

Roller Ski Equipment

Nordiq Canada



Skate, classic or combi?

It is recommended that beginner skiers start on skate rollerskis and once they become comfortable on these skis progress to classic rollerskis. Skate rollerskis are much more maneuverable and the boots more stable compared to classic rollerskis and boots. This makes it much easier to learn on skate rollerskis.



Several manufacturers make decent combi skis, but in general classic and skate rollerskis are different enough that the compromise in making a combi results in a product not optimally suited for either technique. Length (skate skis can be shorter), wheel thickness (skate skis have much narrower wheels), balance point for binding placement (slightly further back for classic) all make for important differences between skate and classic rollerskis.

Wheel Speed: Wheel choice needs to suit where athletes will be rollerskiing and their purpose. Synthetic wheels are generally harder and faster while rubber wheels are generally softer and slower. But beyond those generalisations, wheel manufacturers can usually provide a variety of wheel speeds, mostly by offering options of different wheel material densities. When beginning it is recommended to simply purchase mid-range wheel speeds but as athletes progress we recommend that they purchase additional wheels of different speeds to simulate the same reality as skiing on snow in the winter: it's never the same and athletes need to learn how to ski in various conditions. Club coaches and local ski shops should be able to help you make the correct choices for all these decisions.

Depending on where you ski most and the type of wheel you use, wheels can wear relatively fast. It's not uncommon to replace all four skating wheels every year. Classic wheels wear a lot less, but also need replacing occasionally. It's OK to change them before they get to that...:



Other Rollerski Equipment Considerations

- **Tips:** Poles do not grip on the pavement as well as they do on snow. Special carbide pole tips are required to help correct this problem. Coaches should ensure that the pole tip and handles are correctly aligned and sharp, and that the athlete plants their pole so that the tip digs in properly. When the skier returns to skiing on snow, they should be aware that they might have to adjust their pole action to achieve proper grip with pole tips. At the Start of the season, athletes should avoid excessive double poling and build up volume slowly. The hard impact of poling on pavement can lead to elbow and wrist injuries.
- **Boots:** Boots with a strong cuff and stiff soles are needed to stake rollerski effectively. Many young skiers often attempt to rollerski with combi boots that are too soft and flexible which decreases stability and increases the likelihood of a fall. However, for beginner classic rollerskiers, combi boots offer increased support compared to regular classic boots and can help instill confidence in young athletes.
- **Fenders:** Having fenders installed on rollerskis make a huge difference in the comfort of skiing in wet conditions. Fenders help keep boots dry and in relatively good condition when rollerskiing.
- **Safety Gear:** All rollerskiers must attend practices with a helmet, gloves and a safety vest or bright colored shirt. Beginner skiers may also want to use elbow and knee pads.(see Nordiq Canada [roller ski policy](#)).

Roller Ski maintenance

Binding screws do come loose and one does not want the roller ski and binding to separate while skiing. If you notice rattling and vibration noise as you roll down the highway, it could likely be that one or many of your binding screws have come loose. To repair the binding, fill the hole with glue before tightening the screw. Epoxy also works well, you can even buy specialized epoxy for adhering metal to metal. If the roller skis are wood, white glue works great.

Wheel axle nuts do come loose. Athletes should check their wheel nuts regularly. Use thread locker such as "loctite" or lock nuts if it is a persistent problem. If you find the ratchet is slipping on classic roller skis, it may be that the wheel nuts have worked loose. Wheel nuts do get damaged from scraping on pavement. If they are old, you may want to consider buying replacements so you can use a wrench to effectively tighten them.

Sharpen your tips often. It is much easier to sharpen a tip that is not worn down too much. Roller ski training will be more effective and less frustrating with sharp tips. Use a diamond file and try to maintain the angles on the tips. To speed up the sharpening process you can use a

bench top tile cutter or a dremel tool (more portable) with a rotating diamond blade. This is best done by briefly and gently pressing the tip on the side of the diamond blade.



Wheels wear down. Check your wheels for wear often and replace when you start to see cracks and holes appear in the wheel. By continuing to ski on wheels with these defects you are endangering yourself as the wheel can come apart suddenly while during a rollerski session.

When it is really hot outside, avoid using your roller skis in the heat of the day. Occasionally the rubber on roller ski wheels will delaminate on super hot summer days.

Coaches' repair kit. Coaches should advise athletes to bring extra tips, to all practice (they can be stored in a drink belt). Coaches can carry glue sticks and a lighter to replace broken tips. At the team van coaches should carry equipment to tighten and replace rollerski parts in case bolts have loosen before the ski.