



How to...

ANCIENT SPORT

Ice skating is believed to have been invented in northern Europe around 1000 BCE.



Try out ice skating

This winter sport is a fun way to stay active in the colder weather.

Ice skating is a popular winter activity. More than 9 million people in the US glide around the ice at least once a year. You don't need much more than a pair of ice skates to participate. The activity provides great exercise and can be lots of fun to do with friends and family. Here's how to get started.

Choose your skates

The two main types of ice skates are figure skates and hockey skates. They have slightly different blades at the bottom, but beginners can use either one to skate around a rink. Most skating rinks rent out skates for a small fee, or you could borrow a pair from a friend or relative. If you think you may be skating regularly, you could talk to an adult about whether it's worth buying a pair, either new or from a secondhand sports store.



Hockey skates are one option.

Follow guidelines

Experts suggest wearing a helmet when you go ice skating. Many people wear a ski or snowboarding helmet or a bike helmet. Elbow and knee pads will provide protection if you fall on the ice. Even if the rink is indoors, you may want to wear gloves to keep your hands warm. It's smart to dress in layers. That way, if you start to heat up from all the skating, you

can take a layer off without getting cold. Obey all the rules of the rink to protect yourself and others from accidents. Never skate on a frozen pond unless it has been cleared for safety and adults are present.

Find your balance

First, get comfortable being on the ice. Most rinks are surrounded by a railing that you can hold onto while you're learning. While holding the railing, push one foot forward about six inches. Then push your other foot forward. Next, try going from one foot to the other without stopping. Once you feel ready, step away from the railing. Keeping your knees slightly bent to help with your balance, push one foot forward and then another.

Start gliding

Next, practice gliding on skates. Gliding is when you move forward on the ice without moving your feet. Push off on one foot and then the other to gain some speed. Then, keep both feet on the ice and see if you have enough momentum to glide. To stop, point your toes inward and slightly angle the blades of your skates down into the ice. Remember, if you fall down while practicing any of these moves, don't worry. Falling is extremely common. Push yourself up to standing, and try again.

4 ways to stay warm outdoors

If you're doing a winter sport or playing in the snow, protect yourself from the cold by following these steps.

Dress in layers

Start by putting on a base layer, such as leggings and a turtleneck. Then add a sweatshirt and sweatpants. Finally, put on snow pants and a winter coat. Wearing layers will help your body hold in warm air.



Add accessories

To keep cold air from getting through your layers, you'll also want to wear a hat, gloves, warm socks, and boots. Tuck leggings into socks so your legs are covered. Put your gloves on before you put on your coat to ensure that your wrists are covered and don't get cold.

Keep moving

When you're outside, moving your body will create heat, keeping you warmer. If you start to feel cold from waiting your turn to use a sled, try doing some jumping jacks or jogging in place.



Take breaks

If your fingers or toes get cold, your nose starts running, and your cheeks feel red, head indoors for a break. Take off any wet and cold clothing so your skin can get dry. You can also drink a warm beverage, such as hot chocolate!