



THE DERBY SHOP

ROOKIE GUIDE



A hit-er-hard welcome to roller derby from THE Derby Shop, owned and run by Dirty Job. We love derby, good gear and the people who make this amazing sport what it is!

One of the more difficult aspects of being a Rookie is trying to figure out what exactly is required in terms of gear. You need skates, but if you're like most beginners, you feel like you may as well be rolling around on spaceships. There's a lot of information online, but it can be difficult to figure out what's coming from a reputable source and it would be a bit of an understatement to say that opinions are both strong and divergent in the area of gear. So, to help those of us who are new sort it all out, THE Derby Shop will help you. And you are always welcome to call or email with questions or requests. Don't forget, there are no stupid questions!

Before we're gonna talk about boots, trucks, bearings or wheels, we really want to go over your "expensive parts": your knees and your head. They break easy and are hard to repair! So, before anything else, get really good knee pads and a certified helmet.

KNEES:

You fall on your knees all the time in roller derby, sometimes intentionally other times unexpectedly and often with a lot of force. Cheap recreational-grade knee pads used for inline skating are **NOT** sufficient for roller derby.

Our advice is to get the best, cushiest pads you can afford and learn to skate with them from the very beginning. You will greatly extend your derby career and minimize the chances of knee injury (one of the most common injuries we see, besides bruises...).

Lower-end knee pads with less padding (starting at €50,-) offer sufficient protection for roller derby – but **ONLY** sufficient protection. These pads are good for: rookies on a budget, refs, and tiny, light weight skaters. If you are not one of these people (and even if you are), please consider better knee pads with thick, good quality padding.

HELMETS:

Next up, your head. Your helmet should fit snugly but not painfully. It should sit low on your forehead near your eyebrows and should not slip around.

A good and certified helmet is not necessarily the most expensive helmet. Certified, multi-impact helmets start at €45,-. We strongly advise against buying second hand helmets. There is always the risk something already happened with that helmet even though no damage is visible. And taking risks like that with your head, we feel, is just a really bad plan.

SKATES:

When it comes to buying your very first pair of skates for derby, the options can seem about as overwhelming as the price tag. You may be tempted to simply dust off those Mickey Mouse skates from years ago, or go for the cheapest skate you can find, just to see if you like it. But we warn that very cheap skates can have parts that you cannot remove to replace, like a bolt-on toe stop. It's also far more likely that the plate will crack or the boot will pull away from the plate entirely. And these skates usually give no support or control whatsoever and with that can ruin the fun you have in skating.

If you don't have a lot to spend, there are some lower-end derby skates that are a good place to start. In the €150,- to €250,- range there is already quite some choice. While they only come in whole sizes, and are often made of cheaper vinyl, fit is the most important in this range. The shape of the boot needs to match the shape of your foot.

A mid-level skate package will run between €300,- and €500,-. Boots will run in half sizes and the (fake-)leather will be of good quality. These skates will give you support, control and will last a lot longer. We consider the mid level package to be athletic gear, while the less expensive skates are more recreational in nature, while still suitable for your first strides on the derby track.



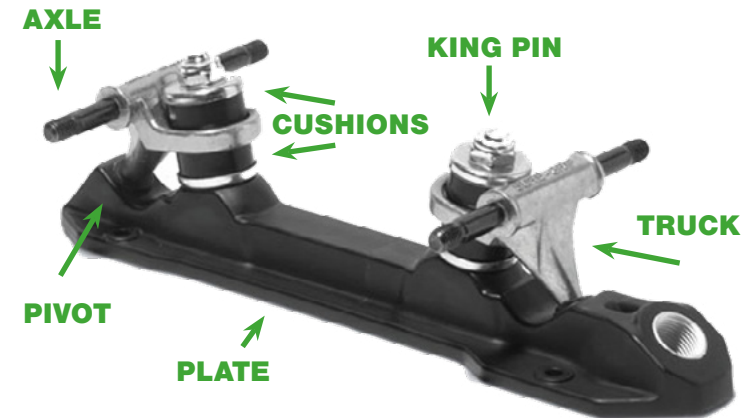
When you're trying on skates at the shop, expect that they will feel very different from your sneakers. The break-in process of a skate boot is similar to breaking in combat boots, and you can expect a little pain, beginner and mid-level boot alike. A good fitting boot will eventually feel like an extension of your leg and they should be very snug but not painful when you're standing in them. You'll know that your boots fits properly if you can stand on your toe stops without feeling lift in your heel. You can expect vinyl boots to be more comfortable right off the bat, but be aware that any cushioning inside the boot will break down over time and give you more space in that area.

WHEELS:

All beginner derby skates at TDS come with decent beginner wheels. Don't worry about those wheels when you buy your first skates; you will develop a preference for a type of wheel over time. For now your beginner wheels will be fine! Also we at TDS we will switch out the wheels on your beginner skate if we feel it would benefit you more.

PLATES:

When it comes to plates on entry-level, there is not much choice. Most come with the same type of nylon plate, that is light-weight and affordable.



TOE STOPS:

What you should pay attention to is the toe stops. Black toe stops leave marks and are not allowed at most venues. Buy a set of good, non-marking toe stops with your first skates so you will be ok skating any floor you encounter.

ELBOW & WRIST:

Wrist guards take a lot of abuse in roller derby, they wear fast. Always look for wrist guards that have plastic inserts on the top and bottom of the hand for proper protection of the wrist joint. They need to fit snugly and comfortably.

Elbow pads must fit snug too. The amount of padding they offer is secondary to fit. It is unlikely that you will fall on your elbows very often, but if you do, they need to stay in place to cushion the impact. Both can be bought second hand or cheap, as long as they are fitting properly and stay in place when you use them.

