

Inline Skating – the Gear

Whether you're in a skate park in the Northeast, cruising the boardwalks of California, or playing a game of roller hockey in the Midwest, inline skating is good exercise and an excellent off-season training program for hockey and skiing.

- 1 Inline skating has exploded in popularity. Skaters can be found almost everywhere bicyclists, skateboarders and joggers go. This increases the chances of painful collisions. Most inline skating injuries happen when a skater loses balance and falls on a hard surface after bumping into someone. The most commonly injured body parts are the hands and arms. Most seriously, skaters who don't wear helmets can get head injuries. Skaters who wear safety gear are less likely to be injured. So always wear your safety gear – and make sure you have it on properly – anytime you go inline skating. Here's a rundown of what you'll need when you skate.
- 2 A helmet is a must every time you skate. It's the most important piece of safety equipment. It's a good idea to invest in a helmet designed specifically for inline skating or skateboarding. Helmets must fit properly. Helmets that are too large or improperly fastened can come off during a fall. If you need fit or sizing tips, ask when you buy the helmet. And always fasten chin straps snugly under your chin so the helmet doesn't move around.
- 3 You'll want a comfortable but sturdy pair of inline skates, with plenty of ankle support. One way to check if skates offer the support you need is to feel the plastic of the boot. If you can squeeze it, the material is not strong enough. Always check your skates before you put them on. Make sure that wheels and brakes are in good shape and tightly secured. If wheels or brakes are misshapen or worn, replace them right away. Check that any buckles are in proper working order. Always buckle up your skates and keep them nice and snug when you skate.
- 4 Cuts, scrapes, and sprained or broken wrists are a constant danger to inline skaters. In addition to wearing a helmet, you need to wear knee pads, elbow pads, and wrist guards every time you skate. Knee and elbow pads should have a cushioned interior with a hard plastic shell to protect against scrapes. Wrist guards should be made from rigid plastic that holds the wrist securely in place in the event of a fall. All pads should fit properly and be securely fastened at all times. Some skaters like to wear long pants and long-sleeve shirts for extra protection against scrapes and cuts. Light gloves can keep your fingers safe.

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