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# *Roller Derby Gear Guide*

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**A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO ALL THE SAFETY  
GEAR YOU WILL NEED AND WANT FOR FRESH MEAT  
ROLLER DERBY BOOT CAMP AND BEYOND**

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# What to Bring

## What to Bring to Boot Camp Practices

### 1-1 ALL REQUIRED SAFETY GEAR

» As described in detail in this document.

» From the rule book:

9.1.1 - Protective gear must be worn while skating in a jam, including to and from the Penalty Box. Failure to wear required protective gear or removal of protective gear, such as a mouth guard, will result in a penalty (see Section 5.13.22 and Section 6.2.6).

9.1.2 - Protective gear must include, at a minimum: wrist guards, elbow pads, knee pads, mouth guards, and helmets.

9.1.2.1 - Wrist guards, elbow pads, knee pads, and helmets must have a hard protective shell or inserts.

9.1.2.2 - Skaters are strongly encouraged to secure or tape down loose Velcro on pads.

### 1-2 ATHLETIC SHOES

» Cross trainers or running shoes for land based workouts.



### 1-3 WATER BOTTLE

» Stay properly hydrated

» Refill at water fountain



#### 1-4 SCRIMMAGE SHIRTS

- » For Level Two and Three, we will likely be going over scrimmage scenarios and derby based drills. When you join the league, you will be expected to have one red and one black scrimmage shirt in your gear bag at all times.
- » They need not have a number while in boot camp, however, if you decide to put one on, follow the WFTDA official guidelines. (The number guidelines are in sections 2.7.4 - 2.7.5.4) You may not have the same number as anyone on the team, nor may you have the number 1. Please ask for current roster to clarify and check with the appropriate league personnel before you decide.
- » Personalized WIRG printed scrimmage shirts available at <https://shop.spreadshirt.com/wirgshop>, but any appropriately colored shirt or tank top are acceptable.



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## 1-5 EXTRA HARDWARE/ACCESSORIES

» Though not required, it is always good to have these on hand. The optional items listed are quick and easy fixes to issues that would likely have you sit out the whole practice.

**Shoe Laces** fall apart more than you would think in derby.



**Duct Tape** is the fix all in roller derby. We use it on everything from a velcro stand-in to toe-guard substitute.



**Toe stops** occasionally break or split. Having an extra pair can make sure that you can still participate.



Having a few **Truck Nuts, Axle Nuts, and Bearings** that fit your plates are great in the case that one should fall off or break.



A lot of us carry an **extra set of wheels** in a different durometer in case we need to adjust to a skating surface on the fly.



**Fitted Mouth Guards** are one of the things that you really can't borrow from anyone else. It's always a good idea to keep an extra set in your gear bag.



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## 1-6 SKATE TOOLS

» Multi-tools are skate tools used for truck nuts, toes stops and wheel changes. It's good to keep one in your bag, especially if you are at an open skate.



## 1-7 WFTDA RULE BOOK

» You will have to take a test on these rules to finish tryouts. They are available online at <https://wftda.com/rules/20141201> or for print at <https://wftda.com/rules/wftda-rules.pdf>.

## 1-8 ATTIRE

» Dress to workout!

» You may be familiar with modern derby culture and have seen some really cool photos of fishnets and short skirts, but here at WIRG, we carry ourselves as athletes. Not to say that we don't take really awesome, edgy pictures or aren't hardcore, but we take practices seriously. Some of us get pretty serious about our images at bouts, but practices are work and rink rash hurts!

» You will SWEAT! We recommend capri athletic pants, short sleeves or tank tops (no spaghetti straps, please). Please respect the Roller Barn rules (contained in the registration packet) in terms of attire. Always remember we are family friendly.

» Wear a supportive sports bra.



# Required Safety Gear

## 2-1 HELMET

» It is required that you have at the very least a single certified, either CPSC or ASTM, helmet. We prefer that you buy an S1 helmet or something similar that is dual certified. We take concussions seriously, as should you. Here's a list of some helmet **types**:

- **Skate-only helmets** typically have a hard exterior shell and a protective inner liner made of expanded polypropylene (EPP).
- **Hockey helmets** - Some derby athletes also opt to wear hockey style helmets. These are also acceptable. Refer to rules 9.1.3.2 & 9.1.3.3 regarding face shields.



### » Other Acceptable Helmets

- **Skateboard** - A skateboard helmet has a round, bucket shape that covers the back of your head much more than a traditional bike helmet. You'll need this extra coverage in a backward fall. Skateboard helmets are designed to sustain a series of small impacts at lower speeds. Skateboard helmets don't need the aerodynamic design of a bicycle helmet or quite as many huge vents.
- **Bicycle** - Bicycle helmets have a very thin exterior shell typically made of ABS plastic with a protective liner made of stiff expanded polystyrene foam (EPS). Note that EPS is often mistakenly called "Styro-foam." They are two separate substances. A traditional bicycle helmet is designed to withstand one big impact (like a crash). Bicycle helmets are ok for boot camp but not recommended. By the time you start playing roller derby, you should be using a skate helmet.

## >> Our Favorite

As stated previously, here at WIRG, we take concussions seriously, and for that reason, we recommended the dual-certified **S1 Lifer** helmets.



**LIFER HELMET** SIZE RANGE: 21" - 23.5"

**BEST SELLER**

**CPSC CERTIFIED HELMETS**

Chargin' Tina  
LA Derby Dolls

**Deep Fit Design:**  
Fits low on the dome

**EPS**

**EPS Fusion Foam (hard foam)**

- Absorbs Impact
- Lightweight
- Deep Fit Design
- Fits Low On The Dome
- CPSC Certified (US Skate/Bike)
- ASTM Certified (Multiple Impact)
- CE EN 1078 (EUR Skate/Bike)

**(soft foam)**

**Sizing Liner (soft foam)**

- Soft Liner Soaks Up Sweat
- Rebounds Back To Original Shape
- Anti-Microbial / Moisture Wicking
- Replaceable Liners For A Perfect Fit

**CERTIFIED CPSC**

**ASTM F 1492**

SIZE RANGE: 21" - 23.5"

**S\*ONE HELMET CO.**

## >> What to AVOID

Skateboard helmets typically have an inner liner made of soft foam. This protective liner that is meant to slow the force of multiple, low to moderate impacts. None of these will be certified helmets, so stay away from these. Be aware, they sell these types of helmets at skate shops, but they are not protective enough for roller derby. If it has **terry cloth** on the inside instead of hard foam, these are **multi-impact helmets**, and again, please **stay away from these**.





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## 2-2 WRIST GUARDS

» The most important part of the wrist guard is that it **MUST** have a hard plastic shell or insert on the palm side of the guard. The rest is a matter of preference.

- Full glove cover the entire hand
- Strappy guards cover the palm only

» Our favorite brands:

- Atom, 187, Pro Design, Smith Scabs, Triple 8, TSG



## 2-3 ELBOW PADS

» Elbow pads must have a hard protective shell or inserts. They should provide basic protection from unexpected falls. You want to make sure they won't slip out of place if you fall on them. Also consider buying slightly smaller, as they will eventually stretch out.

» Our favorite brands:

- Atom, 187, Pro Design, Smith Scabs, Triple 8, TSG



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## 2-4 KNEE PADS

» One of the more important pieces of equipment is the Knee Pads. In boot camp, we will teach you how to fall – and use not just your kneepads, but also how to use the “squishy” parts of your body. That being said, THIS is where you want to spend your money in regards to protective gear. We fall a LOT in derby and having quality knee pads can save you in the long run. Some skaters prefer big squishy pads, some prefer low profile pads.

» Knee pads **MUST** have a hard plastic protective covering.

» Our favorite brands:

- 187 Derby PRO, Rector Fat Boy, Smith Scabs, TSG



## 2-5 QUAD SKATES (Referees can use Quad or Inline skates)

» Speed skates are what most derby players prefer – however you can use an artistic boot if you choose, but we do not recommend it. You can rent skates from the Roller Barn for \$5, but we highly recommend that you get a pair of your own.

**Speed skates** have a lower heel and generally a lower ankle, though some (such as Antiks) have a higher boot available. Speed skates also tend to have a slightly wider boot, though many brands are making “derby specific” boots that are designed to better accommodate a woman’s foot shape.

The skate that you buy should have **adjustable trucks and changeable toe stops**. If those options aren’t present, they probably are not good for derby.

» **How do you know what skate to buy?** That is a difficult question to answer – each skater has slightly different needs, just like each driver of a car has different needs. Don’t hesitate to ask questions from skate shops, derby skaters, in online forums to get feedback and info on your skates. Prices can range from \$150 for a basic set of speed skates to over \$700.

» **Things to consider**

- Leather stretching; You will work your boots in quite a bit doing derby. Try not to go too big.
- Low-cut vs. Mid-cut
  - Some of us like the extra ankle support, while some of us feel constricted by it.

» **Our favorite brands:**

- Riedell, Bont, Antik, Sure-Grip



## >> What to AVOID

- Skates bought from sports stores are usually not fit for derby. Stay away from brands like Chicago, Dominion, Pacer and Roller Derby.
- Artistic boots were not made for roller derby.

## >> WHEELS

>> Don't stress this too much right now. It won't mean much until you understand how your body "handles" skating. If you got a good pair of skates, the wheels that came with will likely suffice for the time being. We'll let you know if we think you should switch. But just so you have the information:

>> Hardness, or Durometer, of a wheel is measured on a scale of a number and then the letter "A".

- Lower number - Softer, "grippier"
- Higher number - Harder, "slicker"
- Outdoor wheels will usually be about 78A, hybrids around 84A and indoors from 87A to 103A+.

>> Size

- Wheels are measured for diameter (height) and width in millimeters. Normal heights can be anything from 59mm to 64mm. Normal widths can range from 39mm to 44 mm. Depending on skating style, these tiny difference can affect your stability and agility.

If we were forced to recommend any type of wheels for beginners, we'd probably suggest wider wheels with a lower durometer, but again, it will vary greatly from skater to skater.

If you will be skating outside, you must switch to outdoor or hybrid wheels. Don't ruin your indoor wheels outside.





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## 2-6 MOUTH GUARD

» Mouth guards come in a few varieties. Here is a breakdown of mouth guard types:

- “Boil and Bite” - To some extent personal fitting is possible, but they are still bulky and uncomfortable; hard to breath, drink and talk with.
- Dentist made - The advantage is the custom fitting. They are less bulky, but still not comfortable and hard to drink and talk with. The major disadvantage beside discomfort is that they can be expensive.



- SISU (formerly Pro Dent)- Small, easy to drink/talk/etc. Some skaters worry about concussion prevention with a thin mouth guard, but research suggests that mouth guards do not aid in concussion prevention.



» Things to consider

- If the packaging states that it insures any dental injury, make sure that you follow the instructions so that you can be reimbursed in case of injury.

» Our favorite brands

- SISU

**SISU™**  
MOUTH GUARDS

- ◆ WORLD'S BEST MOUTHGUARD
- ◆ AVAILABLE IN MANY COLORS
- ◆ ENDORSED BY WFTDA



EASY TO FIT



# Optional Gear

## OPTIONAL GEAR

All of the following gear is optional. From the rule book:

9.1.3 - Optional protective gear such as padded shorts, chin guards, knee or ankle support, shin guards, turtle shell bras, protective cups, tailbone protectors, non-form-fitting clear full-face shields, non-form-fitting clear half-face shields, and form-fitting face shields such as nose guards may be worn at the Skaters' discretion as long as they do not impair or interfere with the safety or play of other Skaters, support staff, or Officials.

9.1.3.1 - Chin guards, turtle shell bras, cups, tailbone protectors, shin guards, non-form-fitting clear full-face shields, non-form-fitting clear half-face shields, and form-fitting face shields such as nose guards may have a hard protective shell. No other optional protective gear may have hard protective shells.

9.1.3.2 - Cage-style face shields are not permitted.

9.1.3.3 - Non-form-fitting full- and half-face shields must be designed for use on the brand and type of helmet with which they are paired.

### 3-1 HIP/TAILBONE PADS

» As much as you will try not to, you will eventually fall on your butt. Several junior derby leagues require hip and tailbone protection – several adult skaters swear by them as well.

» Our favorite brands

- McDavid makes a padded derby short



### 3-2 CHEST PLATE/TURTLE SHELL BRA

» Our league has had skaters wear these in the past for various reasons. There is a more detailed guide to these optional items available online here:

[http://www.allsportprotection.com/How\\_to\\_Choose\\_Roller\\_Derby\\_Upper\\_Body\\_Armor\\_s/724.htm](http://www.allsportprotection.com/How_to_Choose_Roller_Derby_Upper_Body_Armor_s/724.htm), but also adhere to the WFTDA rules for this piece of gear.





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### 3-3 SHIN GUARDS

» Some skaters utilize shin guards (skaters can be kicky at first). They range in style and thickness, some resembling soccer shin guards and others hockey or umpire style.



### 3-4 FACE GUARD

» This is a fairly new piece as it was not legal in the previous rule sets. The keys are:

- May not be cage style
- Non-form fitting must be designed for your specific helmet
- May not impair or interfere with anyone's safety.



### 3-5 SPORTS GOGGLES

» Some skaters wear prescription sports goggles while some just opt to use their own glasses or contacts. You may want to consider using your extra pair of glasses during roller derby so that your everyday pair stays intact. This is a matter of preference.



### 3-6 KNEE GASKETS

» When your knee pads start to wear, knee gasket can offer extra padding and also help your knee pads to stay in place.



# Where to Buy

**Now that you have the information, where do you get stuff?**

## **4-1 FAST GIRL SKATES is a local (Seattle-based) Roller Derby Specialty Store**

They are one of our sponsors and they offer us a discount with the discount code Whidbey. This brick and mortar shop is owned and run by roller derby skaters. We absolutely recommend that you go in to get fitted for boots. They are very knowledgeable about derby gear so don't hesitate to ask all the questions. If the drive to Seattle is outside of your schedule, you can visit their online store at [FastGirlSkates.com](http://FastGirlSkates.com). No need to expedite shipping because they are very close and ship quickly.

## **4-2 OTHER ONLINE SPECIALTY DERBY STORES**

There are a few other derby specialty stores online.

- [SinCitySkates.com](http://SinCitySkates.com)
- [Rollergirl.ca](http://Rollergirl.ca)
- [BruisedBoutique.com](http://BruisedBoutique.com)
- [WickedSkateWear.com](http://WickedSkateWear.com)
- [RollerDerbyDepot.com](http://RollerDerbyDepot.com)
- [RollerGirlSkates.com](http://RollerGirlSkates.com)

## **4-3 FACEBOOK GROUPS**

A newer practice is to buy slightly used gear through Facebook. There are a few Roller Derby Gear Selling specific groups. Poke a roller girl and we can give you some of the groups' information.

## **4-4 ONLINE RETAILERS**

There are many sites that sell derby items that aren't specifically derby stores. You can Google any product to find out where they are. You can also try the manufacturer websites, such as [SureGrip.com](http://SureGrip.com), [Riedell.com](http://Riedell.com), [AtomWheels.com](http://AtomWheels.com), [RectorProtective.com](http://RectorProtective.com), etc.

## **4-5 LOCAL RINKS**

Skagit Skate is a roller rink in Burlington, WA that has a lot of open skates that you can attend to brush up on your skills. They also have a small selection of skate gear. They will fit and order skates for you as well. Check out their website at [SkagitSkate.com](http://SkagitSkate.com)

## **5-1 OTHER RESOURCES**

We could talk about gear all day, but we are definitely not the end all of discussion. Here are some other useful links.

Women's Flat Track Derby Association, information on all things gear  
[www.wftda.com/gear-up](http://www.wftda.com/gear-up)

Fresh Meat File

<http://www.rollergirl.ca/misc/roller-derby-fresh-meat-file.html>

Bruised Boutique, Wheels FAQ

[bruisedboutique.com/onlinestore/index.php?main\\_page=page&id=13](http://bruisedboutique.com/onlinestore/index.php?main_page=page&id=13)

Bruised Boutque, Freshmeat FAQ

[bruisedboutique.com/onlinestore/index.php?main\\_page=page&id=12](http://bruisedboutique.com/onlinestore/index.php?main_page=page&id=12)