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NATIONAL SKATING MONTH

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# GETTING THE MOST OUT OF YOUR SKATING LESSON



## EASY STEPS TO GET THE VERY MOST OUT OF EVERY LESSON

### BE ON TIME

Arrive at least 15 minutes before class so you can get ready to participate. This allows time for renting skates, checking in, getting your skates on and preparing for your lesson to begin.

### BE PREPARED

Being a successful skater does not require fancy equipment, but it is very important that you have well-fitting skates; warm, comfortable clothes; a hat or safety helmet; and a pair of gloves or mittens.

### SKATES

Skates must fit properly. Skates that are uncomfortable or too big will become a frustration. Take time to find a pair that offers adequate support and fits comfortably. Also, practice walking in your skates before taking the ice.

### FITTING

When fitting your skates, find a pair in which your feet, and especially the heel, do not move around the inside of your boots once your foot is properly laced in the skate. Your heel should be as far back into the boot as possible. The boots should feel snug but not pinch your toes, which should have some wiggle-room. The closer the fit, the more control you will have. Your feet will feel best if you wear one pair of lightweight socks or tights. Bulky or thick socks may limit the support provided by your skates and create uncomfortable 'bumps' inside your boots. Support is another important feature in finding the right skates. Skates that lack adequate support cannot hold you up, and you will use a lot of muscle power just staying upright. Keep trying on skates until you find a pair that fits. Rental skates are made to fit everyone and, therefore, fit no one precisely. Finally, be aware that your skate size is not always the same as your shoe size.

### LACING

The way your skates look laced up offers clues as to how well they fit. To properly lace them, tap your heel as far back into the boot as possible. Pull the tongue up gently, and secure it straight up and down before tucking it beside your foot. Starting with the second or third set of laces from the bottom, pull laces tightly one pair at a time so the boot closes well over the front of your foot. It is important that the laces are snug through the ankle area and bottom two sets of hooks. The top two can be looser to allow for some flexibility. Cross extra lace over the hooks neatly; do not wind it around the skates. Loose flying bows can cause accidents. Effectively laced skates should provide enough room, with ankles flexed, to stick a finger between the back of the boot and your leg. If your foot hurts or is uncomfortable, re-lace and adjust.

### WHEN IS THE RIGHT TIME TO BUY YOUR OWN EQUIPMENT?

If you are committed to skating and desire your own equipment, you may want to invest in your own skates. Purchase skates from a pro shop that deals professionally with boots and blades and is willing to work with you on finding a good fit. Be prepared to spend at least \$150 to \$200. Used skates will work too, especially when you are starting out. However, if you buy used, check the boot's support and for remaining "sharpening life" in the blade. Check to see if your local rink's skating club offers any equipments re-sales or on the rink's bulletin board for advertisements.

### TAKING CARE OF YOUR SKATES

Never walk on hard surfaces or concrete with uncovered blades. Wear hard guards when walking around in your skates off the ice to protect your blades. Always dry off your blades with a towel before storing them in your bag or taking them home. Wet blades may rust, and rusted blades will not glide very well. Also, keep your blades sharp. Sharp blades grab the ice better than dull ones, especially when stopping. Ask your director or instructor for the best local places to have them sharpened.

### WHAT TO WEAR

Whether skating indoors or outdoors, dress warmly by layering your clothing. Most indoor arenas are between 50 and 60 degrees, so jackets are recommended. Comfort and the ability to move freely are also important. We suggest close-fitting, but not tight, pants. Sweat pants or warm-up pants are ideal. As you get warm, you may wish to discard a layer.

We recommend protective headgear for children under age 6 and all beginner skaters. Contact a local sporting goods store for proper fit and information about ice-approved safety helmets. Remember gloves or mittens! Learning to fall is an important part of ice skating. Your hands will feel better if they are covered. If you forget to bring gloves or mittens, check with the rink's lost and found and borrow a pair.

### BE ATTENTIVE

Try the skill, try it again, and ALWAYS ask questions if you do not understand. Your instructor should break the skill down into a few easy steps, demonstrate and offer suggestions for quick mastery. People usually learn by either seeing, hearing or doing. By knowing the most effective way you learn, you can get what you need out of every group lesson.

### BE SMART

Watch where you are going, and always skate in control. Be aware of other students in your class as well as surrounding classes. It is important to stay inside the boundaries of your class and outside the boundaries of another. Remember, group classes are about learning and developing basic skills and building a solid foundation for achieving your skating dreams.

**LAST, BUT DEFINITELY  
NOT LEAST, RELAX,  
SMILE AND HAVE FUN!**