

Being properly outfitted on the ice makes all the difference – well-fitted skates, warm clothing, and a safe helmet can go a long way to making the learn to skate experience all the more enjoyable.

Helmets

- 👣 Helmets are required for all CanSkaters, and are recommended for beginning skaters of any age;
- 👣 The fit of the helmet should be snug;
- 👣 Both the strap and the helmet should be adjustable and fastened at all times while on the ice;
- 👣 Look for helmets made of hard plastic with a thick sponge or styrofoam layer;
- 👣 Look for helmets approved by the Canadian Standards Associate (CSA) as they provide the best quality and safest design;
- 👣 A hockey helmet is recommended over a cycling helmet as it is designed to withstand repeated bumps and protects against penetration;
- 👣 A ski-racing helmet is even better as it provides more coverage of the skull while still being designed for repeated bumps and to protect against penetration;
- 👣 Cycling helmets are guaranteed for the first hard hit only.

Clothing

- 👣 Clothing should provide warmth, and allow for movement as well as provide some protection from falls;
- 👣 Ski suits are generally warm and dry but may restrict movement if not form fitting;
- 👣 Layering of sweat suits with splash pants, sweaters, ski jackets, and long underwear or leotards is recommended;
- 👣 Warm mittens are a must, gloves are not warm enough;
- 👣 Scarves are not allowed;
- 👣 Knee guards are not necessary, but if you should decide for your skater to wear them, they should be placed underneath the top layer of clothing. If placed on the outside they slide on the ice which makes getting up difficult.

Skates

☞ Most department and sports sell skating equipment in a variety of prices and quality ranges. Before buying skates, check carefully for:

- ✓ Proper Fit
- ✓ Firm Ankle Support
- ✓ Good Quality Leather
- ✓ Correct Blade Placement

Places we recommend for purchasing skating equipment:

- ☞ Figure 8 - Hockey 1 - they sell used skates as well.
- ☞ The Hockey Store

If you are comfortable with fitting your skater yourself, you can try:

- ☞ Canadian Tire
- ☞ Play It Again Sports

When shopping for skates:

- ☞ Avoid buying a larger size skate in anticipation that the skater will "grow into it" - poor fitting equipment will cause discomfort, discouragement, poor results and can cause injury;
- ☞ Moulded plastic skates should be avoided as should the 'speed skate' style blade. They are inflexible and make it difficult for skaters to bend their knees and push off, and the 'speed skate' style blade is the wrong shape and balance point for any proper development of glide because plastic becomes very cold and stiff on the ice, it makes the skaters' feet colder as well;
- ☞ Look for blades that are screwed onto the boot rather than bolted or riveted on, so that the blade can be moved if necessary. If the blade is bolted or riveted, make sure it is on straight and centered for your skater's body. The blade should feel centered under the foot, and the foot should not fall to one side or the other;
- ☞ A leather boot is preferable to vinyl. Vinyl does not have enough support and gets colder in the arena. Leather will conform to your skater's foot;
- ☞ Makes sure the boot does not have any wrinkles;
- ☞ The tongue should be well padded and wide enough to cover the front of the ankle and stay in place.

How to Properly Fit a Skate

Wear only one pair of tight fitting socks or tights, preferably the same type that will be worn when skating.

1. With skate undone, slide foot into boot;
2. Slide foot forward so toes touch the front but are not cramped;
3. Stand with weight equally distributed over both feet

4. Bend knees.

The space at the back of the heel should be no more than a pencil in width, if your finger fits, the skate is too big!

1. Careful bang the heel of the skate against a wood or padded surface to force the heel all the way back in the boot;
2. Pull tongue out slightly;
3. Stand straight with knees and ankles straight.

There should be no space to put anything in the outside or inside of the boot near the arch or ball of the foot.

1. Tie laces snug over the toe and the front of the boot through to the arch;
2. From the arch/instep to the ankle the skate should be tied tighter;
3. At the top of the ankle the laces should be secure but do not need to be tight.
4. Do not wrap extra laces around the ankle. Cut the laces to fit.

There should be no looseness or creases in the foot area of the boot. Creases at the ankle should work with the shape of the skaters' ankle and should not have cracks or be too deep. Walk around off the ice, the skates should feel comfortable.

Sharpening your Skates

1. Sharpen skates as soon as they are purchased, whether second hand or brand new;
2. Use a good skate sharpening company;
3. Re-sharpen your skates after approximately 30 hours of skating;
4. For Figure Skates, and Recreational Figure Skates, do not remove the bottom toe pick. The pick is part of the design of figure skates and is essential to proper balance, not just for jumps.

We recommend the following Skate sharpening companies

1. Blades & Things - Corner of Slack & Merivale Road - 613-723-5992
2. Vince's Precision Sharpening - Boundary Road - 613-822-1570
3. Figure 8 - Hockey 1 - Industrial Road – 613- 731-4007

Taking Care of your Skates

1. Always wear protective guards when not on the ice, even if there is rubber matting, it still dulls the blades;
2. Loosen skates sufficiently before removing them so that the back of the boot will not break down nor the tongue rip;
3. Dry blades and sole plate completely with an absorbent cloth after each use;
4. Do not put guards on skates that aren't on feet, you can get cloth blade protectors.
5. Air out skates after each use to prolong the life of the boot.