

FAQ: Ski Arms

Response by Katherine McKeown, CALA Master Trainer



Member question:

I have checked out videos on the CALA website as well as the VWT and GAF manuals and I couldn't find my answer to the following question. (All Charlene's demos are slice hands)

What position are your flat hands to be when doing long lever xc ski?

I do it with my palms always facing back however, I have seen instructors say to have your palm facing the direction the arm is moving.

Facing back when you push the water to behind you and then turn your palm to face the front when you bring your arm back to the front of your body.

Is there a reason for doing it one way over the other? To me, if you turn your palm then you are not working both sides of your forearm. Though it might be working different shoulder muscles.

I get the 1-4 hand positions. I even get 5 and 6 but what I have seen in a non-CALA video and while taking a class, the instructor is telling the class to do #6 one way and number 5 on the return for all the reps.

I am okay with demoing and telling my class to keep their palms facing the same direction when I am doing ski flat hands.

I will have to demo the hands as per #5... (Maybe when I next sub a class in a few weeks.)

Response from Katherine McKeown

Thanks for your question!

When performing an alternate narrow ski with long levers, you can use many variations of SA for your hand position:

1. Slice with thumbs tucked beside base of index finger - palms facing in
2. Fold/ Fist with palms facing sides
3. Fold/Fist with palms facing forward
4. Fold/Fist with palms facing back
5. Flat hand palms facing forward
6. Flat hand palms facing back

For the safety of the wrist joint it is always best to stay with one hand position for several reps before switching to another.

Definitely you are on the right track!

The concern with continuing to switch palm positions (supination one direction and pronation the other) is the workload applied to the wrist joint particularly during a flat hand which has the greatest surface area-

Maintaining the same palm orientation for a period of time also allows participants to deepen their attention to executing their arm movement with strength, precision and intention. It allows space to connect their minds to the shoulder/ upper arm/ forearm musculature being activated as well!

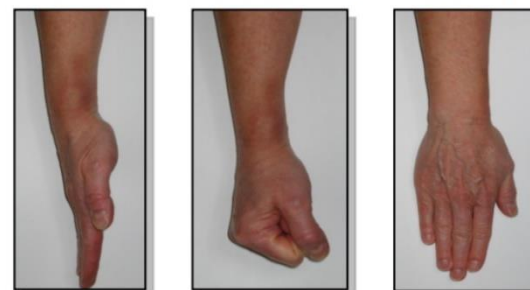
My very best to you! Katherine :)



Visual cueing to show ski legs with long lever ski arm and slice hand. Body Alignment with core activation. Create a strong foundation to ski with perfect posture!

Practical Application and Reflection: Surface Area

Get your body ready by creating gentle firmness in the muscles that surround the joints and activating the core. While marching or standing in the water, bend arms slightly and move them forward and backward (shoulder flexion and extension) using the following hand shapes.



Slice

Fist

Flat



Maintaining a firm wrist will prevent excessive unintentional movement at the joint.