



Skate Function Education Resource

Just as a driver needs to learn how to drive a car, a skater must learn how to properly use their equipment. Coaches should not assume that their skaters, regardless of their skating level or capability, automatically understand how to operate their skates. The following information includes some general assessments, and developmental exercises to ensure that the skater is using the equipment correctly and activating the right muscles to perform.

1. Ankle bend without the use of the skate tongue

Off the ice, have the skater bend and hold their knees over the toe pick of their boots while skate hooks are unlaced. Show them that the muscles that are now activated are the muscles needed to bend. With this exercise, the skater will develop the muscle activation needed and not rely completely on their equipment to support them. Please note this drill should only be done off-ice as it is too unstable and unsafe on ice.



Photos: Skater can feel the muscles needed to maintain posture while bending knees over toe box.



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2. Balancing on one foot off-ice

Can the skater reproduce a one-foot glide off the ice standing still? This is a bit difficult to do standing still but all skaters should be able to hold this position for a few seconds. If they are struggling, check the fit of the skate, foot posture, or blade alignment. Advanced skaters should be able to hold their landing or take-off position with the knee in line with their toe pick. If they struggle off the ice, they rely on their skates to compensate.





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3. Ankle and Foot Strength = Good Edge Control

Skaters can learn to use the muscles of the ankle and foot instead of allowing the stiffness of the boot to control the edges.



4. Landing Softly

Softer jump landings will engage the right muscles to handle shock from impact load more efficiently and not wear out the equipment prematurely. Soft landings come from good core, posture, and hip muscles as well as full ankle mobility and strength.

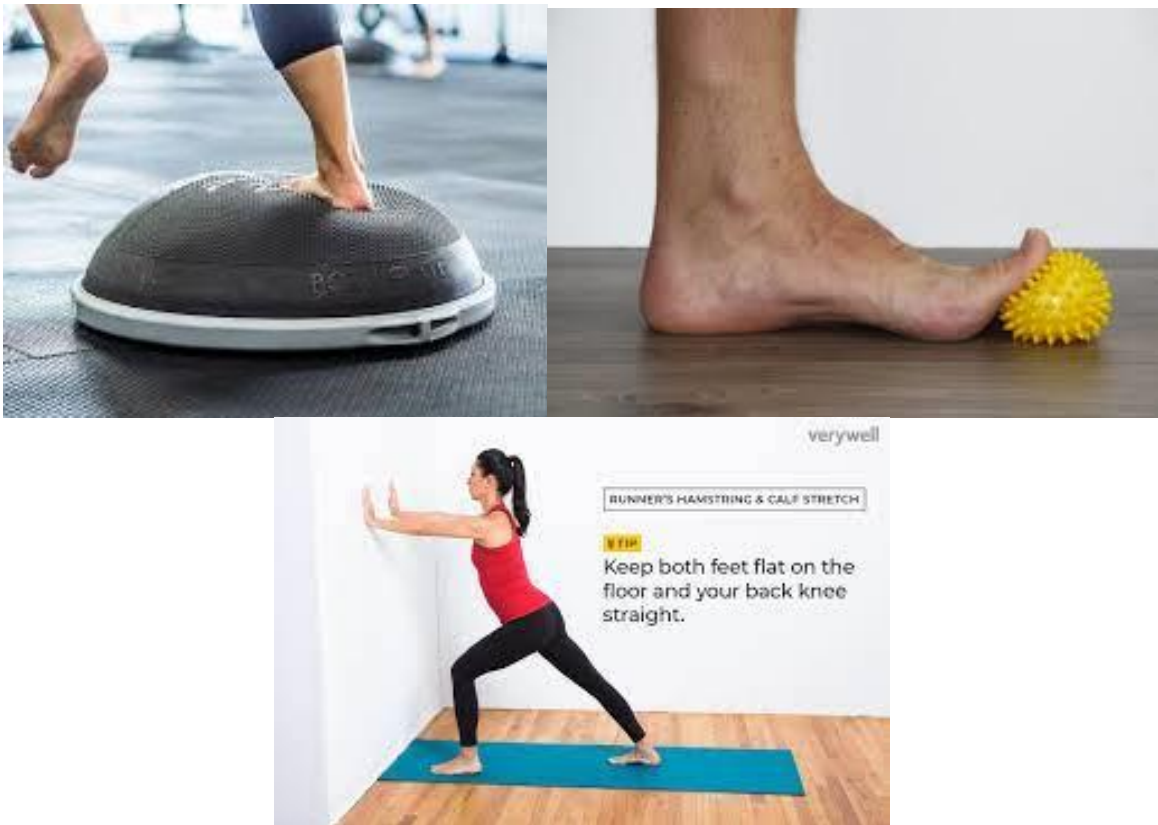




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5. Ankle and Foot Exercises

Bosu ball exercises, foot yoga, and ballet help to strengthen and lengthen muscles, and are great exercises to help improve ankle and foot health.



- Upper Left Photo: Bosu Ball exercises increase proprioception, and ankle/foot strength.
- Upper Right Photo: Ankle mobility exercises include calf stretches.
- Lower Center Photo: An example of a toe yoga exercise