



# Roller Skating



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## About the Tutorial

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Roller skating is a sport and a form of recreational activity. In this brief tutorial, we will discuss the basics of Roller Skating, along with its playing techniques, and rules. We will also discuss briefly about some of the champions who have dominated this game.

## Audience

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This tutorial is meant for anyone who wants to play roller skating. It is prepared keeping in mind that the reader is unaware about the basics of the game. It is a basic guide to help a beginner understand the game of Roller Skating.

## Prerequisites

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Before proceeding with this tutorial, you are required to have a passion for Roller Skating and an eagerness to acquire knowledge on the same.

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# 1. Roller Skating – Overview

Roller skating is a sport and a form of recreational activity. There are basically three varieties of skates **quad roller skates**, **inline skates** or **blades**, and **tri-skates**. There are some other variations like **quintessence skates** which are single wheeled. Roller skating includes many types of performances like solo dance, team dance, and freestyle dance. Many other games like roller hockey, speed skating, roller derby etc. are also played using skates.



The first usage of roller skates was recorded in 1743 in a London stage performance. However, the inventor of this skate is unknown. The first recorded skate invention was by John Joseph Merlin in year 1760, who invented a primitive inline skate with small metal wheels.

## First Patent of Roller Skates

Roller skates were seen on the ballet stage in year 1818, in Berlin. The first ever roller skate design was patented in the year 1819, by M. Petitbled. These skates were quite similar to today's inline skates, but were not manoeuvrable. These skates couldn't do anything but move in a straight line.

## Rolito Skates

Inventors continued to work on improving the design of the skate in the rest of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In 1823, Robert John Tyers of London, patented a skate which he called the **Rolito**, which has five wheels in a single row on the bottom of a boot or a shoe.

## First Skate Rinks

During 1857, roller skating had been enough popular to get the permit of the opening of the first public skating rinks. The first roller rinks were in the Strand, Lond and Floral Hall.

## Quad Skate

The four-wheeled turning roller skate is also known as the **quad skate**. It has four wheels set with two side-by-side pairs. It was first designed in 1863 in New York City by James Leonard Plimpton as an attempt in improving the previous skate designs.

In 1876, William Brown in Birmingham, England, made a design and patented it for roller skates. His design embodied his effort in keeping the two bearing surfaces of an axle, fixed and moving, apart.

## Toe Stop

The toe stop was first patented in the year of 1876 as well. To all the skaters, it provides the ability to stop by tipping the skate in their toe. They are still used nowadays on most of the quad skates.

Roller skates were produced massively in America during the period of 1880s. Several companies like Indiana produced thousands of skates every week during peak sales. The first skate with adjustable tension with a screw were made by Henley skates during this period.

## Usage of Steel Ball Bearing in Skates

In 1884, Levant M. Richardson received a patent for using the steel ball bearings in skate wheels as to reduce friction, resulting in increased speed with less effort. In 1898, he started the Richardson Ball Bearing and Skate Company.

In 1900, an inline skate which has two wheels get patented by The Peck & Snyder Company. The Active Brake Technology was developed by Rollerblade in 1993 for increased safety.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, these skates branded as Rollerblade were very successful and they led to the creation of similar inline skates.

## 2. Roller Skating – How to Play?

Before you go on skating around the house or on the streets, you must learn how it should properly be performed with safety. In this chapter we will discuss the ways to play the game.

### Gearing Up

The equipment which are required for skating is a safety helmet and a firm fitting skating shoes pair. They are easily available in any sport stores or even available on rent. The size of skate shoes size is as same as the size of a standard shoe.

For a starter a helmet is very necessary as it will keep the skater from falling and getting hurt, so as a knee and elbow pad is also a must, as a starter always falls in their initial stage.

### The Right Posture

Keep your feet and shoulder width apart from each other, then take a squat position while bending your knees. With a comfortable squatting position, lower your back slightly towards the ground and lean forward. This form will help to keep the proper balance and won't allow to trip. The right balance is the key to skating.

Keeping this form is a bit difficult, you will even fall a quite a bit of times as it feels like you can't control your stature and the skates. But you will learn it through times. The key is to keep on practicing.

Standing still is quite hard while using roller skates but you have to keep on practicing to stand and you will learn it eventually. To keep your balance, you may even slightly move a bit.

### Walking

While keeping your heels together and pointing out your toes, slowly try to walk, first towards the right, then towards the left, then again towards the right, and keep repeating the cycle. To easily maintain your balance, you should keep on squatting while keeping your heels straight beneath your body.

The goal is to walk in your shoes flawlessly without losing any balance. You may even fall down a few times but you should maintain the squat position and keep yourself on your heels while keeping your body in center.

As you start doing better, increase your pace and move quickly and take longer steps. Increase your push on the wheels and roll further with each step.

### Gliding

Increase each pace you take and let yourself to roll for a while. Pushing yourself with one foot, glide with the support of the other foot until you feel like losing the motion and then shift your foot and repeat. While gliding in one foot, you should keep your other foot in the air to avoid hampering your glide.



Keep on Practice on by turning right and left during gliding. Lean your body slightly to the right while turning right and lean your body slightly to the left while turning left. Keep that routine while maintaining the squat position.



Glide faster after gaining some confidence. While moving your legs faster, keep maintaining the momentum by applying pressure on the wheels. Move your legs a little faster and to gain momentum you must put pressure on the wheels and try to push yourself ahead. Use your body weight for practice and it will help you to get some speed.

For maintaining your balance, you should make movements like running with the help of your arms. While doing this, bend your elbows and keep doing that back and forth.

### **Applying the Brakes**

The brake of the skate is located under the toe of the skate and you should make sure that your skate has a brake. When it come for stopping, you must slide on your skates parallel to each other. You must maintain your squatting position and then lean forward slightly.

Put your right skate in front of your left skate a little, lift your toe of the right skate while pressing it down hard. The time of stopping is parallel to the how hard you press.

It is very important that you press hard on your brakes while stopping. Don't push your brakes hesitantly as if you don't push hard enough, then you may fall down by losing balance, so it is really necessary that you stop with a confident thrust.

In case it is difficult for you to find enough pressure during the first time, then you can apply some pressure on your right knee with the help of your hand.

### 3. Roller Skating – Equipment

In this chapter, we will take a look at the equipment used by the players of Roller Skating. Apart from **rollerblades** and **inline skates**, we have the following equipment that are widely used while playing Roller Skating.

#### Soaps

They have a concave plastic plate in the soles which allows them to grind. They have a normal look as a street and skate shoes.

#### Heelys

The outlook of the shoes looks normal like any other casual shoe but they have a retractable wheel below the soles of the each shoe. The advantage of the shoes is that it can be used as a casual shoes as well as a roller skate. If the player wants to have roller-skating moves then he can again put the wheel and glides.

Heelys comes in handy where the use of skateboarding and all wheel related sports are banned. In such cities, one can easily wear them. They give a subtle low key appearance. That's what makes the Heelys more spontaneous and enticing. The Heelys were later combined with the soaps to form a hybrid shoe.



Soaps



Heelys



Freeline Skates



Two-wheeled Skates



Orbit Wheel Skates

#### Freeline Skates

These are a type of unattached skates that the skaters put under their normal or skate shoes. They have two inline wheels which are closely set with each other under a small square plate with a short base. They are usually attached with the help of grip tape which has the same width as the shoes that the player is wearing.

This type of shoes are similar to heelys. It allows a range of motions same as a single wheeled skates. As there was no straps on the contract plate, these skates need the rider to move in a constant motion and due to this they are a huge challenge for the novices.



## **Two-wheeled Skates**

There are also other skates which are not popular. Some skates look like inline skates while some are large wheel skates. It has two very large wheels attached outwards the skates instead of center. The balance of the skates with four small wheels is same as seen in inline skates.

Other resemblance to the freeline skates is that they have a small squarish platform with two medium-sized inline skate style of wheels.

## **Orbit wheel skates**

These are the spiritual relative of freeline skates. The skate in the orbit wheels stands on grip tapes and is slightly larger than the freeline skate shoes. It has a large hoop inside which contains a wheel trapped and can freely rotate under the grip plate on which each foot is placed.

## 4. Roller Skating – Types

### Artistic Roller Skating

Artistic Roller Skating is a sport consisting of various events. Usually these are accomplished on quad skates, but inline skates are also used for some events. Many types of events are organized according to age and experience. There are nine regional competitions in the US which lead to the National Championships and World Championships.

### Figures

There are prescribed movements symmetrically composed of a minimum of two circles, and a maximum of three circles. It involves either primary, or both primary and secondary movements with or without turns. These are skated on circles, inscribed on the skating surface.



### Types of Dance

Basically, there are two types of dance in skating:

- **Solo Dance** – In solo dance, the competition starts at tiny tot and goes up to golden, for a test round, it starts with bronze and goes up to gold. One has to take a couple of tests to get into a certain event though. In competition, there are set patterns and the judges give marks for good edges, how the look etc.
- **Team Dance** – At the set dances during a team dance, two people skate together. A partner with the same age and ability is preferred by most of the dancers.

Accuracy of the steps are the basic factor of judgment for the skaters while performing a particular dance. They are mostly judged by their turns and edges and apart from that they are required to portray themselves in elegance during the dance and should pay full attention to the timing and the rhythm of the music.



### Freestyle Roller Dancing

In freestyle roller dancing, the physical movements are based on music. This type of dance is neither choreographed nor pre-planned so any level of athlete can come and dance.

### Precision Teams

In this type of dancing, the members of a team should be either four or in the multiple of four. The following elements are performed in this types of dance:

- Skating in a line
- Skating in a box
- Splicing
- Skating in a circle

The judgement is based on the team's ability of skating together and its choreography.

### Singles and Pairs

In this either a single or a pair of skaters perform on the music. The factors to judge are their ability to skate and also creativity. Movements like jumps, turns and spins are expected in this type of performance. Sometimes two songs are played for an individual or couple of skaters.

## **Speed Skating**

In inline skating, the players perform on inline skates. The basis of the judgement is creativity and skating ability as the skaters have to include jumps spins and turns in their performance.

## **Group Skating**

In this type of skating, a large group of skaters skate on the streets. Previously the touring was limited only to quad roller skate club but later on it also started in inline skate competitions.

## **Aggressive Inline**

Aggressive inline skating is a type of skating with tricks. Here the individual performs tricks using a slightly different skate than the normal one. This type of skating is seen at a skate park on the street including tricks like grinds, spins, and flips.

## **Roller Hockey**

Roller hockey is another name for a roller sport which existed long before inline skates were even invented. Quad skates were used to play roller hockey in many countries all over the world and has many names.

## **Roller Derby**

Roller derby is a team sport played with the use of roller skates on an oval track. Originally, for skating demonstration, an out of speed product has been developed and trademarked. The sport which is mainly played by women is currently undergoing a renewal as a grass-roots driven 5-a-side.

Most of the roller derby leagues adopt the rules and guidelines of the Women's Flat Track Derby Association, or sometimes of the Men's Roller Derby Association, which is its men counterpart.

# 5. Roller Skating – Champions

## Artistic Roller Skating World Championships

The Artistic Skating World Championships is a worldwide skating competition which is authorized by the International Roller Sports Federation. Lots of elite figure skaters take part in this competition for the title of world champion.

There are multiple categories in the world championship like men's singles, ladies singles, and title for pairs and also for junior categories. It is considered as the most renowned and prestigious award in this sport and the achievement hold a great value in artistic skating.

### Roberto Riva

Roberto Riva is a roller skater from Italy who has won many gold medals till now. In 2005, he won two gold medals in world championships and the events included were free skating and combined event.

In 2006, he won two golds in figures and combined event and one silver in free skating.

In 2007 and 2008 World Championships, he won gold in all the three events.

In 2009, he participated in World Games and won a silver medal.



### Marcel Ruschel Sturmer

Marcel Ruschel Sturmer is an artistic roller skater from Brazil. He has won many titles in his career and is considered as one of the best roller skaters. His achievements include a gold in World Games held in 2013. Besides this he has taken part in World Championships.

In 2008 and 2010, he won a bronze medal in individual event while in 2011 and 2012, he won a silver medal in individual event. He has also taken part in Pan American Games in 2003, 2007, 2011, and 2015 and won gold in all the years in individual event. In 2010, he participated in South American event and won silver in individual event.



## Federico Degli Eposti

Federico Degli Eposti is a figure skater and roller skater from Italy who was the World Roller Skating Pair Champion from 2003 to 2006. In this pair, his partner was Marika Zanforlin.

He is the member of Polisportiva and Pontevicchio clubs. He has taken part in ISU Challenger Series and earned 118.2 points in combined event, 41.42 points in short program event and 77.10 in free skating. In figure skating, he has not performed very well yet.



## Tanja Romano

Tanja Romano is one of the best female roller skater who has won many medals in her career. From 2002 to 2010, she has taken part in World Championships and won 15 gold medals and two silver medals.

From 2003 to 2006, she participated in European Championships and won six gold medals, two silver medals, and one bronze medal.

She has also participated in Italian Championships from 2002 to 2005, 2007, 2009, and 2010 and won 13 gold medals.

