

Lacing Up Skates

To ensure that the skaters get the most of their skating experience, it is important that they lace their skates properly. Skates that are too loose can cause the ankles to “roll” and not create enough support for the foot. It can also lead to foot problems. So, with that in mind please take special care when re-lacing or teaching your students how to lace and tie their skates.

1. Loosen the laces all the way down to the toes and give the tongue a tug upwards before placing your foot in the boot.
2. Make sure that the socks have no wrinkles or seams that would irritate the foot, insert your foot into the boot and push down on the heel.
3. Again, give the tongue a gentle pull and then secure it straight up and down.
4. Start at the second set of laces from the bottom. Begin pulling the laces tightly, one pair at a time, so the boot closes well over the front of the foot.
5. Figure skates: Tighten the laces up to where the hooks begin, where you will make a half twist of the laces or a knot. Then continue up by going over the hooks, under then across. After you get to the last hook, you can add another half twist and a double-knotted bow. You should be able to put your finger up to your first knuckle behind the laces at the top of the tongue. It is important to tuck in any extra lace at the top of the boot to prevent the skater from stepping on it. Do not wrap the extra lace around the top of the boot. The lace can ride up the leg and cause irritation on the tendon as well as loosen the boot.
6. Hockey skates: Tighten the laces up to the top where you can add another half twist and a double knotted bow. You should be able to put your finger up to your first knuckle behind the laces at the top of the tongue. It is important to tuck in any extra lace at the top of the boot to prevent the skater from stepping on it.

The most common problem in lacing skates is to lace too loosely in the ankle area and too tightly at the top of the boot (last two hooks). This provides little support in the ankle area and undue pressure at the top when trying to bend at the ankle. Snug at the toe area; tight through the arch and ankle; and snug at the top.

Clothing for Skaters

Proper skates are essential to good performance as well as the proper clothing. As a coach you must be knowledgeable about various types of equipment and clothing in order to be able to advise skaters.

- Clothing should not restrict movement and should be advantageous to the skater with regard to appearance of body line for correction by the coach.
- Tights or thin socks must be kept dry and clean and should be cotton or a comparable material that absorbs moisture.
- Warmth is an important factor, and this is best achieved with layering. A sweater or jacket for the beginning of the session and that can be taken off if the skater gets too warm is a good choice.
- Long scarves are not a good option worn, as they can be dangerous if they drag on the ice. Hoods can restrict vision.
- Warm gloves or mittens are important especially for beginners to protect their hands when falling down. They should not be too large or sloppy.
- Long hair should be tied or clipped back so it doesn't fly in the skater's face.