



- Ever put your skates on ... only to find they're a completely different ride to last time?
- Does one of your skates have a death rattle and you're teamies are starting to give you grief about it?
- Do you usually ask your head ref about your skates when they're wonky ... but have little idea when they're not around?

## Learn how to be your own skate tech!

In this session (and accompanying handout), Better Bearings teach you all of the stuff you need to know to understand and maintain your own skates. Grab your skates, your skate tools and let's get into it! NOTE: all skate components are named in the diagram supplied overleaf and this info can vary, depending on the make and model of your skates.

Check your trucks. Trucks are like your steering car wheel – they allow your skates to turn. Look for fracture lines and cracks around the pivot pin and the ring that butts up against your cushions (or bushings). Make sure you check the under-side for cracks also, then check over your full plates for cracks and fracture lines. Check around the plate nuts that hold your plate and boot together, check the stopper housing area, near the pivot area and the whole length of the plate. Also look to see if the plate is twisted or bowed. Make sure all your mounting nuts are tight to the plate.

Check all 8 cushions (bushings). Cushions are urethane or rubber, which support the movement of your trucks. They are threaded on the king pin. These guys do wear out due to the pressure they are under when you turn your skate. Ideally they should look even and not bulging – or two 'round'. They should not have much room to play up and down the king pin. Check they are seated right in the truck and against the retainers. Cushions do go bad over time due to the material they are made of, they get hard and will effect your skating, particularly your turning and gliding.

Pivot cups. Pivot cups are a plug which lessen friction between your plate and pivot pin. Check that your pivot cups aren't broken, split or rubbing too much anywhere. They wear out fast, more so if you have never set up your action properly. They are usually made of brass, delrin or rubber. If they are sitting in the pivot hole funny they may be broken at the bottom. NOTE: If you change any of the above parts make sure you spend time getting the action in your trucks right by test skating and making adjustments to your king pin nut.

Checking your action and making adjustments. Your skate should never rattle, if you like a super loose action, instead of running really loose trucks, try softer cushions, otherwise you might break a king pin or truck. And there should always be at least one thread on your king pin visible so your king pin nut doesn't fall off. Lay your skate, wheels up in your lap, moving the truck side to side like they would move when skating. If they move a lot your action is described as loose, if its hard to move them with your hands, your action is described as hard.

Kingpins - The Kingpin is the large bolt that sticks out of your plates and runs through the center of your trucks – it provides a hanger for your trucks. Look over your kingpins, if your king pin top nut looks worn, replace it. Same with your king pin (especially, if you have been ramp skating and bashing them around you may have fractured them or bent them). Some king pins have nuts flush with the plate as well, check that these nuts are tight as they tend to vibrate lose when you skate. Never continue to skate cracking or cracked equipment; replace it as soon as you see it. If you leave it you will either have to replace your whole plate or it will break while skating and you could really hurt yourself or someone else.

Stoppers – used to stop or for toe work! Check that your stoppers can't move and are the right height, not wearing through the rubber stopper too much. Check that the stem is not bent or rusted into the plate. Check the little screw to make sure it's still there, tight and not rusted. Consider swapping the toe stops from one boot to the other for even wear; test the height before you decide to do a fully sick stop on them though!

Axles nuts – keep your wheels on. If you can even half tighten an axle nut on your skates, by hand, you have to replace them! This means that the nylon lock ring that keeps your nut from falling off during skating is DONE. Get a new one, they should always feel hard to do up and you should always need a tool. This is why people lose wheels during skating.

Boots. Check your boots regularly, in particular, look for boot sides coming away from the sole, serious wear in the toe box area and that your toe stop is not touching the bottom of the boot through the plate hole. Clean them up just like they were your fancy shoes or army boots, love them and polish them.

When purchasing a new boot, and before you skate them, use a good quality hockey tape (thick, made from cotton) to tape areas which may be damaged, ie toe box. Or buy a thick leather toe guard to protect the area. Better yet do both ... protect before you wear.

Laces. Check your laces, are they wearing through from knee slides? Better to change them now than half way through a game. If your toes feel like they're being strangled, try using two sets of laces, one near your toes laced loose and one starting half way up the boot to your ankle, which are tighter.

Bearings - Bearings are what makes the wheels go round, they are on of the most important parts of your skates. If you cease one or blow a bearing out you could fall, other people also could fall on the bits busting off your skate, and they will be pissed if its your unchecked gear that hurts them. If your bearings roll slowly, stop rolling right away or if you can hear of feel debris, clean or replace them. If they are getting rusty and they don't look any better after cleaning them replace them, that rust will spread to the rest of your skate and you will have to start to replace other bits. Rotate where the bearings were on your skates, like car tyres so they can wear evenly. GET Better Bearings How to clean your Bearings sheet or get onto [www.betterbearings.com.au](http://www.betterbearings.com.au) go to the blogs and print it out!

Wheels - are made of urethane and wear out fast. They also get harder as they get older. Check for flat spots and coning (bigger on one side than the other). Make sure you rotate them so they wear out evenly. Everyone wears out one or two wheels faster than the others due to how you skate and stop. Think about which wheels you use to stop and make sure you swap them with the ones that are not used as much.

Handy skate components to keep in your skate tech bag:

- Spare set of bearings.
- Bearing popper / press.
- Toe stops.
- Axle nuts.
- Extra truck for your plate (no they don't all fit each other).
- Spare laces.
- Tools that fit your Skate and plates, (Rolline vs Riedel vs Crazy are all a bit different).
- Spare wheels.
- Tape – electric and hockey (material) type tape.

Can't get your skates back together? Email us at [info@betterbearings.com.au](mailto:info@betterbearings.com.au)