

# Skiing: Holiday shopping ideas

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It's the holiday shopping season and time to figure out what to give your favorite winter enthusiast. Skiers are always looking for the latest functional gadgets and, every year, there is no shortage of innovative new technology that promises to make a cold day on the slopes warm and welcome.



Heated boot bags, such as the Transpack Heated Boot Pro shown above, are becoming more popular.

Heated products are starting to catch on, especially heated boot bags. Although pricey, the feeling of slipping on a warm boot can't be beat. "When you put on warm boots in the morning, it improves the whole day," said Gene Kilot, a college ski racer and jumper, who invented the Transpack compact boot backpacks in the mid-90s, and now debuts the Transpack Heated Boot Pro (\$199).

Plug the bag's outlet in overnight choosing from three different temperature settings and keep them charged on the way to the mountain with a car lighter plug. Warm boots

are softer and easier to put on and buckle up to the right size in the morning for a better fit.

For warm hands, try Seirus' new Ignite (\$375) gloves or mitts with HeatTouch rechargeable technology activated by an illuminated push button with low, medium and high heat settings that last up to six, four and two hours respectively. Wafer thin batteries power heat panels designed to radiate warmth throughout for toasty digits. Less expensive, non-battery heated options are Seirus HeatWave mitts and gloves starting at \$40, with a proprietary thermal reflective layer made of a high wicking material said to retain 20 percent more warmth than traditional linings.

Whether you slide on snow or not, apparel gifts for skiers can be good for anyone on your list. For instance, Stio's Hometown hoody (\$295) is a cozy option to take the chill off any winter day whether hitting the slopes or the town. It has Downtek water repellent 800-fill goose down insulator with nylon exterior that sheds the elements. It has a peripheral-adjust helmet-compatible hood and hand warmer pockets.

Layering is the way to go for dressing comfortably on the slopes and Terramar's new ClimaSense technology adapts to the body's changing conditions to keep users comfortable no matter how hard they're working out. The new 3.0 Ecolator full-zip textured fleece hoodie promises warmth and enhanced breathability in an ultra-thin package for a mid-layer piece that doubles as an outer layer.

For walking around icy terrain, Icebug Footwear from Sweden has BUGrip technology with "smart" 15-19 carbide steel studs on the outer sole designed to adapt to slippery surfaces to provide traction. The Diana (\$185) for women or the Metro (\$165) for men are both water resistant and insulated.

Swedish rooftop carrier Thule has been branching out with other carrying devices such as its new RoundTrip Double Ski Roller (\$229). Simple, but ingenious, design makes this a great gift for skiers or snowboarders who like to travel. The bag fits two pairs of skis or a snowboard with tip and tail protectors that have a stuff sack attached for jacket and layers. An internal zipped pocket stores additional accessories. There's also a sleeve for poles so they don't bang against skis. Compression straps inside and out also prevent gear from shifting. The Boot Backpack (\$99) can be attached via built-in loops and features a separate compartment for helmet and hard shell pocket for goggles. The ski

bag is made of durable, waterproof tarpaulin material with extra thick padding and big wheels. Finally, a lockable zipper protects all the gear.

Of course, nothing gets skiers more excited than a new pair of boards and if you're looking to inspire the woman in your life, jazz up her skiing on the Volkl Yumi (\$550). This easy turning intermediate women's ski handles all conditions happily. A free-ride design features a tip rocker to make it easy to start a turn and easy to ride while on a flat ski. For its width, it's very light, with a wood core/glass construction for liveliness and a playful feel.

Whether Santa's list is for a big-ticket item or a \$20 pair of SmartWool socks, head to a reputable specialty ski or snowboard shop for the best selection and advice.