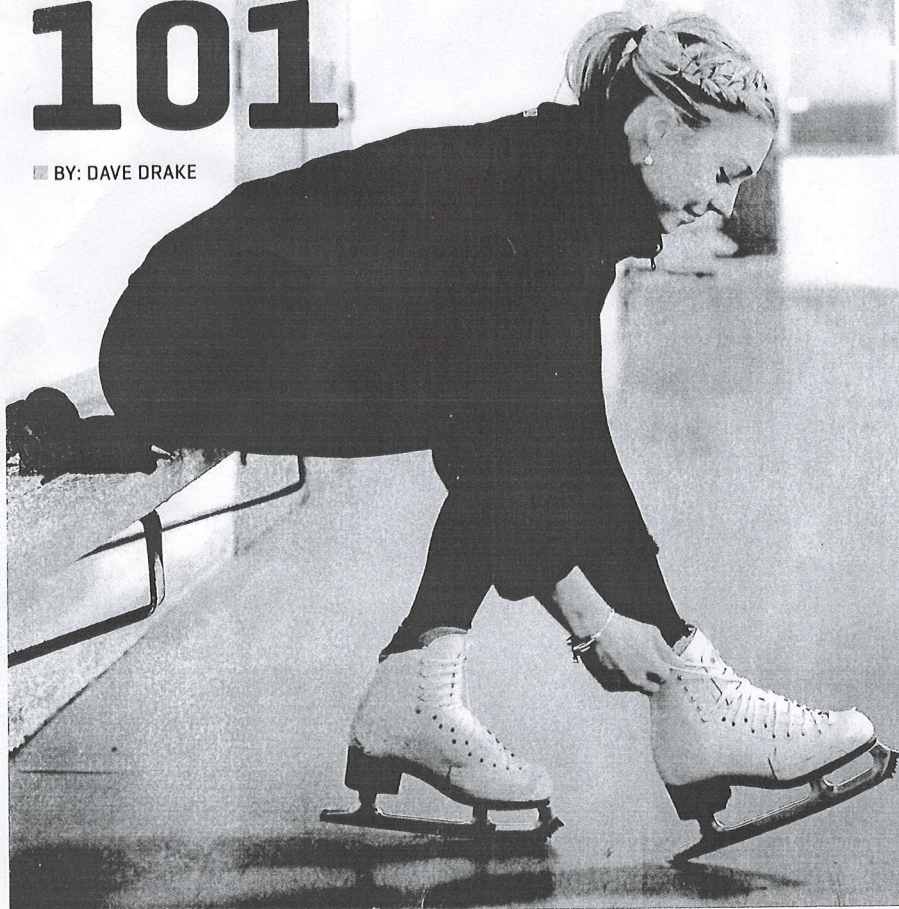


# BUYING FIGURE SKATES 101

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## General Skate Fitting

- 1 Loosen the laces and pull the tongue all the way forward.
- 2 Insert foot and push the toe as far as possible to the front of the boot while keeping the heel down.
- 3 Check for a snug finger width (approximately  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch) behind the heel. Any more can cause the skate to buckle and crease at the ankle. For skaters who have stopped growing, allow no more than a pencil width, or as snug as comfortably possible.
- 4 Tie firmly, stand and bend at the knees to see if the skate bulges out around the ankle area. If there is bulging, the skate may not be tied tight enough or the skate might be too wide.
- 5 If it is tight across the toes, go wider not longer.
- 6 Ask questions about how they feel, remember comfort is priority. Make sure skater stands with full weight on the skates and is able to walk on a rubber mat to get a good feel for them.

## For the Experienced Skater

Skaters should plan to try new skates on at least 2 to 3 weeks before the season starts and more than once in order to ensure they find the right skates for their unique needs. Determine whether current skates are worn down or too small. If worn down, it may be time to upgrade to a higher model to give the skater the required support for their skating level. If outgrown, it may or may not be time to go to the next level of boot depending on the size and strength of the skater. Talk with your skate shop professional about what they recommend. The process of fitting skates is different for everyone and can take an hour, or longer, to get the right fit. You should not feel pressured to buy what is on hand. If it's not what you want, ask to have it ordered in. Do research on your own through the manufacturer's websites and talking with your coaches.

## For the New Skater

Ask coaches or experienced skaters where to find good quality figure skates. Be prepared to spend at least \$100.00 on new skates. You really do get what you pay for and it makes quite a difference in the level of support and comfort of the skater. Look for skates with "screwed on" blades rather than blades that are "riveted on". Contrary to what some believe, skates with plastic soles work fine for a beginner. Used skates can be an affordable option, but be careful to ensure that they are not too worn down which will affect the performance and comfort for the first time skater. Take a good look at the overall condition of the skates including the blades and talk to your coach before making your purchase. If the skater is feeling pain it is often due to poor quality or incorrect size of skate. Choose a skate that is comfortable with a good blade and firm support. If a skater's feet are comfortable, skating is way more fun!