

Ask Mr. Edge

September 2019

Sharpen Your Blades Regularly and Skate Safely

One of the most often asked questions I receive is about skate sharpening. How often a blade should be sharpened, how long should it be before the next sharpening, and how to decide when it's time to sharpen them.

Even the best of skaters can have a bad accident if their blades are not sharpened regularly. Blades can dull gradually to very quickly depending on how often one skates. So why take a chance on that happening to yourself. Always be sure and have your blades sharpened by a competent skate sharpener.

A good blade sharpening begins with the individual who does the sharpening, and thus figure skaters will sometimes travel great distances to have their blades sharpened. To be a good blade sharpener requires a keen eye for detail, steady hands, and many hours of practice on a machine. Sometimes it can take several months or more for an individual to perfect the technique to an acceptable level of consistent quality.

Factors Affecting Blade Sharpening

- Ice conditions—hard, medium, or soft ice
- Skating level—beginner, intermediate, or advanced
- Skating discipline—dance, freestyle, recreational, or synchro
- Number of hours per week on the ice
- Carbon or stainless steel blades—stainless holds an edge much longer
- Weight of skater

How Often Blades Should Be Sharpened

Recreational indoor skaters; skating a couple hours a week can go as long as 6-8 weeks before needing their skates sharpened again. Outdoor skaters won't be as lucky and will need a sharpening after about 3-4 hours of skating. Competitive skaters should have their skates sharpened at least once a month.

Advantages of a Good Blade Sharpening

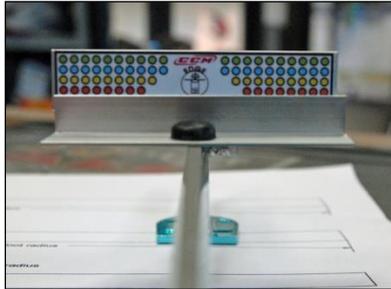
Level edges:

- Provide an identical feel for the ice no matter which edge the skater is on
- Make it easier to spin and maneuver on the ice
- Facilitate landing jumps correctly and on the proper edge

Sharp edges:

- Increase edge bite (grip) in the ice
- Increase speed with less effort
- Make edge jumps easier
- Allow for deeper knee bends without slipping

After sharpening, it is best to check the squareness of the blade edges with one of the many gauges made specifically for this purpose.



Sharpening blades on a regular basis will provide a skater with many hours of enjoyment and not having to worry about slipping, falling and breaking something. It will allow for a smoother transition while on the ice while providing a sense of security as well.

Wishing everyone the best for this coming season.....

Mr. Edge