

Inline Skating

The popularity of inline skating is growing all the time.

No doubt about it, inline skating is one of the world's most popular street sports. Different people call it different things. Rollerblade was the original American skate manufacturer and that's why many call it rollerblading. Others shorten this to blading, while still others prefer inline skating (because the wheels on each skate are in line).

(1)..... Inline skating has taken the concept of self-propelled wheels into a new dimension which allows skaters of the most basic ability to move with grace, speed and style, and feel good about doing it. A huge attraction is that you can do it anywhere where there is a smooth, hard surface and if you're really keen, you can even do it off-road too.

But the very popularity of the sport everywhere has created something of a problem. The 'Ban all Skaters' group, made up of opponents of the sport, has never been far behind. **(2)**..... No matter— people will keep on skating wherever they can.

So the difficulty lies in changing the attitude of established local authorities, which are so often dominated by older people who have no concept of the joy of inline skating, don't want anything to do with it, and simply dismiss the sport as a branch of the current youth culture they can do without.

We know they are wrong. **(3)**..... It is a sport which offers everyone a brilliant way to get up off the couch, whizz around outside, have fun, get fit, get involved, develop skills and learn team-work.

In time, all skaters will be allowed to go about their business and co-exist in harmony with other users of tarmac. **(4)**..... So skaters should take care not to adopt a selfish attitude to others, because annoying other people might eventually lead to a situation where the skaters' own enjoyment or freedom of movement is curtailed.

Kids as young as five or six can learn to skate well. (5)..... And in between those two extremes skating is no less important as a way for those in their teen years to avoid the trap of urban boredom, which can create problems in contemporary society.

To qualify as an inline skater, you just have to get through the basics of pushing off, turning and stopping – all easy techniques which most people can learn to handle in half a dozen sessions. (6)..... Next you can learn to skate faster, turn tighter, stop faster, skate through slalom cones (just use tin cans) forwards and maybe backwards. Then you can learn how to go up and down hills and perhaps some clever tricks as well.

- A** Inline skating is not just about kids whose wishes can be ignored.
- B** Once up and running, it's all about consolidating what's been learned, enjoying the feel of your wheels and getting better.
- C** They all add up to the great new world of inlining.
- D** What's more, with all the right padding and protection, adults can start to skate safely at an age when they are collecting their pensions.
- E** In some areas it has been successful in implementing notorious and strict skating prohibitions, such as the closure of most of London's parks to skaters.
- F** The name doesn't really matter; it's the impact it has had that is important.
- G** Indeed, it's all about the right to enjoy life's little – and not so little – pleasures.