



SPORT

lace up & let go

YOGA HELPS SKATERS BE MORE FLEXIBLE AND GRACEFUL ON THE ICE.

ICE-SKATING CAN SOMETIMES resemble asana-on-ice, and the sport's precise balancing act can be improved by yoga practice. Skating requires strong and sensitive stabilizers, the tiny muscles around the hips, knees, and ankles that standing yoga postures, in particular, enhance. Recreational skaters who lace up a few times a year can gain confidence and help avoid injury through yoga, says Angela Duffy, a yoga teacher and skating coach in Edmonton, Canada, due to the balance, coordination, and strength gained through regular practice.

Elite skaters and 2014 Winter Olympics hopefuls are also incorporating yoga into their training regimens. Speed skater Jessica Smith practices Bikram Yoga to achieve "flexibility while getting a workout in." She finds that Triangle and Bow poses "open up the hips and hamstrings and are great for speed skating." Figure skater Gracie Gold also credits Bikram Yoga with increasing her flexibility for spins and spirals and her core

strength for landing jumps. But perhaps most importantly, she says, yoga has taught her how to breathe to manage her adrenaline.

"Figure skating is a sport of relaxed focus," says Gold. "Yoga teaches body awareness and how to stay in the moment, which have been invaluable to my skating career." ANNA CIPOLLONE

boot beta

Rented skate boots are typically ill-fitting—too tight or too loose. Loose boots can lead to ankle buckling and injury. But tight boots often make for the dreaded "lace bite" (soreness on the top of the feet). Try inserting a tongue pad, and make sure to flex and point feet after skating to address soreness.

focus + balance

Warm up and cool down with poses from yoga teacher and skating coach Angela Duffy.

TREE

Tree teaches balance, engages core, and stills the mind. Root down through your left foot, lift the right knee, and press sole of foot into thigh with hands at heart center.



TRIANGLE

Triangle opens hips and strengthens ankles. Straighten your right leg, reach right arm forward, and bring hand to ground or block. Reach left fingertips up.



PIGEON

Take a long Pigeon Pose after skating to open your hips, stretch hamstrings, relieve lumbar tension, and prevent soreness.

