

Which Brand is Best?

Which brand of skate is the best?

No one brand of skate is best for everyone. Every skater's foot is unique, so each manufacturer produces a range of styles, to help fit skaters of different foot shapes, sizes, and technical levels.

To get the skate that's best for you, be sure to **buy from a retailer who carries skates from several manufacturers**. The more manufacturers your retailer carries, the more likely they are to have the boot that's perfect for you. If you visit the skate manufacturers' websites, you'll see that nearly every manufacturer carries a list of top-level athletes who are using that company's skates. The point is, **you can get to the top in any brand of high-quality skate, but your chances are best if it's the skate that's right for you.**

So get the boot that's right for **you**, not the brand of boot "everyone else" is getting.

Skate Fitting Tips: Getting Past the "Skate-Lore"

Here are some guidelines to help you select new skates.

Please be aware that these are general or "average" statements. **They may not apply to everyone.** Your unique circumstances, and our years of experience, may cause us to suggest a different solution. It's our ability to come up with unique, effective solutions that keeps our elite clientele coming back, year after year.

Generally Speaking...

Boys' feet usually stop growing when the boy reaches age 14 or 15. The rest of the body may grow significantly in height and weight after this, but the feet tend to remain the same size.

Girls' feet will probably not grow after the girl reaches age 13 or 14.

If a skate looks too big for a foot, it probably is.

Shoe widths are different than skate widths. Skates are wider than shoes of the same width classification.

When purchasing skates for a **growing child, allow a half-size** (about 3/16 in. or 5 mm) for growing room. **Generally, this allowance will provide 12 months** of skating before it becomes necessary to stretch the boot or buy new skates.

If the fit is correct, the **average 10 year-old child will be able to lace up his or her skates** securely without assistance.

Fitting Tips

Always **match the skate model** to the skater's size, ability, and frequency of use.

WARNING: Not every skater will benefit from a higher end skate. A boot that is too **stiff** can **significantly hinder** a skater's performance by preventing knee bend and proper edge control. Of course, the opposite is also true: larger, more aggressive skaters need a top end boot for proper support and durability.

Hockey skates fit 1 to 1-1/2 sizes smaller than shoes, for both boys' and men's sizing. For example, a size 6 running shoe will correspond to a size 4 1/2 or 5 skate.

Women's skates generally fit 2 sizes smaller than their shoe sizing. For example a women's size 7 1/2 shoe will require about a size 5 1/2 skate.

A skate fits properly only when laced up. When tightened, the laces will draw the foot back into the boot. A skate that feels too small at first can feel fine once it's done up. On a properly fitting skate, you'll see a **nice, even lacing pattern**-not less than 2 1/2" from eyelet to eyelet.

A new skate should feel **comfortably snug, but without any pressure points**. Specific pressure points (for example, ankle bones, small toes) should be **stretched** ("popped") in-store to relieve local discomfort. **Skates stretch a little after break-in**, so a wide fitting skate will only get wider over time, most likely creating problems in fit and performance. To truly evaluate the fit of a skate boot, **relax and spend some time in it**. In 10 to 15 minutes, **the boot will warm up** on your foot and feel quite different than when you first put it on. The way it feels after it warms up is the way it will feel when you're skating in it.

Getting a good fit takes time. When you buy skates, plan on spending some quality time with us. It can take as much as an hour to fit you properly.

About Skate Manufacturing

Manufacturers produce different models of skates for two main reasons:

to accommodate **physical differences** among individuals. These differences include foot shape, body weight, body biomechanics, and so on.

to accommodate differences in the **level of play** among individuals. For example, a top-level NHL player will need a far more rugged skate than a backyard hockey enthusiast.

Manufacturers for a large store chain or for a special buying group specially produce "Store specific" and "deck" skate models..

Boot sizing is not universal; it differs among brands. For example, a size 5 Bauer usually corresponds to a size 4 1/2 CCM.

Tips for Skate Maintenance

Here are seven easy **tips to help your skates last longer** and give you the **best possible performance:**

Open up the boot between wearings to air out the skate. Remove laces from at least the top three eyelets, then loosen the remaining laces and pull the tongue open. Lift or remove the insoles to let out the trapped moisture.

Always store your skates in an open place where there is good air circulation. This lets them dry properly. Never store skates in your bag, car, locker or any place where airflow is restricted. Skates should only remain in your bag to and from the arena. At all other times, give 'em air and let 'em breathe! It's important!

Never use heat to dry skates. Heat dries out the boot material and causes cracking and premature breakdown. So please no hot air from blow dryers or furnace ducts!

Never skate in bare feet. If you do, the chemicals in your perspiration will seep into the laminates of your boots and destroy them, causing EXTREMELY accelerated breakdown of your boots. Barefoot skating also rusts your rivets, makes your skates smell, and makes you more likely to get blisters from friction.

Prevent Rust! Wipe your blades with a dry cloth after each use. Keep on wiping, using new areas of the cloth, until the blades are fully dry.

Never store skates with hard guards on. Rubber or plastic skate guards are for walking only. They retain moisture and the blades will rust if they are stored in hard guards. Use soft blade covers for storage because they help draw moisture away from the blade.

Inspect your boots and blades for damage every month or so. Look for loose rivets or screws, cracked or broken blades, or any other damage. If there is damage, have the skates repaired immediately. Skate safely!

Summary of Pro Skate's Skate Maintenance Tips

Print this page, then cut out this summary and tuck it into your skate bag for an instant reminder!

Open up the boots between wearings

Store skates in an open place

Never use heat to dry skates

Never skate barefoot

Wipe blades dry after use

Always use soft guards to store skates

Inspect skates every month for damage

6 Things To Know Before Buying Hockey Skates

By Patrick Francey, Owner, Professional Skate Services

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Definition of a skate; A '**skate boot**' is a device used to hold a '**skate blade**' to your foot. It is the vehicle by-which a skater '**carries and controls**' the edges of their skate blades. The skate boot is an **extension of your leg, to your foot, to the blade, to the ice.**

To ensure that you are **maximizing your skating performance**, your skate boot has to fit in such a manner that it is an efficient and effective part of the kinetic chain of your skating stride. The boot must fit **comfortably snug** in order that you have direct and instant **control of your blade edges.**

Here are six of the most important points to consider before you buy your hockey skates, including common misunderstandings and frequent mistakes. If 'skate comfort and performance' really matter to you, then you need to read this!

1. Buying the top manufacturers model of skate may not be the best choice of skate to buy, for you.

Manufacturers make several models of skates to accommodate different levels of skating and the different physical sizes of skaters. Also, the manufacturer needs to cover as many different price points as possible. The higher the model of skate, the more expensive it is and the stiffer it will be.

If you're not physically heavy enough to deal with the stiffness of the skate it won't matter how much money you pay, your skating performance will suffer. Skates that are too stiff for a skater restrict knee bend, and because you **HAVE TO** bend your knees to skate, the stiffness of the skate is a big factor in boot selection. Very often, stiff skates are also the cause of long-term skate discomfort.

Be honest with yourself when it comes to your skating ability and physical size. Purchasing a model of skate that matches your physical size and ability, can dramatically increase your skating performance, and save you money.

2. Fitting hockey skates like shoes.

Skates and shoes do not fit the same. A rule of thumb is that a skate will always fit a size, to a size and a half, smaller than your shoe size. Depending on how you fit your running shoes a skate may even occasionally be as much as two sizes smaller.

If your skates are currently the same size as your running shoe... they are too big. When you are buying skates start by trying on a pair that are size and a half smaller than your shoe. Also, if you generally wear an extra wide shoe, start with a 'D' width skate.

The ideal fit, length wise, has been achieved when you are standing in a skate that is laced up. The longest toe of the foot should 'lightly feather' the end of the toecap. When you bend your knees slightly (as when you skate) the toes need to pull completely away from the front of the toecap. If they don't pull away when you bend your knees, or if you need growing room, then go up half a size.

3. Trying on a pair of skates and not lacing them up.

I think this is one of the most common reasons skaters end up in skates that are too big. Hockey skates are, by design, meant to fit when they are laced up. As the boot is laced up, the foot will draw into the back of the skate. A skate that ultimately fits properly will, more often than not, feel small when the foot is placed in the boot prior to lacing it.

Trying on a pair of skates without lacing them up is like trying on a button shirt without buttoning it, both are meant to fit when they are done up. So, when you put the skate on, be sure to give your heel a good kick into the back of the boot and then lace it up.

4. Not setting enough time aside to properly fit the skates.

It can take time to fit a skate for comfort. Wrapping a very stiff piece of material around the foot can sometimes be a challenge.

How a skate fits in the first few minutes of putting it on compared to how it fits after spending some time to warm the boot up can make a dramatic difference. Give yourself at least an hour; take the time to walk around the store and get a feel for the boot as well as to warm it up. Also, take the time to try on more than one manufacturer's skate and model.

5. Purchasing the same make and model of skate that the pro's (NHL) have, or that your best friend is wearing.

This can be a challenging issue, because younger skaters often want what their favorite player or best friend is wearing. The reality of this situation is that the skates that the general public are able to purchase off the shelf, are not the same as what an NHL player is wearing.

The Bauer Vapor XXX or CCM PRO or whatever the model might be that you see on TV, is not the same skate that you are able to purchase. The pros are wearing custom made boots from the manufacturer. The NHL is a great marketing vehicle for the skate manufacturers. Keep this fact in mind when you are buying skates. When all is said and done the skate you buy has to be appropriate for the skater wearing it.

6. Buying a longer length to try and accommodate a wide foot.

If your foot is wide and the skate is tight then buy a wider skate not a bigger length. The really big skate that feels good in the store, will come back to haunt you almost every time. A skate has a very specific shape that is relative to the length of the foot going into it. If you purchase a skate that is the wrong length, nothing about the shape of the foot will line up with the boot. For example; the widest part of the foot sits back into the narrowest part of the boot. The arch of the foot no longer lines up with the arch of the skate. None of those things may bother you in the store, but get out skating and they will almost always show up in the form of sore feet, and bad edge control.