



SHOPPING FOR KNEE PADS

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Knee pads are not something a roller derby skater should ever skimp on in the interest of saving money. Quality knee pads generally cost between \$50 and \$100. If that seems expensive, consider the expense of orthopedic surgery. It's important to invest in the best quality pads that you can afford.

Inline and recreational skating pads are absolutely not sufficient for roller derby, even for a beginner just starting out. Falling is such a frequent occurrence in roller derby, that even just a few months of practicing in poor quality or excessively worn knee pads can do permanent damage to the knees.



Most of the high-quality knee pads used in roller derby are designed and manufactured by skateboarding companies. The pad models best suited for roller derby are usually "vert" or "pool" styles. These pads are designed with thicker padding than other styles, in order to protect the wearer during vertical falls and

collisions at high speeds.

Some things to look for when shopping for knee pads include:

- ▶ Thick memory foam and ring-shaped padding on the knee: this keeps pressure off of the kneecap.
- ▶ Hard plastic cap over the knee, preferably with a flat, rather than curved, sliding surface.
- ▶ Many skaters prefer butterfly back closure style over the pull-on style, so that the pad may be taken on or off without having to remove their skates.

Like all protective gear, knee pads are useless if they don't fit properly. They should fit snugly, with the plastic shell cap positioned directly over the skater's knee. They should not slip out of place when the skater gets sweaty or when performing falls. Be sure to squat, kneel, and shuffle side to side a bit while trying on knee pads to check for comfort and secure fit. New pads often feel awkward during crossovers at first, but most skaters adapt within a few practices in their new pads.

Replace pads when the memory foam begins to compress, or the elastic, Velcro, or stitching wear out. On some models, the plastic shell cap can be replaced if it

cracks or wears excessively and the rest of the pad is still in good condition.

[« Back to Gear Up! Equipment Advice](#)

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