

In-line skating in skateparks

- Check the surface for holes and bumps and clear the area of stones, broken glass and other debris. Report any hazards in skateparks to the local council or the manager of the park.
- Inspect the ramps, rails and other pieces of equipment to make sure they are safe and secure.
- Before joining in, watch for a while to check how other participants (skateboarders, in-line skaters and BMX riders) are using the equipment and slot in only when it is safe to do so. Observe the skater code of conduct.
- Local government and communities should continue to develop local skateparks that conform to available skate facility design and maintenance guidelines.

Other safety tips

- In-line skate within your limits.
- Complicated tricks require careful practice in a specially designed area. Build up to complicated tricks in stages. Always wear full protective equipment when trying new tricks.
- Drink before you get thirsty and drink regularly when skating in hot weather. Carry a water bottle with you and take rest breaks in the shade.
- Use a broad-spectrum sunscreen. Re-apply regularly.
- Always let someone know where you are going, and how long you will be gone for.
- Children should be supervised by an adult at all times.



For further information contact

Smartplay – Sports Medicine Australia
To contact Smartplay in your state visit
www.smartplay.com.au or www.sma.org.au

Skate Australia
Phone: 07 3382 6933
Website: www.skateaustralia.org.au

References

For a full list of references, contact Smartplay.

Acknowledgments

Smartplay is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing.

This fact sheet has been reprinted with the permission of the Department of Planning and Community Development and VicHealth.

Prepared by Monash University Accident Research Centre, June 2006. Updated and reprinted 2008.

Photos courtesy of Skate Victoria and Bayside Blades.

This information contained in this fact sheet is general in nature and does not constitute medical advice from your doctor or health professional. While all reasonable attempts have been made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this fact sheet, Smartplay and associated parties, cannot accept responsibility for loss, injury, claim or damage resulting from the use or application of information within this fact sheet.



Preventing In-Line Skating Injuries



**Facts and Safety Tips for
In-Line Skating**

Photograph provided by Skate Victoria

Facts on in-line skating injuries

In-line skating is a popular recreational and fitness activity among children, adolescents and adults.

Statistics from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) survey: Children's participation in cultural and leisure activities, reported that 604,500 of Australian children aged 5-14 years participated in in-line skating and skateboarding outside of school hours in the two weeks prior to being surveyed.

How many injuries?

- From 2002-2003, 557 people were admitted to hospitals across Australia for in-line skating injuries.
- In Victoria, from July 2001 to June 2004, there were 1,540 combined Victorian hospital admissions and emergency department presentations.
- Males were over-represented in Victorian hospital admissions but not in emergency department presentations.
- A high proportion (65%) of injured in-line skaters were 5-14 year olds.

The causes and types of injuries

- Falls are the major cause of in-line skating injuries (80-90%).
- The most common in-line skating injuries are to the upper extremity (70%, including wrist/forearm fractures, wrist sprains and hand/finger fractures), followed by lower extremity injuries (15%, including knee and lower leg fractures and ankle sprains) and 5% are to the head, face and neck.
- Beginner in-line skaters wearing little or no safety equipment, who spontaneously lose their balance or fall after hitting a bump, crack or hole, are at particular risk of injury. Experienced in-line skaters performing tricks often at a high speed are also at risk of injury.
- Wrist injuries are common with falling skaters typically putting out their hand in an attempt to break their fall, and landing onto a hard surface. Falling onto the wrist can also lead to forearm and finger fractures, and shoulder injuries.

Safety tips for in-line skating

Good preparation is important

- Warm up and cool down before and after skating sessions.
- Choose good quality durable in-line skates that match your needs and fit you properly. Check and maintain your skates regularly, especially the condition of the wheels, bearings, axles, nuts and heel brakes. Inspect in-line skates before each session, do monthly maintenance and do an annual tune-up.

Good technique and practices will help prevent injury

- Beginners should take lessons from a qualified coach/instructor to learn the four basic in-line skating skills: how to stand, how to stop (using heel brake), how to turn and how to stride and glide, and to learn safe in-line skating practices.
- Learn how to fall. If you lose your balance crouch down so you do not have to fall so far. If you fall, try to land on your shoulder and roll rather than putting your arm and hand out to break the fall.
- Carers should supervise children and novice skaters until they develop sufficient skills to skate safely.



Photograph provided by Bayside Blades

Wear the right protective equipment

- Always wear a helmet, wrist guards, knee pads and elbow pads. Protective equipment can absorb the impact of a fall and reduce the number and severity of injuries. It is especially important that young in-line skaters wear a helmet.
- Protective equipment should be the right size and fit comfortably but firmly so equipment does not slide out of position.
- Hybrid skating helmets that meet the Australian Standard for bicycle helmets are available on the market and are strongly recommended.
- Skate hiring outlets and rinks should offer complete safety equipment as a package deal with in-line skate hire.
- Wear bright or reflective clothing if skating in the evening or on overcast days. Do not skate at night.

Check skate environment for hazards

- Skate in skateparks or on trails wherever possible and avoid skating on roads, streets and driveways.
- Obey the local laws on where you can and cannot skate.
- Do not skate in the rain. A wet surface and in-line skates are not a safe combination. Check the weather forecast before you set out. Carry shoes or sandals with you in a backpack so you can change out of skates if the surface is wet and slippery.

In-line skating on trails

- Watch for changes in skating trail conditions. Look ahead to avoid cracks, potholes, obstacles and debris.
- Be conscious of others, use caution when skating around others and show good manners.