

# The Weekday Offers a New Take on Skiing

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Anyone lucky enough to make it to Massanutten on a weekday will be facing freshly groomed snow, a serious lack of lines, and cheaper lift tickets.

People who ski or snowboard in Central Virginia are likely to have heard of Massanutten. If the name is not recognizable, then the description of the mountain on a weekend might be. As at many other ski mountains, there are lift lines that seem more like concert mosh pits. The snow, which was freshly groomed before the day began, is torn to shreds within a few hours. Although some may enjoy skiing down the mountain in a crowd of people, for others it is simply overwhelming and cramped. For those able to get to the slopes during the week, these issues will be gracefully avoided.

On a Monday, the lift lines are barely there. The most one might have to wait to get on a lift is about 90 seconds. The speed with which one can get on the lift is aided by their newly installed RFID pass scanners. Having one's pass scanned is as simple as skiing up to the gate and then through once your card has been successfully read.

These RFID scanners are just one of many of Massanutten's new improvements. The resort, which is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year, recently announced a four-year expansion and

improvement plan. Including the new lift ticket system, they have announced plans for several new trails and terrain parks as well as an improved and revitalized snow making system.

This new system has had a noticeable effect. Through its use (and an unusually cold winter) Massanutten has achieved practically total snow cover. This means that the trails are exceptionally wide this winter, giving everyone plenty of room to find their own way down the mountain. The combination of wide open trails and few other skiers makes it feel like it really is just you and the mountain.

In addition to the different skiing environment, weekday lift tickets are substantially cheaper. They cost \$59 for an 8-hour pass on Monday compared to the \$86 pass available on a Saturday or Sunday. For students, Wednesdays and Fridays offer even bigger discounts. Tickets only cost \$45.

For anyone interested in heading out there, the conditions on the mountain are currently as good as you can find on the East Coast. It is practically devoid of the ice which often plagues those attempting to ski on this side of the country. According to one lift rider, "This is the best snow we've ever had, and I've been skiing here for 18 years."

Due to the ever changing nature of temperature and weather, the snow conditions at Massanutten shift regularly.



A green circle slope at Massanutten. Photography by Lillian Downey