to do. It is extremely exciting and anyone that goes with you to enjoy a toboggan ride will surely have the time of their life.

I hope that this book has been helpful for you and has answered all of your questions about tobogganing and has also raised your interest in the activity. You don't even really need skill; all you need is a toboggan, snow, and the desire to have a blast!

I thank you for your time and I wish you the best of luck, get out there and start tobogganing!