
Hockey Skate Sizing Considerations

- ⇒ Remember to try on your hockey skates with the type of sock you will be wearing in them.
- ⇒ If you skate barefoot then take along a thin nylon to wear on your feet while trying them on.
- ⇒ Once you buy a pair of skates it's very rare that you can exchange them because of a sizing problem.
- ⇒ You need skates that fit tight enough to give you stability.
- ⇒ You shouldn't buy larger sizes for youngsters to grow into as it may hinder their ability of learning to skate and could also hurt their feet and ankles.
- ⇒ When trying on skates make sure they are long enough. Your toes should be able to wiggle freely, so make sure they don't touch the end of the skate.
- ⇒ Ensure your heel fits comfortably into the pocket, provided for it, as you don't want your heel to lift up while skating. You should be able to move your toes while your heel stays put.
- ⇒ Make sure that the hockey skates are wide enough and that the front sides of your feet and toes don't rub against the inside of the skate.
- ⇒ The inside of your hockey skate may stretch to a certain extent, but remember the materials used to form the outside of the boot, such as graphite and Kevlar etc, aren't made to stretch.

Skate Sharpening

Ask your sharpener about the differences between a shallow and deep cut. In general, a shallower cut will glide easier and faster on the ice than a deep cut. It also allows you to feel the blade edges better, which are used for stopping. A shallow cut is recommended for beginners, especially for learning to stop.

- ⇒ A shallow cut won't let you turn as sharply. For more experienced skaters, particularly defensemen who are often making quick changes in direction, it's essential to have sharp edges as they need to be able to turn at sharp angles without having their blades give out from under them.
- ⇒ A deep cut, however, won't allow you to glide as freely as a shallow cut and you will use more energy in skating.
- ⇒ Goaltenders usually like their skates to be quite dull so they can glide from side to side across the ice easier.

Hockey Stick Weight

⇒ The weight of your stick is important as you need to maneuver it into position quickly. You don't want to be lugging around a stick that is too heavy, this is especially important for children. A lighter stick allows you to shoot and pass quicker. A heavier stick is better suited for defensemen who check with their sticks more often. Wood sticks are heavier than most of composite types.

Hockey Stick Curve

⇒ Hockey Sticks are identified by the curves of their blades and are labelled left, right or straight. Sticks are curved at the heel, toe or middle of the blade. A curved blade may help you raise the puck higher and faster, but they make backhand passing and shooting a little more difficult.

Hockey Stick Lie

⇒ The hockey stick lie is the angle between the blade and the shaft. Each lie is two degrees in angle. A 5 lie is 45 degrees and a 6 lie is 47 degrees. Each degree brings the shaft forward 1.25 inches. Lower lie angle sticks are good for players who skate low to the ice and carry the puck out in front of them. Higher lies are for players who skate upright and carry the puck close to their skates. If only the toe or the heel of your blade is touching the ice then you are using the wrong lie. You want the whole blade on the ice and for the blade to wear evenly. Many sticks on the market are now made with a universal lie, meaning they are all made the same.

Hockey Stick Flex

⇒ The stiffness of the hockey stick's shaft is called the flex. The higher the number is, the stiffer the shaft. A stiffer shaft is more useful for bigger and stronger players as well as defensemen. Forwards generally use a more flexible shaft. You need more strength to flex a stiffer shaft, so keep in mind a stiff shaft isn't advisable for young children.

Hockey Helmets

- ⇒ A hockey helmet should fit snugly to prevent any movement and to maximize protection. Make sure the chinstrap can be adjusted so it gently makes contact under the chin when fastened. If your chinstrap is not tight enough your helmet could come off during a collision and you may suffer a concussion.
- ⇒ It's important you wear a hockey helmet with sufficient padding to ward off injury. Experts recommend it be at least 5/8 in thick. Most helmets are made of a polycarbonate material, which is basically a lightweight plastic. Hockey helmets come in one and two-piece models with the two-piece version offering a more customized fit.
- ⇒ Most hockey helmet models now protect the ears, as well as the head, and have vents built in it to keep you cool while playing. As with all your equipment make sure it is comfortable. Most helmets are adjustable, but the only way to make sure it fits properly is to try it on before buying.
- ⇒ All ice hockey players, from the minor level upwards including college and university, are required to wear a face mask on their helmets. Masks can be purchased as part of the helmet or separately. There are three kinds of masks wire cage, face shield and combination. There are also neck protectors on the market to give you added protection. Itech is generally regarded as the leading manufacturer of face masks and shields.

Hockey Shoulder Pads

- ⇒ Hockey shoulder pads protect your collarbone, upper chest, back, upper arms, and shoulders. There is also extra lower-back protection as part of the pad or as an attachment. Some have removable rib and stomach guards. You should wear shoulder pads which provide the most protection for your needs. Remember pads are used for protection against hockey pucks, as well as bodily contact. You need sufficient padding to deliver and absorb shoulder checks and to protect yourself when going into the boards or hitting the ice.

Hockey Elbow Pads

⇒ Hockey elbow pads are essential to protect against bone bruises and fractured elbows. The pads cover the elbows and arms just above and below the elbows. Some cover the forearms and biceps. To make sure you have the right size elbow pads they should cover the area from just below the shoulder pad to just above the hockey glove; giving your whole arm maximum protection. Most hockey pads are now adjustable and are secured with Velcro straps.

Hockey Shin Pads

⇒ Hockey Shin pads are needed to protect your legs from the puck and the opponent's stick. The pads should fit over your kneecap to just above your skates. Make sure you get the maximum protection for your style of game. If you are prone to blocking shots make sure you get a very well padded pair of shin pads. Some forwards prefer lighter hockey shin pads to allow them more flexibility and speed. Most models come with adjustable Velcro straps. They range in size from about 7 to 18 inches.

Hockey Gloves

- ⇒ A good pair of hockey gloves should protect your hands and wrists while still giving you maximum flexibility and providing you with comfort. Some of the older style gloves are made of all-leather, but they often get wet and heavy with perspiration during a game. Many modern versions of hockey gloves incorporate Kevlar and nylon into them for increased strength, durability, dryness and comfort. Most gloves are padded in the fingers with foam and plastic inserts and many of them have thumb locks to help prevent you from hyper extending your thumbs.
- ⇒ As with all pieces of hockey equipment, make sure that your gloves fit you properly, are comfortable, and don't irritate your hands in any way. It's okay for hockey gloves to be a little big on you as long as long as they cover all parts of your hand and wrist. Many players take slashes to the back of their hands during a game, so it's important that your thumbs and fingers are adequately protected. Many pro players are using shorter cuffed gloves these days for better stick handling flexibility, but many shorter gloves don't properly cover the wrists. You want your gloves to meet your elbow pads if you are looking for full protection on the ice. Remember that your gloves aren't just there to protect you from wayward slashes from hockey sticks they are also made to protect you from the hockey puck and from razor-sharp skate blades.

Hockey Pants

- ⇒ A good pair of hockey pants should be designed to protect your spine, tailbone, kidneys, thighs and hips. Most hockey pants are made primarily of nylon, with foam and polyurethane padding inserted inside of them. Hockey pants should be worn so they come down to the top of your hockey shin pads to give you maximum protection and it's a good idea to try them on with your shin pads if possible to make sure they are the right size for you. They should also fit high enough above your waist to protect you from crosschecks along the lower back. Women's hockey pants are slightly different from men's as they are designed to fit properly on a woman's body shape.
- ⇒ Some hockey pants come with zippers on the inside leg to allow you to take them on and off easier. Some players also open the zippers part way to allow for more mobility while playing. Most pants also come with an adjustable belt to let you tighten or loosen them and some models come with attachments which allow you to wear suspenders with them. The suspenders are made to hold up your pants and allow you to wear your belt a bit looser. Your hockey pants should provide you with maximum protection, but they should also enable you to move about freely on the ice.
- ⇒ There are basically two different styles of hockey pants which are the European and North American styles. European style pants generally have a little less padding in them seem to be a little longer than North American hockey pants. Tackla and Graf are two of the European style manufacturers. The style of pants you prefer is really a personal choice. Many speedy and shifty players like to wear the European models as they seem to offer a little more flexibility and freedom of movement while most hard hitting, physical players prefer the extra padding of the north American pants.
- ⇒ Make sure that your hockey pants fit you properly as they won't provide you with the full protection you need if they are worn too low down you legs. They need to be worn properly to protect the areas above your waist. A bad-fitting pair of pants may also hinder your skating ability.