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CHOOSING A HELMET

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Concussions are not infrequent in roller derby. When you smash your head on the floor, you don't want a fashion helmet on your noggin—you want a safety-tested and -rated helmet.

Look for extreme sports, bicycle, hockey, and skateboarding helmets that have a sticker inside indicating that the helmet has been rated for safety standards. Some ratings to look for include ASTM and CPSC, among others (if you're not sure, ask a salesperson). These types of helmets will do a better job than non-rated helmets at dispersing impact and helping to prevent concussions and skull fractures. Price is not necessarily an indication of a quality helmet, and many good brands offer low prices. You also need not worry about looking like a bobble head in a safety-rated helmet, as many companies make low profile safety-rated helmets that are styled and fit more like fashion helmets.



Even the best helmet won't protect you if it doesn't fit well. Helmets should fit snugly and low on the forehead, and won't move when you shake your head side to side or up and down. If you have a very round or narrow head, look for helmet models designed to fit your head shape. If at all possible, try

on a variety of models to find the one that fits the best. The helmet strap should be worn snugly under the chin, with the excess tucked under and not dangling from the head. If, after a period of time, the soft foam liner starts to compress and cause the helmet to fit too loose on your head, either replace the liner or the entire helmet.

Once a helmet has protected you from an extreme impact, gets cracked, or when the inner foam begins to feel loose inside the hard shell, it should be replaced. At the minimum, a helmet for an actively scrimmaging skater should be replaced once a year.

Some brands preferred by skaters include Triple 8 and ProTec.

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