

Guide to Purchasing Ice Skates

Ice skating can be a very physically demanding sport. The importance of a well-fitted boot and blade can make the difference between an enjoyable day on the ice or a painful, challenging practice.

Think of the foot as the overall foundation for the body. It needs to provide proper support. The foot is comprised of 26 bones supported by ligaments and tendons and controlled by numerous muscles. The strength of the foundation will determine the overall strength of the total structure. The foot is a very complex part of the body, and proper support and comfort of the foot will result in the best performance and enjoyment of skating.

Here are a few questions and answers skaters should consider when looking to purchase new ice skates.

What should I look for when selecting a skate brand?

1. Look for a manufacturer that has a solid reputation for servicing the industry and offers a wide range of models and price points for all levels and proficiencies of skating.
2. Look for a brand that has a strong retail dealer network and can provide skate fitting, blade mounting and post-sale service.

What do I look for in a properly fitted skate?

1. Never just purchase a skate based on your street shoe size. All skate boot brands have their own size scales and often do not match up with street shoe sizes. Typical skate boots should not feel like sneakers or bedroom slippers.
2. It's important to have your foot sized by a knowledgeable skate fitter using the

size scale provided by manufacturer of the brand of skates you are interested in purchasing.

3. After the size and width have been determined, put the skate on with the socks you will be wearing when skating. Slightly tap the foot down into the base of the skate and lightly kick your heel back into the skate. Now start to lace the skate from the toe area up to the ankle using good firm tension on the laces. This will keep the foot help in position and offer the best support and comfort for the arch area. With slightly decreased lacing tension, lace the skate to the top hooks and tie off the ends. This process will hold the foot firmly in the skate while giving ankle flexibility.
4. Stand and rest your weight evenly over both feet. You should be able to wiggle your toes up and down slightly, but not side to side.
5. To test heel snugness, the skate fitter should hold down the back portion of the skates and have you try and lift your heel up and forward out of the heel cup of the boot.
6. If excess room is present at the front of the toes or in the width of the skate, a narrower width or shorter size may be necessary.

Who should decide what brand of skates to choose?

When selecting skate brand or models, you are the customer and you should decide what product works for you. Skating coaches, instructors and the retail dealer may make recommendations, but the consumer should base their decision on product quality, product options and personal preference.

How can I determine if the retailer dealer is qualified to meet my skate purchase and service needs?

Reputable skate dealers have received product training and skate fitting procedures from the manufacturers and have developed a reputation of quality products and service. Ask other skaters, parents and coaches for their recommendations. If the skate retailer is unable or unwilling to provide you with the proper product or answer your questions, seek out another retailer.

Should I buy skates from an online retailer?

Although it may seem convenient to purchase skates through the internet or mail-order, ice skates are performance footwear. The best method of fitting skates is to personally have your feet measured and the skates fit in-person by a reputable and trained skate fitter. In-person sizing will ensure proper comfort, support and performance.

Is it important to purchase quality ice skates for a beginner?

Yes. Ice skating is a physically demanding sport. High-quality skates provide the necessary support, comfort and durability for skater success.

Should I purchase skates large for my child to allow room for growth?

No, purchasing oversized skates not only will result in poor skating performance, discomfort and possible foot irritation, but it will also cause premature skate product failure. Buy skates to last the skating season for growing children.

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