



## Inline Skating Safety

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The latest innovation in roller skating is inline skating. [\*NOTE: Although many people know the sport as "rollerblading," the term Rollerblade® is a registered trademark of Rollerblade, Inc., and should not be used as a generic term for the sport. Accordingly, this document will refer to the equipment and sport by the generic terms "inline skates" and "inline skating," respectively.]

In 1980, inline skates were an ideal off-season training tool for hockey players. Inline skating spread from hockey players to skiers, who also used them for training, and then into the general population of fitness buffs and recreational sports consumers.

Swiftly gaining in popularity, rapid inline skating can burn as many calories per minute as cycling or running. Its low-impact, gliding strokes apply less injury-causing stress to the lower body joints than other sports such as aerobics or tennis. Ankles are well-protected because the boots are a heavy, thick plastic and rise above the ankle.

- According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, as many as two-thirds of inline skaters do not wear safety gear.
- The Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates that from 2003 to 2007 an average of 32,585 inline skating injuries occurred per year.
- Inline skaters should always wear safety gear, including a helmet, knee and elbow pads, and wrist guards.
- Just as you would wear a helmet while bicycling, you should wear a helmet when inline skating.
- Helmets SIGNIFICANTLY reduce head and brain injury!

Since unintentional injuries can occur to even the most experienced inline skaters, the National Safety Council recommends these skating safety tips:

- Always wear protective equipment: elbow and knee pads, light gloves, helmets, and wrist guards.
- Before your first time out, take an inline skating course to learn the basics.
- Choose durable skates that match your needs, whether you exercise infrequently or race. Your plans will determine the type of skate you should buy.
- For proper ankle support, feel the plastic of the boot: if you can squeeze it, the material is not strong enough to give you reliable support.
- When buying skates, take socks to the store with you to ensure a proper fit, or buy the socks there.

- Begin skating with a five-minute, slow skate to warm up; you will be less likely to tear muscles.
- Start skating gradually on level ground. Practice moving forward, and ease into skating.
- While skating, keep knees slightly bent, which will lower your center of gravity and keep your body balanced on the balls of your feet.
- Practice stopping by bringing the foot with the heel stop forward until the heel stop is next to the toe of the other foot. Gently bend your front knee while lifting your toes up. This motion will bring you to a stop. This is known as the "heel stop." There are other stopping methods, such as T-stop and power stop, as well as several ways to slow down, for example, snowplowing and running on the grass.

Skaters should get current information on skating techniques and practice them for greatest enjoyment of the sport consistent with safety.

- Accept the fact that falls will happen and practice falling on a soft lawn or a gym mat if you are a novice skater.
- Be conscious of others: skaters, pedestrians, joggers, and bicyclists frequently use the same areas. To avoid collisions, use caution when skating around others.
- Skate on the right side of sidewalks, bike paths and trails. Pass on the left as cars do, after yelling "passing on the left". Don't pass without warning. Also pass only when it is safe, and when you have enough room for both you and the person(s) you want to pass to be at the full extension position of your stroke.
- It is dangerous to skate in the street. In densely populated areas, be especially watchful for cars and other traffic when crossing roads and streets. Look left-right-left and cross when it is safe to do so. Remember that you must obey all traffic regulations.
- Watch for changes in skating trail conditions because of traffic, weather conditions or hazards such as water, potholes or storm debris. When in doubt, slow down. Do not skate on wet or oily surfaces.
- Before using any trail, achieve a basic skating level, including the ability to turn, control speed, brake on downhills, and recognize and avoid skating obstacles.
- Check skates regularly to make sure they are in good condition. Replace worn wheels and the brake. Make sure the wheels are securely tightened and are not blocked by debris or grass.