

## Figure Skating



Figure skating requires many difficult skills to be executed properly. Skating forward and backward in all directions, jumps, spins, footwork, speed, edges, and flexibility, and all of these skills choreographed to music. Done perfectly figure skating is an amazing sport to watch and to be part of.

Most SO figure skaters are performing at a very low level. Even many of the best SO athletes can't execute double or triple jumps, skate with speed and have the flexibility to execute spins properly. The vast majority of SO figure skaters have low skating skills and low flexibility that limits everything they do. As a result, SO performances are slow and simple with very little degree of difficulty. This is not surprising considering the difficulties associated with this sport and the low training time of most SO athletes (1 hour per week).

SO competitions require figure skaters to prepare a routine to music with specific technical elements. A lot of ice (practice) time is spent preparing athletes' programs and develop required skating elements. Learning basic skating skills is often a secondary priority for many SO coaches as they often run out of time to prepare athletes for competitions. Each basic figure skating skill; forward skating, backward skating, cross-over forward and backward, jumps, spins, foot work, and flexibility demands hours (20-hour) of practice. Extra skating opportunities such as public ice sessions, roller-skating and increased sessions 2 to 3 times per week will need to be considered for basic skill acquisition.



In-line figure skating has been shown to be a possible alternative when ice sessions (at SO programs and public skating) are impossible to increase. In-line skating in a gymnasium or outside is a tool to develop SO figure skaters basic skating skills.

Skills required in figure skating are listed in the FS basic skill (next page). These sheets can be used as a guide, and when all skills are marked “yes”, figure skaters have learned all basic skills and are ready for more advanced intermediate skills.

**Guidelines for using the skill sheet for figure skating**

1. Skating skills are first introduced with skating forward.
2. When this is acquired (it can take 20 hours or more), it is then time to start on skating backward skills. Cross-over skills would eventually follow.
3. Follow each step of the skill sheet (next page) until all basic skills are acquired. Progress will be mostly dependent on how many focused training sessions an athlete does.

### Figure Skating Basic Skills

On ice

<b>Basic Skills: Skating forward And backward</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Sub Skills			
Skating forward 1 length	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Skating backward 1 length	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Skating forward less than 2 sec. from blue line to blue line	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Skating Backward less than 3 sec. blue line to blue line	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Basic Skill: Crossovers</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Sub Skills			
Walking crossovers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Hockey circle ½ lap On one skate (left and right)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Skating 3 laps with Crossovers CW and CCW	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Basic Skill: Jumps (180 °)</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Sub Skills			
Waltz jump 180 °	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Landing on 1 foot	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Basic Skills: Spin and Flexibility</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Basic one-foot forward spin	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Spiral	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

**When athletes achieve all “YES”, they have acquired basic skills.  
Expectations are critical to skill acquisition**

## **20-hour acquisition**

### **Skill Breakdown: Examples of priority elements to focus on during practice**

#### **Spend time on each one until acquired**

1. Skating Forward: Balance – Ankle, knee, and hip alignment – Arm motion
2. Crossovers: Balance – Ankle alignment – Circle glide – Edges –
3. Skating backward: Glide in straight line – Edges – Cross over –
4. Jumps: Take off – Air awareness and spins – Landing
5. Spins: Set up – Arm and feet position – Blade action – Coming out
6. Speed: Acceleration – Strides – Length of pushes
7. Flexibility: Amplitude of movement – Artistic impression –
8. Choreography: Synchronization – Artistic impression

If attaining more frequency of ice times is impossible, SO figure skaters can acquire all basic skills using in-line figure skating in a gymnasium, on a hard surface or even at home.



#### **Home skill practice using IN-LINE skates:**

The same skills can be practiced on in-line at home. Practice as many times as possible.

Practice only one skill at a time for 20 hours, we suggest the following order:

- 1. 20-hour Forward Skating**
- 2. 20-hour Forward Cross-overs**
- 3. 20-hour Backward Skating**
- 4. 20-hour Backward Cross-overs**
- 5. 20-hour Jumps**
- 6. 20-hour: Spins and Balance skills**

**Figure Skating Example: Focused Basic Skills Session on ice or on in-line (1 hour)**

**Practice only one skill at a time: Example “Forward cross-overs”**  
(15' = 15 minutes)

15' Warm up and stretching (before skating)

5' Skating warm up

20' Cross-over **(with demonstrations and video, slow down the demonstration when introducing a new skill, use hands to guide movements when necessary)**

- Holding boards, lean left on left leg keeping ankle straight (this is a stationary exercise)
- Switch to right leg
- Repeat above with as much lean as possible
- Glide on two skates around corner using left edges
- Glide on left leg edge around corner (using a partner for balance)
- Same as above but switch leg

10' Aerobic training (5 intervals of 1 minute with 1 minute rest in between)

20' Cross-over **(with demonstrations and video, slow down the demonstration when introducing a new skill)**

- Holding boards, lean on left edges on both skates and execute cross overs always landing on left edges
- Using circle hockey face off – Gliding on left for half lap – switch to right
- Cross-over hold hand on the circle (leaning inside)
- Cross-over following the circle

**Don't worry about crossover quality, simply do as many repetitions as possible using edges.**

**Conclusion:**

Figure skating is the most complex SO sport to learn. It has the most basic skill elements to acquire before athletes can perform this sport properly. Using the skill sheet is an excellent way to learn basic skills and encourage athletes to practice, however unless many hours per week of focused skill acquisition is done on the ice, it will take years before a few skills are acquired. Using in-line figure skating is possibly the only solution for SO figure skaters apart from joining a generic (usually expensive) club to increase training time and acquire basic skills.

**Lesson Plan**  
**Basic Skill Acquisition Program**  
(weekly or monthly)

Sport \_\_\_\_\_ Athlete Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Program Expectations**

**1- Weekly Practice** (attend all practices)

Day (S) \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

Location \_\_\_\_\_

“What the group is working on”:

**2- Club Fit** 100% attendance (Including Functional Testing exercises)

Day \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

Location \_\_\_\_\_

“What you need to concentrate on”:

**3- Basic Skill Development Homework** (4 times per week - 1 hour per day)

Skill \_\_\_\_\_

“Individual Home Practice Objectives”