

'HOW I BUILD MY BODY'

MALOU PETERSON



MEET THE ELITE

Professional freestyle and backcountry skier Malou Peterson has been skiing since she was two years old. During her three years on the Swedish National Ski Team, she competed in the Europa Cup and the Youth Olympic Winter Games across various disciplines including alpine racing, big air and skiercross.

Malou Peterson is an ambassador for Smartwool (smartwool.eu)

CARDIO

'I spend all winter ski touring, which means that I walk and climb mountains with heavy equipment to ski them. I prepare for that in the summer and autumn by running and hiking for hours on the mountains, mixing long, gentler runs with shorter sprints – hill sprints are amazing for strengthening your legs for skiing. I also try to get in a month of surfing in the autumn, which is great for balance. I don't have a coach, and I thrive on trying new forms of exercise that push my body and mind, and help me find joy. When I competed at national level, I followed a very strict workout programme with a coach – that worked well for that point in my life, but I don't find that approach very sustainable for my long-term health. I want to ski until I'm 80 at least!'

STRENGTH

'I used to hit the gym a lot, doing loads of leg work and weightlifting. But in the past year, I've got completely hooked on Pilates – both high-paced and slower versions. I do four or five 45-minute sessions a week at home, and the focus switches between my core, upper body and lower body. The burn I get from Pilates is very similar to skiing but I find it very gentle on my body, especially on my knees and back. Skiing requires you to be centred and in control, so I love Pilates for its core benefits.'

NUTRITION

'I love food. When you're in the mountains, you need lots of it because if you don't have the energy, you won't have the power. I try to eat as in tune with the planet as possible, eating a plant-based diet when I'm at home with lots of veggies, curries, rice, oatmeal, wraps and burritos. But when



'I'm on the road, I eat everything. I don't like to be limited when traveling since food culture is different all over the world and, at the end of the day, I need energy for long days in the mountains.'

RECOVERY

'I have rest days, but I don't plan them. With skiing, there are always "bad weather" days, so I normally use them to relax – it's hard to slow down when the conditions are perfect! Mobility and flexibility are super important for my sport, but I sometimes struggle to stretch after every ski session. However, I do a lot of short, slow runs to shake out my legs after skiing, followed by an ice bath.'

VITAL KIT

'When I'm skiing, hiking or running in colder temperatures, it's key that my clothes are made from merino wool. This is because it keeps me warm and cool at the same time, and it doesn't smell bad, even when

I've worn something for a couple of days. When I'm skiing, I'll always wear the Smartwool Intraknit Merino 200 Pattern Crew Baselayer top, £119.99, paired with the Smartwool Intraknit Merino 200 Pattern Bottoms, £119.99. I also love the Smartwool Athlete Edition Freeski OTC Socks, £29.99; smartwool.co.uk

Why try skiing?

'Skiing is so joyful because you get to have fun with friends, travel, experience different foods and cultures and enjoy the adrenaline rush. It's also great for your mental health.

'Being surrounded by mountains makes you feel so alive and yet so small. It makes me feel I can do anything but also that I don't matter in the grand scheme of things, which adds to the "I can do anything in the world" feeling.

'Skiing is great for mental strength because you go outside of your comfort zone. Pushing yourself to your limits is when you evolve most.'

'My biggest achievement...'

'...has been overcoming two big concussions while competing. Brain injuries are hard, and recovery takes a long time. But I'm proud of my patience and now I'm focusing on big mountain skiing and creating films from around the world. I'm healthy and wiser than before: wearing a helmet is so important and, without mine, I wouldn't be here today. I'm also proud to run a charity auction where, together with sponsors like Smartwool, I auction gear for which all the profits go to non-profits working for a more inclusive outdoor space. I want as many people as possible to experience the joy of the outdoors.'



Words: Joanna Ebsworth | Photography: Tybalt Peake, Skadi, William Larsson