

You CAN Skate Faster...Don't Let Your Skates Hold You Back!

If you are looking for a way to gain more power, create more speed, and experience maximum agility or just to truly be certain that your getting the most out of your skates, than consider having your skate blades aligned.

Being a specialty skates store, we have developed and pioneered many unique systems for enhancing the performance of our clients skates. One of the many things we have done is developed and refined the concept of "aligning skate blades"

However, even after more than twenty years and many thousands of 'blade alignments' we are still often asked "what the heck is a blade alignment?"

The simplest definition of a skate blade alignment is; the positioning of a skate blade on a boot in such a manner as to be relative to the foot and the biomechanics of the skaters body that is going to be wearing the skate; or in other words...positioning the skate blade on the boot to ensure that the skaters center of gravity falls directly over the blade.

Conceptually ...aligning blades on skates is the same as aligning the wheels on a car. When it's done correctly, the wheels (skate blades) track 'straight' and 'true'.

Skate blade alignment is by no means a new concept. In fact figure skaters have been aligning their blades for more than 100 years. Because of our extensive history with figure skating we simply used what we had been doing with figure skaters for so many years, and applied it to all skaters, including hockey and ringette players.

Positioning the blade to allow for the biomechanical differences in your feet and body takes your skate fitting to the next level. The correct alignment will allow for maximum edge control, which will support you in maintaining a more efficient stride, better turning ability, smother stopping, stronger cross overs,etc. and will enhance your overall skating performance.

Because your skates are a production line item, the most that can be expected from the skate manufacture is that the blade will be mounted in the middle of the outer soul of the skates. That however does not accommodate the majority of skaters who pronate or supinate. Being certain that your center of gravity falls directly over the blade means that you will have better control of both the inside and outside edge of your skate blades.

The classic picture of the young skater trying to skate while using only inside edges is something that is easily avoided by repositioning the blade on the boot. Subtle changes to blade positioning on all levels of skaters can translate into significant gains in performance on the ice.

Just some of the indications that you may need your skate blades aligned may include; difficulty turning one direction , struggling to hold eith an outside or inside edge, weak crossovers, chronic knee strain, groin pulls, sore lower back.

The manufacturing process is not perfect,so re-mounting a a skate blade mounted on a boot from the manufacturer can make a huge difference in skating performance.

In a perfect world blade alignment should be done with the skater, in person, in that way a perfect alignment can be attained.However, skates that have been worn for a period of time, will show signs of a poor blade alignment, so it can in fact be attained without the skater. It may not be ideal but significant performance improvements can be attained either way.

Having worked with every level of hockey player and figure skater, including Olympic gold medalists. Blade alignment is an integral part of the skate fitting process and will help you attain maximum performance results from your skates.

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About the Author

Patrick Francey is recognized internationally as a? skate fit and performance' expert. Pro Skate staff services all levels of hockey players and figure skaters, including many NHL and world class figure skaters. Visit them at <http://www.pro-skate.com>