

SKATE YOUR WAY TO WEIGHT LOSS, FITNESS, AND FREEDOM

If you loved skating as a kid, turn your old hobby into a fun, new workout. Even if you're a complete newbie, skating is easy to learn and safe as long as you follow some simple precautions.

Put some wheels or blades under your feet. Take a look at the advantages of skating and how to make rollerblading or ice skating part of your exercise routine.

BENEFITS OF EXERCISING ON SKATES

1. **Lose weight.** Ice skating or rollerblading burns as many calories as running, which is about 400 calories an hour, depending on your weight. As a bonus, skating is also easier on your joints than running.
2. **Tone your lower body.** Skating engages your entire lower body, as well as your core. With one movement, you target your buttocks, thighs, calves, and abdomen.
3. **Enjoy socializing.** Skating is a fun activity to share with family and friends. Many rinks offer concerts and concession stands. Sip hot chocolate and listen to jazz after your workout.
4. **Spend time indoors or outdoors.** Indoor rinks allow you to stick to your program, even when it's snowing or raining. On the other hand, skating outdoors can be especially appealing. Connecting with nature helps reduce stress and restore your energy levels.

5. **Feel exhilarated.** With rollerblades, also known as inline skates, you'll be traveling fast from the time you take off. On pavement or ice, some skaters may work up to speeds of 25 miles an hour or more. You'll feel graceful and relaxed as you fly along.

HOW TO EXERCISE ON SKATES

1. **Select your footwear.** Proper fitting is essential. **Your skate size will probably be a bit smaller than your shoe size, especially if you're a woman.** Ensure that your heels fit securely in the back of the boots. You may want to start out with recreational skates and switch to fitness skates as you become more proficient.
2. **Take a class.** Working with a qualified instructor could save you from many falls. Ask the staff at your local skate shop for recommendations or browse online for classes.
3. **Learn to brake.** Stopping safely in various conditions is one of the first skills you'll want to master. Remember that figure skates brake in the front, while inline skates brake in the back.
4. **Train for balance.** Additional balance training may also help keep you on your feet. Ask your

instructor for exercises you can perform on your skates. **Practice standing on one leg with your eyes closed to increase your balance.**

5. **Build up your strength.** At first, your legs may feel sore as your muscles try to adapt to skating. Performing squats and lunges can help speed up the process.
6. **Plan your route.** Quiet parking lots or skating rinks are ideal for your first skating practices. As you become more steady on your feet, you can venture out to skating parks and trails.
7. **Follow the rules of the road.** If you're skating on public roads, obey the same rules as a bicyclist. Wherever you skate, stay to the right. If you want to pass someone, check that you have enough room and let them know that you're approaching on their left.
8. **Wear safety gear. Helmets are essential when skating.** Wrist guards and pads for your elbows and knees will also help protect you from injuries.
9. **Intensify your workouts.** There are many ways for skaters to heighten the challenge. Gradually increase your speed and distance. Bend forward at the waist to work your legs harder.

If your treadmill is starting to bore you, maybe it's time to trade it in for a pair of skates. They're not just for kids or Olympic athletes. You can skate your way to greater health and fitness.