



Traffic Flow and Ice Etiquette



Tips for Younger and/or Less Experienced Skaters

- **Keep moving.** It's not important to skate fast, but it is important to keep moving! If you feel like you're in the way, stay calm and skate in a direction away from the path of travel of other skaters. Trying to outrun a faster skater won't help you get out of the way. Go in a different direction.
- **Look both ways before you skate away from the door or wall.** Other skaters are moving and they may not expect you to skate away from the wall or doorway if you've stopped. Before you start to skate from a standstill, look to see if you'll be skating into someone else's path.
- **Understand the right-of-way rules.** Skaters are concentrating on their own lesson or practice. There are guidelines on what merits "right of way" over another person. See the next page for detailed explanations of these guidelines.
- **Learn where skaters are likely to spin.** Skaters typically spin in the center of the ice. Please practice your spins there rather than at the end or in a corner where more advanced skaters usually jump.
- **Learn where skaters are likely to jump.** Talk to your coach about where jumps are usually placed on the ice surface. Learn where the "lutz corner" is and where edge or toe jumps typically run through. Avoid standing or spinning in these areas.
- **Look behind you when skating backwards.** Make sure no one is behind you (or fallen) in your path.
- **Skate on the whole ice surface.** Trying to stay out of the way by skating at the end of the rink or in a corner for an extended period of time is not helpful. It prevents other skaters from passing through that space. Please use the whole surface and move around every few minutes so that you're not in the same place. When your coach suggests practicing on free skating sessions, it means he or she believes you have the skills to skate on the whole ice!
- **Chit chat in safe spaces.** Skaters looking for encouragement or direction from a parent should do so off the ice. When skaters stop on the ice and begin to communicate with someone off the ice, they are significantly less aware of their surroundings and put both themselves and others at risk.
- **Courtesy is contagious.** A little courtesy goes a long way: smile when someone catches your eye. Thank someone for letting you go ahead. If there's a conflict, say you're sorry. It doesn't matter whose fault it was, what's more important is to respect the other skater.



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Tips for ALL Skaters

1) Look out for the people who aren't looking out for you (and give them extra space)

Some circumstances when another skater might not be looking out for you:

- **Programs** - It's more difficult to see potential collisions when performing difficult choreography and focusing on music. Skaters should learn which music goes with which skater and give skaters extra space when they are practicing their programs. After some time, it's possible to learn some of the patterns in others' programs to predict their path of travel.
- **Lessons** - A skater's attention is divided when he/she is in a lesson. Skaters focus on their coach when their view would otherwise be expanded across the entire ice surface.
- **Harness** - When a lesson uses the harness, skaters should try to avoid that corner. The coach and skater cannot maneuver together quickly, or veer far from the harness line.
- **Pairs/Teams** - A skater's attention is divided when skaters practice pairs or dance in teams. It is more difficult for couples to stop or change directions quickly.
- **Spins** - You can't see a thing when you're spinning. Never skate close to a spinning skater - even if your music is playing (see next point about right-of-way). Always give spinners enough space to change positions into a camel spin (e.g., don't skate close to an upright spin because the skater may change positions and extend his/her leg at any point).
- **Having a bad day or generally clueless.** Anytime a skater isn't actively looking around at traffic flow on the ice, they should be given more space. These phenomena span all ages and abilities.

2) Think of safety first, then right-of-way. Right-of-way goes to skaters in the following order:

- **Spins** - Spinning skaters are unable to see other skaters.
- **Programs** - Skaters should be mindful of the person running their program and try to stay out of their way. However, every skater on the ice, whether their program music is playing or not, is responsible for skating safely. Sometimes younger skaters follow their program pattern directly into (or very near) someone else's camel spin because they believe they have the "right-of-way." Or, equally unsafe, more advanced skaters sometimes barrel through a program when there are too many little ones who are unable to get out of the way.
- **Lessons** - After programs and spins, skaters in lessons should be given the right-of-way to help make lessons as productive as possible. When a lesson involves use of the harness, other skaters should try to avoid that corner as the coach and skater cannot maneuver together quickly or veer far from the harness line.

2) Communicate with and teach inexperienced skaters. If someone is in your way, simply asking them to move is the quickest, safest and friendliest way to make space on the ice. Younger or inexperienced skaters often don't know they are in the way. If an advanced skater tells them, for example, what jump they're working on and what direction they'll be coming from, the inexperienced skater will (a) get out of the way and (b) learn a bit about traffic flow. This is much more effective than creating fear and bad energy by skating dangerously close to another person. Everyone is responsible for making the ice a safe space. Friendly advice is usually very well received.