

The First Day of Skating



We're going to let you in on a little secret. The first time you skate—you're going to fall. We all fall. Olympic medalists have fallen hundreds of times. Thousands even. The best part, everyone gets right back up better than ever.

Anything is possible on your first day, but you can be ready for it. Prepare yourself with this guide for whatever expected and unexpected happens. You'll feel comfortable. You'll have safety in mind. And you'll have more fun knowing you're comfortable and safe.

Your first day will then be a fantastic day. Just like the hundreds coming after it.

Arrive early

Show up a good 20 minutes before class kicks off. Check in at the registration desk and then pick up skates at the rental counter (if needed).

Wear the right skating attire

Clothing

Comfort and the ability to move about freely is an absolute must for new skaters. Plenty of layers along with a jacket should be worn. While it's easy to assume it's warmer indoors, arenas do keep thermostats set at a brisk 50°F. Sweatpants or warm-up pants are better than bulkier snow pants. Skaters should discard layers the warmer they get.

Gloves and mittens

They're not to keep your hands warm. They protect hands as skaters learn to fall and stand back up. Lost and found boxes sometimes hide a few extra pairs skaters could borrow, if they forgot to bring some.

Socks

As for feet, one pair of lightweight socks or thinner tights work best. Bulkier, thicker socks limit support and create uncomfortable bumps inside your boots.

Safety Helmets

All beginning skaters should wear them. The Consumer Products Safety Commission offers guidelines regarding different activities. Skaters should use one of these recommended helmets: ASTM F1447; Snell B-90A, B-95, N-94. Check the fine print for certifications.

Fitting skates

Try on skates until the most comfortable pair is found. The rule of thumb: the closer the fit, the more control. Boots should be snug, giving toes just enough wiggle room without pinching. Feet should be immobile with the heel far back in the boot. Solid support is also necessary as staying upright takes a considerable amount of strength.

Note: be aware that rental skates are designed to fit everyone. Shoe size also does not necessarily match skate size.

Do

- Make sure the helmet fits comfortably and snug.
- Wear the helmet low in front to protect the forehead.
- Keep it level and immobile. Avoid tilting back or pulling low.
- Secure chinstrap buckle. Check the adjustment often for protection, in case of a fall or collision.
- Replace your helmet immediately, if signs or damage are visible.
- Clean the helmet with mild soap and water only.
- Store the helmet in a cool, dry place.
- Have the helmet wearer present during purchase to test and ensure a good fit.

Don't

- Wear anything under the helmet.
- Attach anything to the helmet.
- Wear a helmet that does not fit or cannot be adjusted properly.
- Leave a helmet in direct sunlight or in a car on a sunny day.

