

Get Rolling: Roller Skating Starter Guide

Quads, stops, and the derby wife who will change your life

Roller skating is having its biggest revival since the 1970s. Quad skates (four wheels, two axles) are back, rinks are packed, and outdoor skating parks have waiting lists. This guide gets you rolling safely on quad skates.

Gear and fit

- Quad skates have four wheels — two in the front, two in the back. More stable than inline for beginners.
- Skate sizing runs small. Try a size up from your shoe size and ensure the boot is snug with no heel lift.
- Pads matter: wrist guards, knee pads, and a helmet until you can stop reliably. Falling on skates is hard and fast.
- Outdoor wheels are wider and softer (78-85A hardness); indoor/rink wheels are harder and smaller (93-101A).

The foundational skills

- Learn to fall safely first: crouch low, arms out, fall to the side onto padded hip/knee, not backwards.
- Toe stop (the rubber plug at the front): drag it behind you to slow down. Not graceful, effective.
- T-stop: extend one foot behind the other at a T-angle and apply pressure. The elegant stop.
- Crossovers: crossing one skate over the other in turns — how you build speed through corners.

The community

- Derby culture: roller derby players are the friendliest, most inclusive community in action sports.
- Fresh Meat: the name for new derby recruits in training. Wear it with pride.
- Derby Wife: your rink partner, confidante, and the person who will drag you to every scrimmage.

Insider glossary

Quad skates — Four-wheel skates (2x2) — the classic roller skate style. More stable than inline for most beginners.

Derby Wife — Your roller derby partner-in-crime — a term of deep affection in the community.

Fresh Meat — A new derby recruit still learning the basics. A proud title, not an insult.

Jam — A two-minute period of play in roller derby — the core unit of the game.

In Quad We Trust — The highest expression of quad-skate loyalty.

Starter checklist

- Quad skates (properly fitted)
- Wrist guards
- Knee pads
- Helmet
- Outdoor or indoor wheels (depending on where you skate)
- Toe stops (usually pre-installed)

In Quad We Trust — roller skating tee at 15d0.com/shop/rollerskating/