

Knee Binding: Heel Release Promises Safer Skiing For Seniors

by Mike Stebbins

SeniorsSkiing.com's Correspondent Mike Stebbins Reviews An Innovation In Binding Engineering That Addresses Knee Injuries.

Back in the day, the fractured leg was “The Ski Injury”. With the advent of release bindings, broken legs all but vanished from our sport. These days, the torn Anterior Cruciate Ligament (ACL) is king of season-ending-injuries. Well documented research concludes that ACL injuries are caused by backward twisting falls. In these days of cliff hucking, rail grinding, and high speed carving, these types of falls are becoming common. Worldwide last year, there were 76,000 reported ACL injuries related to skiing. That is one out of every 1,900 skier days. The research also shows that women and seniors are much more prone to ACL injury. The problem is that typical bindings do not release in these types of falls because they do not release laterally at the heel.

Knee Bindings add heel rotation to traditional toe rotation as an innovative safety feature.
Credit: Knee Bindings.



Enter, the KneeBinding company of Stowe, Vermont. Their patented PureLateral™ system releases in the same way as all other bindings but also has a second mechanism to release the heel directly to the inside, protecting your ACL.

Their product is also a high performance binding. The LeverEdge™ feature places the base of the binding closer to the ski edge than any other binding, providing more leverage, power, and control. Most bindings create a dead spot under foot where the ski can't bend. The FlexFloat™ system allows the ski to bend under foot giving more crisp and rounded turns.

Here's my experience with Knee:

Day One, I started in the shop by testing the Carbon model's release values. Throughout the entire DIN range of 3-12 they released in the middle of the "acceptable" range. – **PASS**

Like many seniors, I prefer to ski more upright than the current fad of going about hunched over and pressing shins into the front of the boot. Kits are available from Knee to set the forward lean (Delta or Ramp angle) between zero and 6mm. – **PASS**

The day saw me on 7 inches of fresh, wet, heavy snow. If pre-release was going to be a problem this is the snow to prove it! No matter how tight the carve, nor how hard I banged through moguls, these bindings never even hinted at a pre-release. Ski Retention – **PASS**

Days 2-3-4- POW!! 30 inches of Montana Cold Smoke! Lots of tight turns in the trees. I make most of my turns in deep crud and moguls off the inside/uphill ski. If there was to be a lateral pre-release of the heel that would do it. No worries, mate. Pow and hip deep harbor chop – **PASS**

Day 5 we finally had some corduroy. I spent the day just laying the edges over hard, twin-tracking, and hitting the moguls. I could really feel the difference that the LeverEdge™ and FlexFloat™ features make. You have to ski a free floated binding system to believe the enhanced performance. – **PASS**

This product is a definite BUY! MSRP for the Carbon model is \$499.99; online, as little as \$275.99. For a high performance binding AND the protection from ACL injury, that's quite a bargain.

[For more information go to KneeBinding.com](http://KneeBinding.com)

[For a video from Knee Bindings explaining how the heel release feature works, click here.](#)

Editor Note: This product review is not a paid endorsement or advertisement.