

How to Select the Proper Ice Skate

Getting a pair of ice skates that fit properly and provide good support is essential to an enjoyable and successful skating lesson. Improper fit and support can lead to injuries and poor performance.

- Do NOT buy skates that are a size too big thinking your child will grow into them.
- Never double up on socks. Ideally, a thin nylon sock or tights are best. Feet will actually stay warmer. Cotton socks hold moisture close to the foot and after a short time on the ice this will make the foot cold. Cotton socks also tend to stretch and then bunch up in the skate causing blisters.
- Avoid skates that are molded out of plastic. They do not allow for ankle flexibility.
- If buying used skates ensure there is some sharpening left on the blade. There should be a slight curve to the blade, so if it appears to be flat, its lifespan is complete and won't sharpen properly.
- Lace the skates all the way to the top. The laces should be snug to ensure support for the ankle. You should not be able to slide your finger beneath the laces.
- A skate with proper support should be stiff enough to at least support their own weight if you grab them by the cuff and turn them upside down, if they flop over there is not enough support.

A few pointers when trying on ice skates:

- Unlace the skate very loosely and pull the tongue forward as far as it will go.
- While sitting, place the foot into the skate and slide the foot all the way forward so your toes are touching the end of the boot, making sure to keep toes flat.
- Place your index finger behind the heel. Ideally, it should be a tight squeeze; only half of a finger width is recommended. If you can get a full finger in, the boot is too long. If you can't get a finger in at all the boot may be too short.
- Kick the heel to the very back of the boot; you want any extra room at the toes so the heel doesn't slip up and down in the skate. The heel should NOT lift at all.
- The skater should be able to stand up completely straight, without any leaning in or out around the ankle area. If the ankles buckle even the slightest bit the skates do **NOT** have enough support and an injury can occur.

Caring for your ice skates:

The most important part of caring for your new ice skates is ensuring the blades are completely dry when finished on the ice. Use cloth to dry the blades and bottom of the skate.

Skate guards should always be worn when you are not on the ice. Never step on concrete without skate guards on, this will damage the blade. NEVER put skate guards back on the blades for storage. You can purchase blade covers, commonly called soakers when you are storing your skates.

Have your skates sharpened if you feel any nicks on the edges of the blade or on a fairly regular basis, depending on how often they are used.

Please feel free to ask any of our instructors or Learn to Skate coordinators any questions regarding your child's ice skates.