



Roller blading is a recreational and competitive sport, referred to as in-line skating. It can also be a mode of transportation to and from school and work.

Just as biking and jogging, roller blading is a healthy activity. If jogging is too hard on joints, in-line skating could be an exciting alternative. Vigorous skating can burn as many calories as jogging.

As in any sport, roller blading can be dangerous. High speeds and falls can cause serious injury and fatality. Children under the age of fifteen suffer the most injuries during the first few weeks of learning to roller blade. Learning to stop or break a fall causes the most injuries. Safety equipment is essential!

The Right Equipment

Skates that are too big:

- do not support the ankles
- are difficult to control
- create extra space behind heel when toe slides to the front of the skate

Helmets are essential and:

- need to fit as snug as possible, no extra movement (Parents should purchase helmets to fit the child at that moment, not purchase the helmet large enough to grow into.)
- should be worn approximately one inch above eyebrows



- should have chin straps that fit around the ear and under the chin snugly and comfortably, keeping the helmet from shifting on the head
- must be safety tested and labeled with a certified sticker that it meets the standards set by the Consumer Products Safety Commission (CPSC), the American Society of Testing Materials (ASTM) and the American National Standards Institute (ANSI)
- must be worn correctly every time
- should be replaced if damaged
- should be replaced at least every five years based on wear and tear
- need to be colorful to increase visibility
- are an inexpensive way to protect the brain

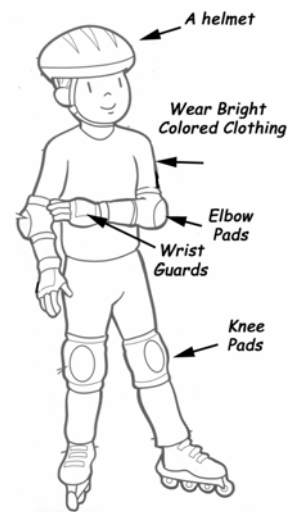
Wrist Guards:

- must fit snugly over the hands to absorb the shock of a fall (the most common injury associated with roller blading is a fractured or broken wrist)

Elbows and knee pads:

- should fit snugly
- will tend to pop off if the pad is too small
- slide off if the pad is too big

Wear Proper Equipment



Reduce the Risk

Children who do not wear or use protective equipment, particularly helmets, are at greater risk of injury. Bicycle helmets have been shown to reduce the risk of head injury by 85% and the risk of brain injury by as much as 88%.

Source: National SAFE KIDS Campaign, Injury Facts, Recreational Injury, 2004.

Common sense, courtesy, and consistency promote safe blading.

Ask a retailer about lessons and if they are taught by a certified instructor. Lessons will increase ability and enjoyment. Roller blading is a great way to combine fitness with fun. It is suitable for all ages and can be done almost anywhere!

Parents are always the best teachers by setting a good example, checking on the safety of the child's equipment, and supervising beginners. Start the safety habit early in life and be consistent. Roller blading can be a fun, rewarding family activity.

Additional Resources

In-Line Skating Association, Roller Blading Safety, Phone 305-672-6714

International Inline Skating Association, Rules of the Road, 105 South 7th Street, Wilmington, NC 28401, USA, Phone 910-762-7004.

The Saint John Regional Hospital Foundation,

Canadian Bike Helmet Coalition

Women.com.Networks, Women.com Homepage, Healthy Ideas: Program Planner



SKATING DO'S

- Always wear protective gear.
- Be sure equipment is in working order.
- Learn to skate inside.
- Skate on a flat, smooth surface.
- Master the basics of stopping, turning and striding.
- Skate on the right, pass on the left.
- Yield to pedestrians when skating on sidewalks.

- Avoid water, oil and sand.
- Watch for road hazards.
- Avoid traffic.



SKATING DON'TS

- Skate at night.
- Skate in foggy or low visibility weather.
- Wear portable radio/headphone or other items that would alter the effectiveness of the safety gear.
- Combine multi-tasks such as walking the dog when roller blading.

Educational programs of the Texas AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, sex, disability, religion, age, or national origin.
The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating