



## KneeBinding: Step Into the 3rd Dimension

JAMES ROBLES



*KneeBinding relies on "PureLateral" release to minimize injury.*

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If you're an avid skier who's yet to hear the nauseating 'pop' of an ACL tear, then you probably know someone who has. According to KneeBinding, close to 70,000 skiers are prematurely sidelined between the first big dump and the final pond skim due to a knee injury. Unfortunately, the costs of such an injury are more than monetary—the company estimates that over 20 percent of those injured never ski again.

During this past off-season, between living room lunges, I happened to stumble upon KneeBinding, a fast growing company out of Stowe, Vermont. What makes KneeBinding unique, aside from being a U.S. based manufacturer, is their third dimension of release. KneeBinding's "PureLateral" heel release allows the heel to move sideways. This added movement is crucial for preventing rearward-twisting knee injuries. All alpine bindings release up at the heel and sideways at the toe, effectively reducing broken legs, however, this two-way release mechanism does nothing to prevent rearward-twisting knee injuries, according to KneeBinding. Was I intrigued? You bet.

A skier's bindings are arguably the most vital safety component they own. As an ex-racer, I was admittedly reluctant to trust my 200-pound frame on top of this relatively unknown binding at full speed. I posed the question to an active group of community members via [EpicSki.com](https://www.epicski.com) and uncovered some positive feedback from KneeBinding owners. Ultimately, the idea of not releasing when I needed to outweighed my fears of pre-releasing when I didn't. Mount up!

After two months of hard skiing on my KneeBinding Carbons (DIN range 3-12), I've yet to experience a pre-release on hard pack or in crud. I have released twice while in deep powder (both of which were not during a fall), but it was difficult to determine if it was a pre-release issue or not. One release may have been due in part to my ski getting too close to a tree-well, while the other release occurred while cresting over a buried mogul. I may up the DIN a half step before my next trip out.

After skiing 12 days with these bindings they continue to impress, allowing me to push the limits of my skiing in a confident manner. As an added bonus, I've noticed zero boot movement. The Carbons provide solid edge-hold and responsiveness across the mountain. Time will tell how these bindings hold up after multiple seasons and multiple spills, but initial testing is very positive.

An inherently dangerous sport with its own set of unique risks, in skiing, "newer" doesn't always mean better, but "safer" most certainly does. KneeBinding has not only addressed one of the sport's biggest pitfalls, but perhaps more importantly, they've revealed it. Now, clicking into my old race bindings feels like an unnecessary risk, like driving without a seatbelt or eating McDonalds—perhaps that's why they've been retired to storage with the rest of my skiing memorabilia.

Skiing is nothing more than a series of small recoveries made under the pull of gravity. Hopefully, with the help of companies like KneeBinding, the phrase "recovery time" can be left on the mountain where it belongs.