

# Sharpening Your Speed Skates



## Speed Skating Canada

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## EQUIPMENT NEEDED:

### 1. SKATE SHAPENING JIG

- ❖ A variety of jigs are available
- ❖ Before purchasing ensure the jig will fit the make and height of your boot.

### 2. STONES

- ❖ Sharpening and Burr Stones are available in a number of sizes and materials
- ❖ Most stones have a coarse side and a fine side
- ❖ Burr Removers can be Carbide, Diamond, Razor Blades, whetstones, etc.
- ❖ Each will result in a different finish to your blades. Most cost efficient and easiest to use is the whetstone.

### 3. STONE LUBRICANT

- ❖ By using a lubricant, it will assist in keeping the stone free from unwanted particles while sharpening.
- ❖ Use water for Diamond Stones
- ❖ Baby oil or fine machine oil for whetstones
- ❖ For safety do not use lubricants in aerosol cans

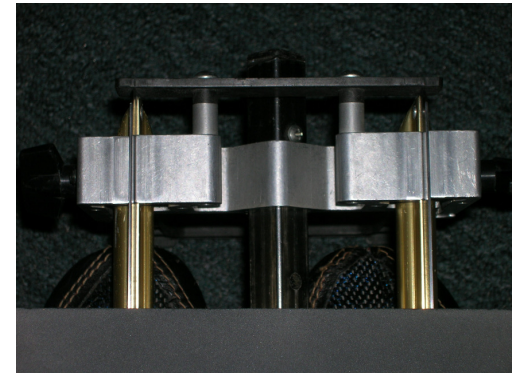
## MAINTENANCE TIPS FOR STONES

- ❖ All stones should be kept clean so steel shavings and oils don't build up on the stone.
- ❖ Use Oil to clean the stone. Spread Oil evenly with a toothbrush.
- ❖ The stone has become worn when valleys appear on its cutting edge. A stone can be re-surfaced by grinding flat on a grindstone or concrete block.

## SHARPENING:

### 1. SETTING UP YOUR SKATES

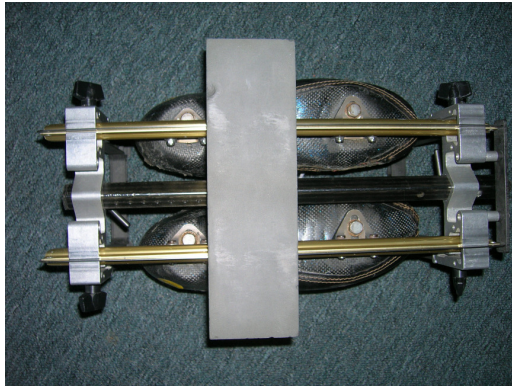
- ❖ Always try to sharpen your skates in the same jig with the same set-up each time.
- ❖ Tighten wing nuts so that the jaws of the jig are gripping the blades and blades are resting firmly on the support base.



- ❖ Ensure that both blades are parallel in jig and neither is too far forward or back. Using a straight edge at the front of the jig can do this.
- ❖ When tightening wing nuts, tighten until snug. Do not over tighten or you may bend the blades.
- ❖ A simple check to see if the blades are set correctly is to use the fine side of the whetstone and gently run it across the top of the blades. A thin etch mark should be seen completely across the blades indicating they are level. Do this to ensure the blades will be worn down equally.

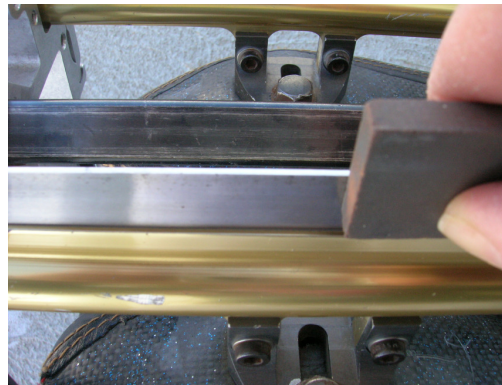
## 2. GRINDING PROCESS

- ❖ With sharpening you want to grind down the blades until a slight lip called a Burr is created on each side of the blade. Ideally the same amount of burr should be found the entire length of the blade. Try to cover the entire blade equally and with the same amount of pressure along the entire length of the blade. For this reason it is recommended to sharpen standing up.



- ❖ Your large sharpening stone should be held with one hand on each side. Hold the stone between index and thumb for best results.
- ❖ Keep the stone perpendicular to the blades at all times when sharpening.
- ❖ The beginner is advised to make five strokes in one direction and then five in the other, sliding the stone diagonally from left to right. Finish with five strokes forward and back. These straight strokes will assist in removing crosshatch marks and improve polishing time.

- ❖ Use your fingernails to detect burr. Your fingernails will click on the tiny lip of steel.
- ❖ To remove burr place the burr stone on the blade. The stone should remain flat on the steel of the blade. Do not place the burrstone on the runner of the tube as this will tilt the stone and remove the edge.



- ❖ Once burr is removed from all four edges you want to go back over your skates with the fine side of your cutting stone. This will remove any crosshatch marks as well as any top burr that may have moved to the crest of the blade.
- ❖ Polishing continues with a sequence of straight strokes followed by de-burring until there is no side burr and no top burr. This could take several polishing and de-burring cycles. Once completed your skates are sharp and ready for speed!!!

## CHECKING THE ROCKER

- ❖ The rocker of the skate is the amount that the blade deviates from being completely flat. A short track rocker needs to be a bit “rounder” than a long track rocker due to sharper cornering.
- ❖ If you hold skates together by the blades you will notice a higher contact point near the midline of the blade. Only one high point should be detectable and is located under the center of gravity of the skater when in basic skating position.

## TIPS FOR KEEPING SKATES SHARP:

- ❖ Dry the blades after use. It is best to wrap your blades in a dry cloth, skate covers (knit or cloth), or tube sock. Leaving the skates in your guards can trap in moisture.
- ❖ Walk to the skate surface with leather or plastic guards on. Make sure you wipe out the inside of these guards at the end of each practice.
- ❖ Do a quick check of your blades, bolts, and boots before and after each practice or race.
- ❖ Sharpen your skates often to keep them in good condition.
- ❖ Prior to storing skates apply a small amount of oil to keep the blades moisture and rust free.