

FIGURE SKATING

Parents Guide

Volume 3

Striving for success
on and off the ice





2018 U.S. Olympic Team bronze medalists

SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD TO REACH MAXIMUM POTENTIAL

Skating is far more than a competitive sport. It offers physical and mental skills for living successfully on and off the rink throughout one's life. New skaters learn to listen and follow direction. They grow to understand the importance of clear communication and how to participate with others. As skaters develop, they learn time management, gain the ability to assess critical feedback and integrate that information to improving their skills. These crossover skills provide the personal

discipline that heighten performance in educational goals, professional pursuits and self-development.

Setting goals in skating is easier when parents and athletes are informed and have the basics to ask questions from an informed position. This guidebook lays out the basics, from organizational rules to nutrition and training information. The more you know, the greater the potential of a rewarding experience for parents and their children.



MEMBER
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Skating Union



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Skating: 20 First Street,
Colorado Springs, CO 80906:
719.635.5200

U.S. FIGURE SKATING PIPELINE

Nonqualifying Competitions

Skaters of all ages can participate in nonqualifying competitions to earn awards and showcase skill mastery. Nonqualifying competitions are divided into two tracks: one is more recreational (Excel) and the other is more competitive in nature (well-balanced). In the Excel Series, skaters compete at certain nonqualifying competitions to earn an invitation to the Excel National Festival.

Compete USA

No Test/Beginner

Pre-Preliminary

Preliminary

Pre-Juvenile

Juvenile/Open*

Intermediate

Novice

Junior

Senior

Excel Series

Collegiate and Intercollegiate

Adult levels*

Qualifying Competitions

This is the pipeline for singles, pairs and ice dance teams to advance to the U.S. Championships, international competitions, World Championships and Olympic Winter Games. The top skaters advance in the juvenile to senior levels and compete for various titles based on age and test level.

Juvenile

Intermediate

Novice

Skaters who place among the juvenile, intermediate and novice levels will be invited to the National High Performance Development Team, and the top novice skaters will be invited to skate at the U.S. Championships at the junior level.

Junior

Senior

U.S. Collegiate Championships

U.S. Adult Championships*

Synchronized Skating

Synchronized Skating is a team sport in which eight to 20 skaters perform a program together. It is characterized by teamwork, speed, intricate formations and challenging step sequences. Synchronized skating has its own qualifying competition system, which leads to the U.S. Synchronized Championships, international competitions (junior/senior) and the World Junior and World Synchronized Skating Championships.

Beginner are offered at Compete USA competitions and U.S. Figure Skating nonqualifying competitions

Aspire Synchro*

Aspire Synchro through Preliminary are offered at Compete USA competitions. Preliminary

Pre-Juvenile*

Open Juvenile*

Juvenile*

Intermediate*

Novice*

Junior*

Senior*

Novice*

College Events

Adult Event*

**These levels have age restrictions; refer to a current U.S. Figure Skating rulebook for more information.*

DEVELOPMENT CAMPS

U.S. Figure Skating's Athlete Development department offers several camps to address the needs of developing athletes, including at least one national camp open to all regional (singles) or sectional (pairs, dance, synchronized skating) competitors at the juvenile level or higher.

All camps have a maximum capacity and offered on a "first come-first served" basis within the eligible pool of athletes. Below are a few camps U.S. Figure Skating offers to help athletes perform to their highest potential.

ATHLETE ACCELERATION SUMMIT

The Athlete Acceleration Summit helps athletes improve their performance, personality and poise on the ice. Skaters from all four disciplines who have competed at the juvenile level or higher can participate. The camp also offers a separate Parents Information program for all parents attending.

DANCE CAMP

Designed for dance teams intending to compete at the juvenile-senior levels for the upcoming season, Dance Camp features on- and off-ice group classes focusing on boosting technical and program components scores. There are also classes for parents and coaches presented by the PSA.

JUMP ON IT!

Jump On It! Camp focuses on jump exercises, spins, skating skills, power, agility and off-ice classes with an emphasis on sports science and understanding the judges' and technical panel's evaluations. This camp accepts registrations in a tier system, and skaters that competed at a regional challenge at juvenile or higher are welcome to register.

NATIONAL HIGH PERFORMANCE DEVELOPMENT CAMP

Athletes at the juvenile, intermediate and novice levels qualify for the National Development Team and National Development Camp based on a top four placement in singles at the Sectional Singles Final and a top nine finish in pairs or ice dance at the U.S. Pairs Final or U.S. Ice Dance Final. The camp provides athletes with the tools they need to accelerate their exposure to Team USA and high performance programming.

SYNCHRONIZED SKATING DEVELOPMENT CAMPS

U.S. Figure Skating hosts two Synchronized Skating DREAM Camps each year, one in the Eastern section and one in the Midwestern section. The camps are open to all skaters who competed in synchro at the Synchro Skills (Learn to Skate USA), preliminary, pre-juvenile and open juvenile levels to help them improve their individual and synchronized skating skills in a fun summer camp setting.

LIFE LESSONS LEARNED IN SKATING

Figure skating, in any of its disciplines, can be a recreational activity, a competitive experience and, for some, a career. The benefits of skating go far beyond the ice.

PATIENCE

Competency takes time. Not every skater will pass every figure skating test he/she takes. Not every competition will end in a successful great skate. These moments may seem like a setback or feel like a failure, but they offer skaters an opportunity to learn, practice and improve. Patience invites competency in all life's challenges.

DETERMINATION

Skaters fall. They get back up. It happens in practice and in competition. It's an inevitable part of skating that grows a determined spirit. Persistence and grit are what champions on and off the ice practice to shake off failure and stay determined to try again.

CONFIDENCE

Confidence grows when we face and overcome challenges. Learning to set goals in partnership with coaches and parents helps skaters develop strategies to problem solve in life. A confident skater learns how to acknowledge and appreciate success, whether it's a stellar medal awarded performance or mastering a skill in practice they learn internal satisfaction. That is confidence.

RESPONSIBILITY

Participation in skating holds a person accountable. Goals and expectations are set by coaches and parents and reviewed. Skaters learn how to manage their time, assess their strengths

and build up their weaknesses. They learn accountability, which makes for more than successful skating — it makes for success in life.

DIVERSITY

Skating competitions and camps take place in various places around the country, and some internationally. This is an opportunity to learn about the rich diversity of people, traditions and cultures. Skating invites us to see the commonality in the world's diversity.



I've learned that success isn't about winning, it's about never giving up.

ENCOURAGING EXCELLENCE: HOW TO BRING OUT THE BEST IN YOUR CHILD

BY DR. CAROLINE SILBY

A

Give affection regardless of performance outcome

Children need to know their failures and successes don't affect your support or acceptance. Unconditional parental love gives kids a haven from which to launch lofty dreams and ambitions. Children who believe their worth increases with every medal or trophy will likely buckle under the weight of unrealistic expectations. Expressing unconditional love is based on who they are rather than what they accomplish. The pursuit of excellence is then transformed from a daunting task to a realistic goal.

F

Be focused, but don't coach

It's the parent's job to develop the child, and it's the coach's job to develop the champion. Stay away from detailed, technical discussions about performance; instead, encourage your child to establish good goal-setting habits.

F

Be flexible

At the first sign of success, many parents place their budding skaters on the fast track to the Olympics without taking time to find out their goals. Set your agenda based on what is best for your children's long-term wellbeing, not short-term goals. Flexibility enables both you and your athlete to enjoy the journey more fully.

I

Interact without dominating the conversation

A supportive parent listens more than talks. Parents provide comfort for children by creating a safe environment where they can express true feelings of loss and disappointment. A key element in creating that safe environment is learning to listen. Listen for descriptive words your children use to express how they feel about themselves and their performances. By listening, you show that their thoughts and feelings are worthy of expression and that you respect their skating experience.

R

Reframe

It's the parent's role to provide perspective and remind their children of the bigger picture, including long-term goals and other aspects of life (academics, friendships, family, spirituality, etc.). Your guidance and feedback affirm sport is only one aspect of a multidimensional life and serves as a valuable balance to the pressures of competition.

M

Model

Kids learn valuable coping skills by watching their parents deal with difficult situations. Live your own life with integrity by ensuring your actions correspond with your values and beliefs. Your personal life experiences can provide powerful learning opportunities. When you make mistakes, admit your errors, and explain to your children the more appropriate response.

NUTRITION TIPS

Proper nutrition and fueling your body is key to performance success.

COMPETITION DAY FUELING

Many skaters resist eating on competition day because they feel nervous or don't want to feel full or "heavy" when they compete. However, competition day eating is essential! You wouldn't race a sports car without gas in the tank — similarly, your body and your brain can't optimally function without fuel!

RECOVERY NUTRITION

Recovery nutrition is the food energy you put in your body to help your working muscles recover from the training you just did and prepare for the next bout of exercise or training, whether it be immediately or the next day. It helps your body:

- Train more effectively
- Prevent fatigue
- Maintain a healthy body composition
- Resist injury

- Optimize growth and development

The Four Rs of Recovery Nutrition

- Rehydrate your body with fluids and electrolytes
- Replenish your muscle glycogen (stored energy) by consuming carbohydrates
- Repair your muscle tissue by eating high quality protein
- Reinforce your immune system with nutrient-rich and natural food sources

To maximize recovery, eat snacks with a ratio of 4 grams of carbs for every gram of protein within 30-45 minutes after the last practice session, assuming that more than two hours will pass until the next meal.

During periods of higher intensity training, you may require a snack with a similar ratio an hour or two before bedtime to facilitate repair and improve recovery while sleeping.



Four hours before: Eat your final pre-competition meal about four hours prior to your skate. Depending on your schedule and travel, this may mean taking food on the road, packing a lunch or making smart decisions to postpone a large meal that's served immediately before a performance for after you skate.



Two-to-three hours before: This could be the last time you fuel with solid foods, depending on your nerves before competition. Eat something simple (taste-wise) containing mostly carbs and protein (low-fat yogurt and fruit, hummus and pita, small smoothie, etc.). Steer clear of strong flavors and seasonings that could be more difficult to digest and could cause indigestion on a nervous stomach.



One hour or less before: High water-containing fruits like oranges, melons and apples are good options because they digest quickly. Limit solid food because it requires more digestion time.

It is U.S. Figure Skating's position that nutrition advice, particularly recommendations of specific dietary intake, be given by Registered Dietitians (RDs). RDs (as opposed to "nutritionists") are qualified nutrition professionals who have completed a minimum of a bachelor's degree and an accredited practice program, passed a national exam and are required to maintain continuing education requirements. Certified Specialists in Sport Dietetics (CSSDs) are RDs who earn an additional certification to provide individualized information to athletes of all ages and skill levels.



HYDRATING FOR HEALTH

Hydration is the foundation for everything an athlete does, whether it's training, competition or post-performance recovery. There are a lot of factors that determine how much water each athlete should intake daily, and it's helpful to understand how the fluids we drink are lost.

According to TrueSport, a good way to measure the amount of water an athlete needs is to divide their body weight in half and drink at least an ounce per pound of body weight throughout the day (ex. Someone weighing 120 pounds should drink 60 oz of water per day). This amount should be adjusted according to the activity level and outside temperature.

On higher activity days, the timing of hydration plays an important factor in stayed hydrated and recovering properly. It can take the body 8-12 hours to fully re-hydrate from an intense workout session.

There are four main ways athletes lose fluid:

- 1. Exercise intensity:** The longer an athlete exercises, the more fluids he/she will need to take in.
- 2. Sweating:** Some athletes sweat more than others, and those that sweat more have a higher risk of dehydration.
- 3. Temperature:** Exercising in hot weather increases the need for hydrating and exercising in the cold increases the amount of fluid lost through breathing.
- 4. Altitude:** Higher altitudes have a dehydrating effect on the body.

Aside from water, skaters can have sports drinks to supply additional carbohydrates and electrolytes during high intensity practice sessions to decrease the onset of fatigue.

Other recommended beverages to consume include: milk, 100% fruit juice and 100% fruit smoothies.

Signs of Dehydration

- Cramps
- Nausea
- Dry mouth
- Impaired Performance
- Dizziness/Lightheadedness
- Weakness
- Headache
- Fatigue

There is a such thing as over-hydrating (water intoxication). Monitor hydration to ensure athletes are properly intaking fluids but not taking in too much.

Sources: TrueSport: How Much Water Do Youth Athletes Need?; UPMC Sports Medicine. Preventing Sports Injury. (n.d.). Vol 3.

Weight of Athlete	Before Exercise (1-4 hours prior to)	During Exercise (Every 15 minutes, small gulps)	After Activity (Every hour for 1-2 hours post activity)
60 lb	3/4 cup (6 oz)	3 oz	4 oz
80 lb	2 cups (16 oz)	4 oz	6 oz
100 lb	2 1/2 cups (20 oz)	5 oz	6-8 oz
120 lb	3 cups (24 oz)	6 oz	8 oz
150 lb	3 3/4 cups (30 oz)	8 oz	8-10 oz

Nutrition and training go hand in hand, but nothing will matter if an athlete doesn't get proper sleep.

Lack of proper sleep has a variety of consequences on young athletes, including:

- Delayed reaction time
- Amplified stress and anxiety
- Daytime drowsiness and feeling of lethargy
- Weight gain
- Reduced cognitive abilities, including concentration, short-term memory, logical thinking, decision making, creativity, etc.
- Impaired muscle repair and growth from training



IMPROVING SLEEP

According to TrueSport, studies have shown that youth athletes need at least nine hours of sleep each night. Upon reaching puberty, the average teenager's circadian rhythms reset to stay up late and sleep late. Your teenager isn't being difficult — it's his/her biological clock at work. This tells us that an extra hour of sleep in the morning may be more beneficial than one more hour of practice at 5 a.m. before a competition.

Tips to Help Athletes Fall Asleep Faster

Source: TrueSport: 6 Ways Youth Athletes Can Improve Their Sleep

CUT THE CAFFEINE

Caffeine is a notorious stimulant, and its effects can even be felt three to five hours after consuming.



Cut the caffeine at least five hours before bedtime. If your skater is still having trouble sleeping, consider stopping the caffeine earlier or even reduce the amount consumed.

SET A ROUTINE

Great sleep requires a great routine. Setting small habits before bedtime every night sets young athletes up for a well-rested morning. Examples of small habits include brushing teeth, reading a book and going to bed at the same time. It's also important to keep the bedroom as a space just for sleeping, not for doing homework or checking social media.

ELIMINATE BLUE LIGHT (AND ALL LIGHT)

When it gets dark outside, our bodies produce a hormone called melatonin, which helps us get sleepy. Melatonin production is limited when we stare at screens from computers, TV or smartphones before bedtime. To keep a normal circadian rhythm, avoid looking at screens an hour or two before bedtime. If this



is too difficult, there are also apps and phone settings that will eliminate the amount of blue light devices emit at night.

NAP RESPONSIBLY

Naps as short as 30 minutes can improve an athlete's mood, alertness and reaction times and are helpful for those having trouble getting the recommended amount of sleep. It's recommended to take a nap before 3 p.m. to avoid interference with the nighttime sleep schedule. If your skater desires to take more than one nap a day, it may signify he or she is not getting enough quality sleep or nutrition is not supporting the energy needs your athlete requires.

ADD WHITE NOISE

Many people use background noise to help them drift into sleep peacefully and cover up outside noises



that could interrupt sleep. Fans often provide adequate white noise, but there are also noisemakers and apps that can be purchased. Note that having the TV on does not qualify as suitable background noise.

INVEST IN SLEEP

Good sleep is essential to living a healthy lifestyle, so choosing a quality, comfortable mattress is also important. Having an uncomfortable mattress can disrupt what could be a good night of sleep. Try out mattresses in-store and take advantage of any trial periods before settling on the perfect bed (and the perfect night's sleep).

Jet Lag and Sleep Deprivation

Source: National Sleep Foundation: Jet Lag and Sleep

As skaters progress through the levels of U.S. Figure Skating, they may be invited to compete in international competitions. This could mean traveling across the world to a country several hours ahead or behind of your home's time zone.

As people travel across time zones, they experience jet lag, which puts them in conflict with their natural sleep patterns. The shift in time and light forces the brain and body to alter its normal pattern and adjust to the new time zone.

To prepare for international travel, try to shift your sleep and wake times gradually to the new schedule a few days before leaving home and adopt the sleep/wake cycle of your destination upon arrival. Upon arrival, avoid heavy meals and any heavy exercise close to bedtime. Try to get outside and enjoy the sunlight whenever possible to increase alertness.





It's important to develop young athletes as a whole and not just focus on figure skating. Elements of conditioning include agility, balance, coordination, strength, power and flexibility.

PROMOTING OFF-ICE FITNESS

Figure skating is a compelling and beautiful sport that combines athleticism and artistry to create powerful moments on the ice. The primary goal of off-ice training is to make ice time more productive for improving skating skills. Off-ice training should be balanced with on-ice training to ensure energy is productively used on and off the ice.

Effective off-ice training includes six focus areas:

- Agility
- Balance
- Coordination
- Strength
- Power
- Flexibility

These focus areas produce a conditioning response in the body that increases endurance and power. As athletes become more conditioned, the same exercise intensity will seem easier. Skaters will become more well-rounded athletes with proper training.

OFF-ICE TRAINING FOR SYNCHRONIZED SKATERS

Strength and conditioning are as important for synchronized skaters as for any other skating discipline. Whether that training is performed as part of team training in a group or individually, the trainer must understand the principles of appropriate exercise for the age group and normal growth and development of adolescents.

For synchronized skaters, the stability gained from core control and upper body strength are essential to improving on-ice performance. As with other disciplines, the intensity, frequency and type of exercise vary with the cycle of the skating season.

NATIONAL DYNAMIC WARM-UP

Warming up before a skating session improves performance and decreases the risk of injury. A dynamic warm-up takes the body through a series of movement skills that will warm up the joints and muscles necessary to complete on-ice skills.

JOGGING

- 1 minute

NECK ROLLS

- 8 each direction
- Start looking down at the chin and then roll the neck clockwise/counterclockwise

ANKLE ROTATIONS

- 8 each direction
- Balance on one foot, then roll the free ankle clockwise/counterclockwise

TRUNK TWISTS

- 8 each side
- Stand with the feet hip-width apart
- Twisting at the waist, twist the torso side-to-side

KNEE HUGS

- Alternate to complete 4 on each leg
- Step forward and pull one knee into the chest while balancing and extending through the standing leg
- Hold 2-3 seconds

QUAD PULLS

- Alternate to complete 4 on each leg
- Step forward and grab the foot of the free leg, pulling the heel toward the buttocks
- Push the hips forward for a deeper stretch
- Hold 2-3 seconds

GLUTE PULLS

- Alternate to complete 4 on each leg
- Step forward and grab the free foot, pulling the heel up toward the belly button to stretch the outside of the hip
- Hold 2-3 seconds

WALKING LUNGES

- Alternate to complete 4 on each leg
- Take a big step forward, bending the knee to a 90-degree angle
- Hold 2-3 seconds, alternating feet

STRAIGHT LEG KICKS

- 8 repetitions
- Step forward and kick one leg in front, reaching for the toe with the opposite hand

HIGH KNEE RUN

- Complete the distance of 10 yards
- Running quickly, pull the knees up high toward the chest

BUTT KICKERS

- Complete the distance of 10 yards
- Running quickly, kick the heels back toward the buttocks

GRAPEVINE

- Complete the distance of 10 yards
- In a sideways direction, cross the right foot over the left, then bring the left foot from behind to the side and cross behind with the right foot; cross over again with the left
- Repeat both directions

TOE AND HEEL RAISE

- 10 repetitions
- Standing with the feet hip-width apart, put all the weight in the heels of the foot, raising the toes off the ground, then rock up to the toes and lift the heels
- Repeat, holding each position 1-2 seconds

SKIPS

- Complete the distance of 10 yards
- Step forward and hop, alternating feet

JUMPING JACKS

- 10 repetitions
- Start with feet together and arms by the side, then jump both feet out while extending the arms over head
- Bring feet back together while returning arms back to the sides of the body

ABCS OF ATHLETICISM

(AGILITY, BALANCE AND COORDINATION)

AGILITY

Agility is the ability to change directions quickly with control. Use the following exercises to develop agility and athleticism.

- Running and sprinting (10-20 yards)
- Lateral shuffle (10-20 yards)
- Grapevine (10-20 yards)
- Quick feet (10-20 seconds)
- Forward hops (10-20 yards)
- Lateral hops (10-20 yards)
- Line jumps (10-20-second intervals)
- Hexagon jump (three rotations)
- Speed ladder drills

BALANCE

Balance helps athletes become more aware of their body in space (proprioception). Use the following exercises to enhance your balance and proprioception. Once you begin practicing them, start increasing the length of time and

attempting each with your eyes closed. Add coordination activities to further strengthen balance.

- Barefoot two-foot balance (20-40-second intervals)
- Barefoot two-foot balance, eyes closed (10-20-second intervals)
- Single leg balance progression (10-20-second intervals)
- One-foot glide (10-20-second intervals)
- Stroking position (10-20-second intervals)
- Hip flexion/"h" position (10-20-second intervals)
- Loading position (10-20-second intervals)
- Air position (10-20-second intervals)
- Spiral position (10-20-second intervals)

COORDINATION

Coordination, or the ability to efficiently use different parts of the body together, is vital to every aspect of athletic development in figure skating. Try these exercises to improve hand-eye coordination, balance and footwork skills.

- Skipping progression, changing direction, size and speed (10-20 yards)
- Walking skip (10-20 yards)
- Forward skip (10-20 yards)
- Backward skip (10-20 yards)
- Lateral skip (10-20 yards)
- Turning skip (10-20 yards)
- Power skip for height or distance (10-20 yards)
- Jump rope (variable times)
- Bear crawl (10-20 yards)
- Crab walk (10-20 yards)
- Inchworms (10-20 yards)
- Galloping (10-20 yards)
- Bird dogs (10-20 yards)



STRENGTH AND POWER

Foundations of Strength

The ability to move properly and engage key muscle groups will help improve strength to support the muscles and movement patterns needed for on-ice skill development. The following exercises will develop strength and enhance your capacity for exertion or endurance.

- Basic squat (10-20 reps)
- Overhead squat with arms lifted (10 reps)
- Split squat (8-12 reps)
- Step back lunge (8-12 reps)
- Walking lunge (8-12 reps)
- Side lunge (8-12 reps)
- Basic hinge (8-10 reps)
- Glute bridge (8-10 reps)

Foundations of Power

Power helps in all aspects of figure skating, from jumping high to holding fast spins. Practice these power exercises in four steps.

STEP 1 MOVEMENT AND COORDINATION

- Skipping
- Hopping on two feet
- Galloping
- Jump roping

STEP 2 LANDING MECHANICS

- Quick snaps
- Mini depth landing, stepping off a small step and landing softly with control
- Mini two-foot jump focusing on soft landings and control

STEP 3: INTRODUCTION TO BASIC POWER EXERCISES

- Two-foot bound jumps across the floor focusing on distance
- Power skips focusing on height and distance
- Two-foot vertical jumps with proper landing mechanics
- Basic box jump
- Squat jumps
- Tuck jumps
- Hurdle jump and stick

STEP 4 SPORT-SPECIFIC

- Two-foot rotational jumps focusing on mechanics, control and quality
- Jump check-outs focusing on stability and control of landing leg

FLEXIBILITY AND STRETCHING

Stretching before and after training and competition helps athletes prevent injuries. It helps prevent muscle tears and pulls, and it helps a skater's joints move through a full range of motion. Stretching also helps skaters be more flexible on the ice.

Before stretching, muscles should be warm. Stretching cold muscles can lead to injuries. Skaters should stretch to a point of a gentle pull, not pain. Stretching before practice increases range of motion and stretching after practice helps speed up the muscle recovery process. The following stretches will help make a world of difference in your child's recovery and performance.

High knee walks: Pull your leg up to your chest as you slowly walk forward, head up and back straight. Lower your leg as you step and lift the other one up.

Runner's lunge: Stand with both feet together. Step out as far as you can and lower your hips toward the floor, head and back straight. Bring your foot back and repeat with the other foot.

Straight leg toe touches: With your back straight, lift one leg straight up and attempt to touch it with your fingers. Repeat with the other leg.

Reach to the side: Stand with your feet slightly apart. Bend to the side, holding the opposite arm above your head. Avoid leaning forward.

Sitting hamstring stretch: Sit on the edge of a chair and stretch out your leg with your toes pointing up. Place your hands on your left thigh, keeping your other foot flat on the ground. With your back straight, lean forward until you feel a stretch in the back of your thigh. Repeat with the other leg.

Chest opener: Bring your right arm up to shoulder height and position the palm and inside of the arm on a wall surface or doorway. Gently press the chest through the open space to feel the stretch. Repeat with the left arm.

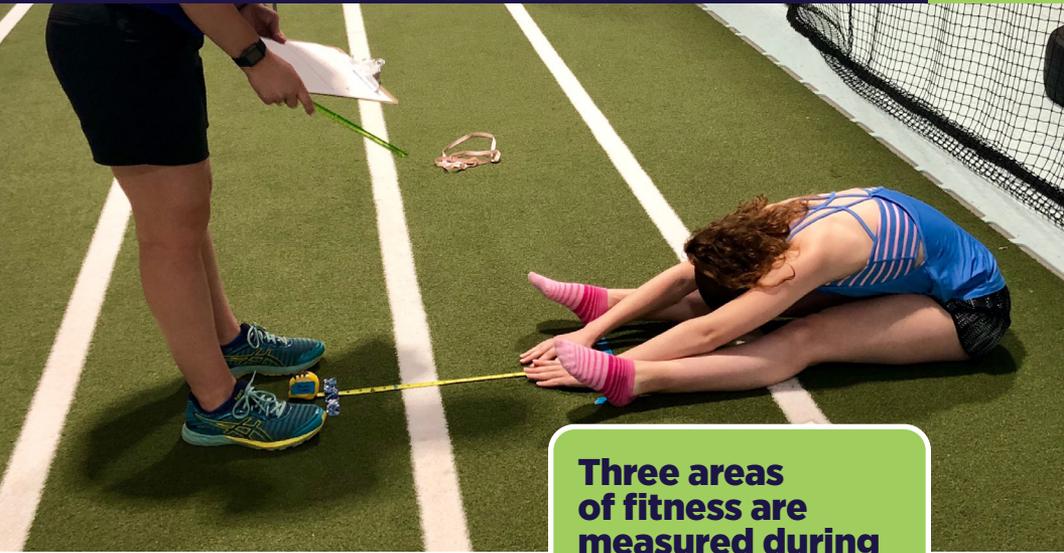
YOGA

Yoga is another great way for athletes to stay limber while increasing flexibility and coordination. It works most muscle groups and builds better balance and mental focus. There are yoga studios all over the country offering different varieties, and some communities offer kids classes as well.

Source: UPMC Sports Medicine. Preventing Sports Injury. (n.d.). Vol. 3



Stride to the side: Stand with both feet together, knees slightly bent. Step out to the side, keeping your knees bent. Feel the stretch in your groin area. Repeat by stepping out in the opposite direction.



S.T.A.R.S.

S.T.A.R.S. (Standardized Testing of Athleticism to Recognize Skaters) is a system of off-ice fitness assessment and development designed to support U.S. Figure Skating's testing and competition progressions.

Skaters today are expected to complete harder skills at younger ages, but athletes can't accomplish this solely training on the ice. S.T.A.R.S. promotes the athletic development of our athletes and keeps them safe and injury resistant by training their bodies ahead of the on-ice skills curve.

The objectives of S.T.A.R.S. is to promote and enhance athleticism and athletic ability in all figure skaters through assessment, recognition and opportunity. Off-ice training can help reduce the rate of injury in all skating disciplines and competitive levels. The feedback received from the S.T.A.R.S. test assists coaches and parents in developing and guiding a skater's athletic development.

S.T.A.R.S. COMBINE

The S.T.A.R.S. Combine is a one- to two-day testing period to assess skaters. Combines are held on different dates

Three areas of fitness are measured during a S.T.A.R.S. test:

1. Agility/Balance/Coordination
2. Strength/Power
3. Flexibility

across the country, and figure skating athletes who are 6 years old and who have passed at least pre-preliminary moves in the field are eligible to participate.

Typically, there are 30-70 skaters at a combine ranging in age and skill level. Participants receive a S.T.A.R.S. athlete gift as well as participation in the assessment, warm-up class and sports science seminar. Coaches can observe their athletes during the assessment. Coaches and parents are also invited to participate in the sports science seminar.

There are 15 assessments conducted by certified trainers. Skaters have a raw data score sheet and will take home a copy at the end of the day. The data for all athletes is recorded in a database. At the end of each season, athletes receive a report with percentile and improvement scores for each assessment. Top athletes are recognized by U.S. Figure Skating online and in SKATING magazine.



KEEPING SCORE: *HOW THE INTERNATIONAL JUDGING SYSTEM WORKS*

The international judging system (IJS) is used at all ISU competitions and U.S. Figure Skating qualifying competitions. The IJS is based on cumulative points achieved during each skater's/team's performance.

Under the IJS, points are awarded for a technical score combined with points awarded for five program components: skating skills, transitions, performance, composition and interpretation of music. Penalties are given for program length violations, costume mishaps, falls and other violations.

If a skater performs more than the defined well-balanced program elements, there are no deductions, but the additional elements will not be calculated into the skater's score. If a skater performs fewer than the required elements, he/she receives fewer points rather than a deduction. The only exception to this is

ice dance, which takes a 1.0 deduction for each extra element.

The benefit of IJS is that the judges don't compare the skaters to figure out where to place them. Each skater is evaluated solely on his/her individual performance independent of the other skaters in the group.

TECHNICAL PANEL

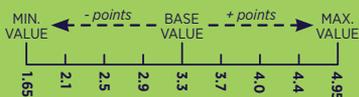
A technical panel of five people includes a technical controller, technical specialist, assistant technical specialist, data operator and video replay operator. During each performance, the technical specialist identifies each element and the level of difficulty as defined by the ISU.

The technical controller and assistant technical specialist support the primary technical specialist to ensure all elements are correctly identified. Final decisions on elements and levels are determined by the majority opinion of the controller and

Example:

Double Axel

A double Axel's base value is 3.3, so a skater has the potential earn as much as 4.95 points for that jump or as little as 1.65. In this example, the positive and negative grades are 0.5 points each.



two specialists.

Both specialists and the controller are recorded with an audio tape during each program, and video is available to verify calls. The elements can be reviewed after a skater's performance, and scores can be changed accordingly. The scores are final once they are posted and announced to the public.

JUDGES

A maximum of nine judges make up the panel at a competition. The judges focus completely on scoring the quality of each technical element and the five components for each skater. The computer keeps track of comparative scores, records results and calculates totals to determine placements.

TECHNICAL SCORE

Each element of the program is assigned a base value, which gives skaters credit for every element they perform. Some elements, such as spins and step sequences, have levels of difficulty on which the base values are established.

Judges grade the quality of each element using a grade of execution score (GOE) within a range of +5 to -5, which is added to or deducted from the base value. GOEs are proportional to the base value of each element.

The high and low judges' scores for each element are thrown out, and the remain-

ing judge's scores are averaged to determine the final GOE for each element. The GOE is then added to or subtracted from the base value for each element, and the sum of the scores for all elements forms the technical score.

PROGRAM COMPONENTS

The judges will award points on a scale from 0.25 to 10 (with increments of 0.25) for five program components to grade overall presentation. As with GOEs, the judges' high and low scores for each component are thrown out, and the remaining scores are averaged. The final program components scores are then multiplied by a set factor to ensure the technical score and program components score are balanced.

- 1. Skating Skills:** Overall skating quality, including edge control and flow over the ice surface (edges, steps, turns, speed, etc.), clarity of technique and use of effortless power to accelerate and vary speed
- 2. Transitions:** The varied and/or intricate footwork, positions, movement and holds that link all elements
- 3. Performance:** The involvement of the skater physically, emotionally and intellectually in translating the music and choreography
- 4. Composition:** An intentional, developed and/or original arrangement of all types of movements according to the principles of proportion, unity, space, pattern, structure and phrasing
- 5. Interpretation of Music:** The personal and creative translation of the music to the movement on the ice

SEGMENT SCORE

The technical score is added to the program components score to determine the segment score (short program/rhythm dance or free skate/dance). The scores for each segment are then added together to determine the competition score. The skater with the highest competition score is declared the winner. For more information about the IJS, including a complete listing of base values, visit usfigureskating.org.



RINK RULES AND ICE ETIQUETTE

Every rink has a different set of rules regarding behavior and ice etiquette, but these general guidelines transfer across most rinks.

BASIC RINK BEHAVIOR

- Respect the rights of others
- Respect arena property and the property of others

FREE SKATING SESSION GUIDELINES

For Skaters

- Sign in and pay for sessions before stepping on the ice.
- Pick up all belongings at the end of the session.
- Skaters should stay aware of others on the ice.
- Be understanding if someone gets in your way.
- Look both ways before leaving the boards or skating across the ice. Keep moving and avoid standing still in the middle of the ice or in any jumping corners.

For Parents

- Parents and spectators should not loiter by the boards or benches. This interferes with a constructive training session.

- Coaching by parents is not acceptable in any rink.
- Be respectful and courteous to the coaches, rink staff and other parents.

WHO HAS THE RIGHT OF WAY?

1. The skater doing a program to music
 - Many rinks have skaters wear orange vests or colorful belts while performing a program. Be aware of which skater is doing a program and do your best to stay clear.
2. Skaters in a lesson
3. Skaters on the harness

MUSIC

Every club has different guidelines regarding music. If it's a crowded session, there may be a music line, and programs will be played on a rotational basis. After a skater's music has been played, it's put at the end of the line to re-enter the rotation. Sometimes, not everyone will be able to play their music on full sessions.

- Coaches may also put their students' music ahead of others if they're teaching a lesson.
- Do not stop and restart your music if another is waiting in line.
- Handle the music equipment with care.

PROHIBITED BEHAVIOR

- Kicking, digging holes, scraping or stomping the ice or kicking the boards with your blades is prohibited.
- Being verbally abusive to other skaters and coaches is prohibited.
- Deliberately challenging, scaring or intentionally blocking another skater is prohibited.



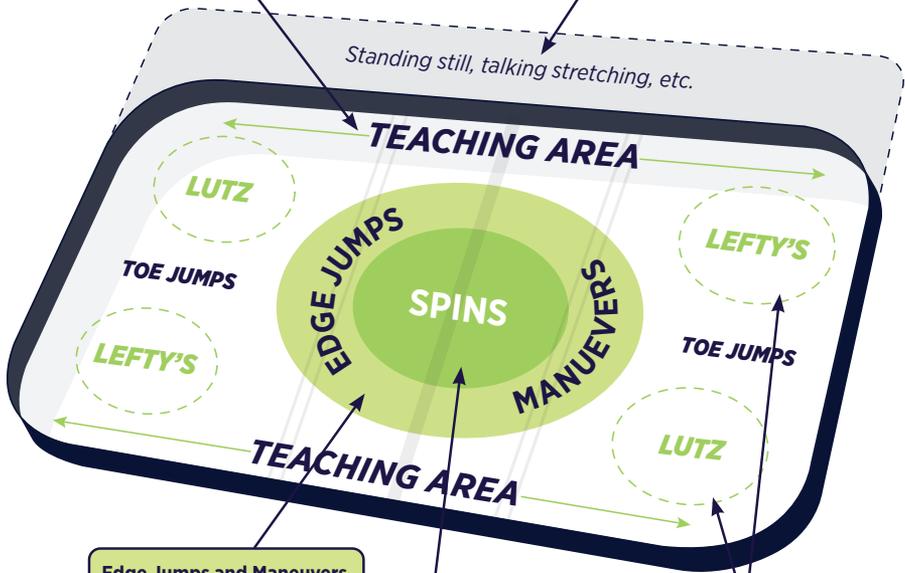
When warming up or skating laps, always skate in a counterclockwise direction.

Teaching Area

Coaches teach from the sides, away from the center of the ice so skaters can go by.

Standing, talking, stretching, etc.

Those standing still, talking or stretching should get off the ice. Stopping in the middle of the ice is a hazard, especially near jumping areas. Keep moving while you are on the ice.



Edge Jumps and Maneuvers

Edge jumps and other maneuvers are practiced around the center of the ice.

Spinning Center

Spins should be practiced in the center of the ice away from jumping and edge patterns.

Jumping Corners

Jumpers have the right of way in the four corners of the ice, mainly for Lutz jumps. Toe jumps go down the middle-end of the ice as well. Avoid spinning or standing in these areas.

MONEY MATTERS

Whether your child is a freestyle, ice dance or synchronized skater, there are increasing expenses as he/she competes and moves to higher levels. Budget planning should be prepared with the entire family in mind, and all possible expenses over a season should be considered in order to properly set a skating budget.

As a skater progresses from the nonqualifying to the qualifying level, expect the need to increase your budget. Your skater may need a more durable boot and blade, a choreographer or an off-ice trainer. Keep good communication with your coach to decide what is best for your skater.

SYNCHRONIZED SKATING

Synchro teams generally provide a budget for the skater's participation on the team for the season. Ice time, coaching fees, competition dresses, travel expenses, competition entry fees and other miscellaneous expenses may all be included in the budget. Parents may also need to supplement this with expenses that are not included in the team budget, such as individual training for skaters.

BUYING SKATES

For a young, growing skater, you may need to replace skates every six months or so. Consult with a reputable dealer to help you get a quality boot and blade that meets the needs of the skater but doesn't break the bank. The need for a custom blood should be considered for special foot/ankle problems and/or when the foot has stopped growing.

COSTUMES

Singles, pairs and ice dance skaters will need to budget for their skating attire. Parents can reduce costume expense for young skaters by using outfits off the rack and adding stones or appliques to enhance their beauty. The internet also has numerous websites for both new and used dresses.

Budgeting Tips

- Talk to other parents about their experiences
- Talk to rink managers about options to reduce ice cost, like package discounts
- Use club ice as much as possible
- Ask older skaters if they have any old costumes they are willing to sell
- Don't be afraid to let your skater's coach know if money is getting tight
- Instead of staying at a competition's host hotel, search the area for others that might better fit your budget

Expenses to Consider

- Ice time
- Coaching fees
- Skates
- Costumes
- Travel fees
- Hotel
- Competition fees
- Coach competition fees

SPONSORS

Getting a sponsor for your skater or team is possible. Look for companies or local businesses that support local athletes and speak directly to those that make sponsor decisions. Be realistic with a potential sponsor about your team's goals and expenses. Ask about expectations and be ready to fulfill them.

Obtaining a sponsor is not easy, but it's important to not give up. Success in skating gets athletes more exposure, especially in the media, which will increase their chances of finding financial assistance.

U.S. FIGURE SKATING MEMORIAL FUND

The U.S. Figure Skating Memorial Fund assists qualified athletes with various expenses. The Memorial Fund supports three financial aid programs:

Competitive Skaters Assistance Program

CSAP awards are intended to subsidize training expenses of competitive singles, pairs and ice dancing skaters. Awards are based on financial need and competitive history and available to qualified juvenile-through senior-level athletes in singles, pairs and ice dance.

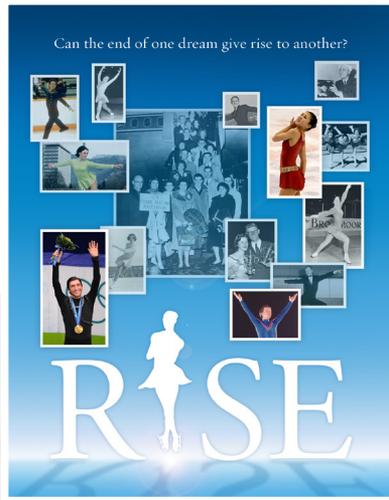
Academic Scholarship Program

ASP scholarships are intended to help defray the costs of higher education for current and former skaters in the singles, pairs, ice dance and synchronized skating. Awards are based on financial need, academic performance and continuing participation in the sport of figure skating.

RISE Youth Essay Contest

The RISE Youth Essay Contest provides younger skaters with the opportunity to connect with figure skating's history and share their personal reflections on the movie RISE. The contest is open to skaters competing at the pre-preliminary through juvenile levels.

To find more information on the Memorial Fund and other financial aid opportunities from U.S. Figure Skating, visit www.usfigureskating.org.



U.S. FIGURE SKATING SAFESPORT PROGRAM

SAFESPORT OVERSEES:



Policies prohibiting abuse and misconduct



Education and awareness training



Mandatory background screening



Reporting concerns and abuse



Responding to reports of abuse



Monitoring and supervision of SafeSport program

U.S. Figure Skating strives to provide a safe environment for its members that is free of abuse or misconduct. The association will not tolerate or condone any form of harassment or abuse of any of its members or any persons while they are participating in or preparing for a figure skating activity or event conducted under the auspices of U.S. Figure Skating. All forms of abuse and misconduct are unacceptable and in direct conflict with U.S. Figure Skating's SafeSport Handbook. The U.S. Figure Skating SafeSport program provides resources for all members to identify abuse and misconduct, steps to reduce it and response procedures.

THE U.S. FIGURE SKATING SAFESPORT PROGRAM ADDRESSES THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF ABUSE, HARASSMENT AND MISCONDUCT:

- Sexual misconduct
- Physical misconduct
- Emotional misconduct
- Bullying, threats and harassment
- Hazing
- Willfully tolerating misconduct

To find resources, helpful links, online training or how to make a report, visit usfigureskating.org/safesport or email safesport@usfigureskating.org.

US FIGURE SKATING
SAFESPORT

IN CONCLUSION

Every decision a parent makes in guiding his/her children should be based first on what's best for the child, and second on what may support the child's efforts to succeed at his/her performance goals and provide opportunity for successful performance outcomes.

The pursuit of distinction, the recognition of outstanding performance and achieving performance goals are sweet

rewards of sport, but they can turn sour if, through not achieving distinction or one's performance goals, you or your child's perspective is lost.

Success is a measure of an athlete's competency; winning reflects the outcome of a competition. Your child won't be able to control all the factors that go into winning an event, but he/she can find success in developing and improving skills.

Whether your child chooses to pursue skating as a career or takes a different direction, his/her journey on the ice will be an unforgettable experience that he/she will carry through the years.



NOTES:

NOTES:



U.S. FIGURE SKATING

20 First Street
Colorado Springs, CO 80906
719.635.5200
info@usfigureskating.org