

A ski day in the life of **Tommy Whiting**

Bell 2 Bell

TOMMY WHITING is a work-hard, play-hard kind of guy. During the week, he drives a tow truck that rescues tractor-trailers for a company based in **Portsmouth, N.H.** At the end of the day on Friday, the 35-year-old heads two-and-a-half hours northwest to **Killington**, his home mountain since 2011. Whiting's weekend ritual is pretty simple: **ski as much as possible**. Over the years, he's established a plan of attack for making the most of his time on snow. It might not work for everyone, but those who are serious about milking the ski day for all it's worth would be wise to **follow his tracks**.

"Skiing and **spending time** at **KILLINGTON** is something that makes me thoroughly happy. **I really feel like part of the community.**"



by Kirk Kardashian photos by Justin Cash



"I look around and appreciate how **BIG** this place is."

6:00am | **Whiting** has a share in a ski house with five or six friends. He sets his alarm for six o'clock, making him the first one up in the morning. He gets up early so he doesn't feel rushed. "I like to ease into my morning, and if you have a half-dozen people descending on the kitchen at the same time to cook breakfast, it can be a little hectic," he says. He makes coffee for himself and the rest of his housemates, who are usually rousing themselves by 6:30. For breakfast, Whiting cooks up a bacon-egg-and-cheese on a big English muffin. Sometimes he has enough time to eat it at the house. If not, he's eating it in the car on the way to the lifts, or it's in his pocket for the ride up the first chair.

7:40am | **At this time of the morning**, skiers have their pick of the parking lots. Whiting chooses a spot as close to the Superstar lift as he can get. A few minutes later, he's rubbing elbows with a Killington cohort waiting for the lift to start spinning. "You see the same old-timers and retirees coming out for their one hour of skiing," he says. "It's kind of a cool vibe, and I know I don't fit into their age bracket, but I try to keep the peace with them. They sometimes give me funny looks if I beat them to the first chair, like, 'Who's this young guy over here?'"

8:07am | **Gliding off the ramp**, Whiting follows the sun toward Bear Mountain. He takes Gateway to Great Eastern to Skyeburst. Somewhere in those first few hundred feet of skiing, he looks north and east to the pastel Vermont skyline, to the soft sun on the horizon, and feels himself become immersed in the present. "This is why I'm getting up early, to do this and enjoy this moment," he says. The rewards are more tangible when he carves the first lines of the day into the steep and fresh corduroy of Skyeburst, sometimes getting heckled by riders on the Skye Peak Express, who haven't reached the top yet. He laps the Skye Peak Express a couple of times, taking quick and empty runs down Skyeburst, Wildfire and Outer Limits.

9:00am | **Whiting's friends** are now meeting up with him, and together they head over to Needle's Eye to ski Panic Button and Cruise Control. Sometimes they race the clock. Can they get 10 runs by 10 a.m.? Or 12 runs?

10:30am | **From Needle's Eye**, Whiting skis back toward Superstar, which is now lit with morning sun, and laps Skyelark, Superstar and Ovation. If he's by himself, he takes some time to think about his form and his turns. Since renting a ski house—and increasing his ski days per season from

15 to 60—he's noticed a marked improvement in his skiing. "I've become a lot more aggressive with my carving and turning, powering into turns more where I used to wash through them," he says. For the past few years, he's been on the Nordica Enforcer 93. "I'd keep buying that ski forever," he notes.

12:00pm | **Whiting** carries a few Clif Bars in his pockets to stay energized, but he does need to stop for water. He usually swings into the Mahogany Ridge Bar in the K-1 Base Lodge and downs a few cups on his way over to the Snowdon Six Express. "That lift is so awesome," he says. "It puts so many people up the hill quickly, and it's changed the dynamic of Snowdon for the better." He likes to rip runs right under the chairlift, on Chute and Bunny Buster, and then work his way across the mountain on the gladed trails, skiing Lowrider, Patsy's, Tin Man and Scarecrow.

1:30pm | **From the top of Snowdon**, the easy call is to ski to the North Ridge Quad and descend Rime, Reason and East Fall. Then Whiting goes down to the Canyon Quad and skis Double Dipper, Big Dipper and Cascade. If he's with a friend and they're feeling thirsty, they might stop into the Peak Lodge for a quick beer and a snack. He also likes to show Killington newbies the way up to Catwalk and the short walk to the summit. "You feel very secluded up there, you get some amazing views, and Catwalk is a really fun, technical chute," he says.

3:00pm | **At this point in the day**, every extra run is a bonus for Whiting. He skis a little more conservatively because his legs are a bit tired and he doesn't want to get hurt. He goes back to whatever run skied best earlier in the day. If he's skiing from the peak, he'll take Great Northern to Highline. And, one more time, he'll take note of his surroundings and feel a sense of gratitude. "I look around and appreciate how big this place is, and spy the woods runs I skied earlier," he says.

4:00pm | **Whiting hops the last chair** at Superstar and enjoys an easy cruise down Skyelark and Bittersweet, right to the Mahogany Ridge Bar, where he meets up with his friends for après-ski drinks and food.

KILLINGTON has become Whiting's second home. In October, his friends in Portsmouth say, "See you in six months." "And that's about right," Whiting says. "Skiing and spending time at Killington is something that makes me thoroughly happy. I really feel like part of the community." ❄️

