

# Choosing, Lacing and Caring For Your Ice Skates

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Ice skating is a great exercise for all ages. Children as young as two years old can learn how to ice skate and once learned ... it is a lifetime exercise.

Three common questions about ice skates are how do you choose a pair of skates, how do you fit them to size and how do you care for them?

How do you choose a pair of ice skates? Choose a good leather boot. Vinyl boots do not breathe and do not offer the support needed for such a vigorous sport. Remember.... the complete body weight is being placed on two blades of steel. The boot on those blades needs to be strong and supportive. It is better to pay a better price for a better skate that will not buckle or fold at the ankle than to look for a bargain .. with the result being that "fold over" boot.

How do you size a pair of skates? You size them no differently than if you were buying a pair of shoes. You need them to fit properly. Do not buy a pair that pinches in any way. When trying skates on for size, kick the heel of your foot back so it fits comfortably at the back of the skate. Your toes should have plenty of room to wiggle around. Lace the boot up. If it pinches anywhere ... it is the wrong size. Skates will not "loosen up" after using them ... do not buy with that in mind. Never buy "by shoe size" as ice skate sizes differ from shoe sizes.

What is the proper way to lace ice skates? "Loose, tight , loose" is the sequence to remember. Tie the bottom third of the boot rather loosely .. snug but not tight. The middle is then tied tightly.. but not tight enough to cut off circulation. The top third is tied as the bottom... loosely.. snug but not tight. This sequence allows for good circulation in the boot and will not cause "pins and needles" from a cut off of circulation in the foot from over tightening the skate.

How do you care for ice skates? Care for them as you would a good pair of leather shoes or boots. Oil them regularly with a good boot oil to keep the leather supple. Should the inside become wet from sweaty feet.... air dry them by hanging upside down with skate open as widely as possible. Keep a soft cloth in with your ice skates so when you are finished ice skating, you can wipe the blades dry. It will keep the blades from rusting. Invest in a good blade cover to snap on the blades only after they are thoroughly dried. Never ever walk on your ice skates on anything other than ice without the blade protectors in place. Should a lace break.. make sure you replace it .. not just tie it back together.

When not in use, tying the laces together of both skates and hanging the ice skates is a good way to store them. Hang them in a dry place when not in use for any length of time.

Choose your skates wisely when buying .... fit them carefully for size ..... care for them with tlc.. and they will last you for years.

Enjoy!

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