

In-Line Skating Safety



The latest innovation in roller-skating is in-line skating. It has spread from hockey players to skiers, who used them for training, and then into the general population of fitness buffs and recreational sports consumers.

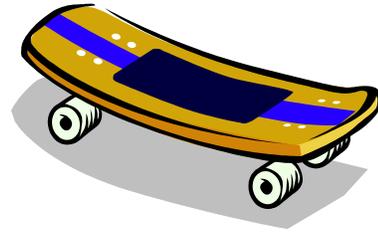
In-line skating can burn as many calories per minute as cycling or running. Its low-impact gliding strokes apply less than half the impact shock to joints than running. Routine in-line skating produces nearly the same increase in aerobic fitness as running.

Experts suggest investing in lessons to fully enjoy the sport. A competent instructor can help you develop the proper techniques to keep you safe and well protected. According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, 90 percent of all in-line skating injuries could have been prevented. Since unintentional injuries can occur to the most experienced in-line skater, we offer you the following safety tips:

- **Choose the proper skates to match your needs.** Apart from the style durability, proper ankle support, and a comfortable fit are essential.
- **Always wear the recommended safety gear.** Make sure you wear wrist guards, knee and elbow pads, and a helmet that covers the base of your skull.
- **To practice on your own when you're starting out, find a smooth, level place** away from cars and crowds. Parking lots, playgrounds and parks are ideal.
- **Begin skating with a slow five minute warm-up.** You will be less likely to tear muscles.
- **Maintain a good athletic stance** with a low center of gravity. With your buttocks low, your upper body slightly forward, and your arms and hands out in front of you, push a little with one foot and then glide on both skates.
- **Unlike roller skates, the brake is on the back of an in-line skate.** To practice stopping, bend a little at the waist, and place your weight on the non-braking foot. Then move your braking foot forward, and raise the toe of your braking foot so the brake pad touches the ground. Once you've got the brake pad touching the ground, gradually apply pressure to that heel and you'll slow down.
- **Keep your balance by bending your knees** so you can adjust your stance and stay in control.
- **Accept the fact that falls will happen** and practice falling on a soft lawn or a gym mat if you are a novice skater.
- **Use caution when skating around others.** Be conscious of other skaters, pedestrians, joggers, and cyclists.
- **Skate on the right side** of sidewalks, bike paths, and trails.
- **Don't pass without warning.** Pass on the left as cars do, after yelling, "passing on the left."
- **Take extra caution in densely populated areas.** Be especially watchful for cars and other traffic when crossing roads and streets. Look right-left-right and cross only when it is safe to do so.
- **Remember to obey all traffic regulations. Do not use headphones** while skating.
- **Watch out for skating trail conditions,** weather conditions or hazards such as water, potholes or storm debris. Do not skate on wet or oily surfaces.
- **The more you ride the faster your skates break down.** Check skates regularly to make sure they are in good condition. You can rotate the wheels approximately every 40 miles - or sooner if and when you become an aggressive skater.

Skateboarding Safety: What You Need to Know

Skating is great exercise for children. And it is fun. However, as with any sport, there are ways for a child to get hurt. To help prevent injuries, have your child take lessons first. Children need to know how to stop, slow down and avoid collisions. The International In-Line Skating Association offers the following helpful guidelines:



- Before skateboarding, skating or riding a scooter, a parent should check equipment thoroughly for hazards such as loose, broken or cracked parts, slippery top surfaces and wheels with nicks and cracks.
- Always wear appropriate [safety gear including a helmet](#), wrist guards, and elbow and knee pads. If wrist guards interfere with your child's ability to safely steer the scooter, he may want to leave one or both wrist guards off.
- Be sure protective gear fits properly and does not interfere with your child's movement, vision or hearing.
- Never ride in the street. Ride on smooth, paved surfaces free of traffic. Avoid streets or surfaces with water, sand, gravel or dirt.
- Do not skateboard, skate or ride a scooter at night. Do not use headphones while skateboarding.
- Limit skateboard, skate or scooter use to one person at a time.
- Never hitch a ride from a car, bus, truck, bicycle, etc.
- If a move seems risky, do not try it.
- Do complicated moves only in designated areas.
- Children ages 8 and younger should not use bikes, skateboards, skates or scooters without close adult supervision.
- Use caution when skateboarding, skating or riding a scooter downhill. If the hill is steep, step off and walk to the bottom of the hill.

Skating Safety and Etiquette

By Ms Kathie Fry

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Your chance of being injured on inline skates will be greatly reduced if you are aware of potential hazards and you know how to avoid them. Whenever you skate, pay attention to your surroundings and keep your eyes and ears open. Don't let yourself be surprised by changes in the terrain or the unexpected actions of other people.

Stay Alert !!!

I've never been seriously injured in a skating fall, but my three most **unnerving** falls were caused by surprise encounters with water on the road, sand on a bike path, and a city sidewalk that abruptly disappeared. On those occasions, I didn't notice the danger because I allowed myself to become distracted. HOWEVER.....I still managed to escape injury because of.....



Body Protection !!!

Always wear your helmet, wrist guards, knee pads and elbow pads.

My wrist guards are literally COVERED with scrapes and scratches and dents. I've had relatively few falls, but anyone who skates as much as I do is going to hit the ground 2 or 3 times a year. My body protection has saved me during more than one close encounter with the asphalt!

I skate about 4,000 miles a year, so I have a lot of skating experience and a lot of safety tips to share. Unfortunately I learned most of them the hard way. Here are some of the best:

Road Surfaces

- Try to skate only on smooth pavement with no surface debris.
- Be very alert for changes in the condition of the road in front of you. Don't let potholes, storm debris, rough pavement, curbs or patches of grass catch you by surprise.
- Don't skate through water, oil, mud or sand. Your wheels will have very little traction, and your feet can slide right out from under you.
- Tiny pebbles look harmless, but they can get stuck in your skate wheels and cause them to stop rolling. This one is a REAL bummer...

- Cracks in the pavement can be a serious danger, in a way that always surprises new skaters. It's not the cracks CROSSING your path that you need to worry about. Inline skates handle those cracks very well -- much better than traditional quad skates.

The dangerous cracks are the ones that run parallel to your skating path. If the wheels of one of your inline skates get lodged into one of those cracks, you can be thrown off balance without any warning. This typically happens when you're skating on a sidewalk with a crack down the center.

Public Paths

- Always use caution when skating in public areas with bicycles, cars, pedestrians, and other skaters.
- Learn basic skating skills before you attempt to skate in a public place. Learn how to turn, control your speed, fall safely, and most important, to stop. One of the most dangerous things on a crowded bike path is a skater who never learned how to stop!
- Always be conscious of others around you. Avoid sudden stops and last minute turns. You don't want to surprise anyone.
- When you're skating in an area with a lot of bicycle, skate or auto traffic, glance back over your shoulder every 10 or 20 seconds (remember - always be aware of your surroundings).
- Around Bicycles: Be very predictable. Don't make any unexpected movements. Don't swing your arms and legs wildly back and forth as you skate -- many cyclists have been knocked off their bikes by careless skaters.
- Around Pedestrians: Always yield to pedestrians. Be prepared for them to run in front of you or stroll obliviously across your path.
- Around Children: Be prepared for ANYTHING. They will frequently run across your path when you least expect it. Children on skates or on foot usually cause me to slow down to a very cautious crawl.



- Around Dogs: Be cautious when you approach a dog on a leash. If the dog suddenly runs across your path, you can find yourself skating toward a leash stretched out across the path in front of you.

Street Skating

- Always be acutely aware that it is DANGEROUS to skate in the street.
- Ask your local law enforcement agency if skaters are allowed to skate in the streets, on the sidewalks, and on the bike paths in your city.
- Skate in the bicycle lane on city streets (if skaters are allowed on bike paths in your city)

- Obey all traffic regulations.
- Whenever you approach a driveway, imagine a car speeding out, just as you're skating by.
- Whenever you approach a car parked on the side of the road, imagine someone flinging the door open just as you're skating by.
- Before you cross an intersection, look all around you for any car that could POSSIBLY turn in front of you. If cars drive on the right side of the road in your country, you should be especially concerned about cars making RIGHT turns in front of you. If your cars drive on the left side of the road, watch for cars making a LEFT turn in front of you. Those kind of turns cause a lot of skating accidents because it's difficult for drivers to see you in time to stop.

Equipment

- Wear good-quality, well-fitting skates that provide adequate ankle support.
- Check your skates regularly to make sure they're in good condition.
- Rotate your wheels when they wear unevenly.
- Replace worn out wheels and bearings.
- Replace your brake BEFORE it wears out.
- Make sure your wheels are securely tightened
- Make sure your wheels are never blocked by debris or grass.
- Always have an all-purpose skate tool with you when you skate.

Other Safety Tips

- Never skate at night. When it's dark, you can't see hazards in the road and you can't be seen by others. If you ever DO have to skate in the dark, clip two flashing bicycle lights to your helmet or your waist (one in front and one in back).
- Wear protective gear every time you skate. Long-sleeved shirts and long trousers will give you additional protection from scrapes and cuts.
- Always skate under control and within your abilities. Avoid hills until you are ready for them. Remember that you will gain speed quickly on even a very small hill.
- Many people recommend you do not skate with headphones, because they block out sounds that can alert you to approaching danger. If you must skate with headphones, keep the volume low, and use headphones that don't block out surrounding noise. **On military installations, do not use headphones while skateboarding.**
- When you can't avoid falling, try to fall in sand or grass, and fall forward onto your wrist guards and knee pads.



Skating Etiquette and Courtesy

The best thing you can do to prevent skating bans in your area, is to demonstrate that skaters are an asset to your community rather than a nuisance and a hazard.



Give skating a good name !!!

- Be courteous, friendly, and helpful to those around you.
- Be tolerant of the shortcomings of others.
- Do your most weird and dangerous tricks out of eye-sight and out of camera-sight. This tip is from [An Open Letter to Skaters](#) by Dave Cooper, Government Relations Chair for the International Inline Skating Association.

- Don't swing legs and arms wildly to the left and right.
- Always skate single file, even when you skate with friends.
- Skate on the FAR right side of sidewalks, bike paths and trails.
- Pass pedestrians, cyclists and other skaters on the left (skate on the right, pass on the left)
- Don't pass without warning and pass only when it's safe, and you know there's enough room.
- Warn others before passing. Say "Passing on your left". Say it loudly, but don't bark it out angrily. If you say it with a smile, the smile will be reflected in your voice. (I usually smile and wave to the person I'm passing.)

All this passing etiquette might seem like overkill, but for some reason, people often become annoyed when someone skates up behind them shrieking

"ON YOUR LEEEEEEFT!!!!"

To avoid being the victim of someone's bike-path road rage, AND to prevent skating bans in your area, always be a courteous, friendly, helpful, polite, and civic-minded skater.

Attention ...

Riding a bicycle can be a lot of fun. It can be a means of transportation, physical fitness and racing. However, bicycle riding poses many risks and should always be done safely.



Crash Statistics:

- 🚲 A child is four times more likely to be seriously injured in a bicycle crash than to be kidnapped by a stranger.
- 🚲 About 900 bicycle riders are killed in the U.S. every year, 90% involve collisions with cars, and 75% of them die of brain injuries.
- 🚲 49% of all deaths occur between 3 p.m. and 9 p.m.
- 🚲 Summer: May, June and July have the highest percent of bicycle related deaths. About six times as many bicycle deaths are males compared with females.
- 🚲 33% of deaths occurred at intersections.
- 🚲 Distribution of bicycle deaths:
- 🚲 Bicycle incidents are most likely to occur within 5 blocks of home.
- 🚲 Almost half of all bicycle crashes occur in driveways and on sidewalks.
- 🚲 96% of bicyclists killed were reportedly not wearing helmets. **A *must have!***
- 🚲 Medical research shows that a bicycle helmet can prevent 88% of cyclists' brain injuries.
- 🚲 Universal use of helmets could prevent one death every day and one brain injury every four minutes.
- 🚲 Having friends or parents who wear bike helmets significantly encourages children to use them.



Buy a helmet that meets the safety standards of the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), the Snell Memorial Foundation or the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM). Wearing a helmet correctly is vitally important to the ability of the helmet to work! Always do these things to ensure a proper fit:

- ✓ Tighten the chin strap to keep the helmet from slipping forward or backward.
- ✓ Only two fingers should fit under the chin strap.
- ✓ Place the helmet directly over the forehead.