

CHAPTER 1

HOCKEY SKATES AND SKATE SHARPENING



Hockey Skates

I have been searching for over 70 years for that perfect pair of skates that I have not had to modify and now I think I have found it in the MLX. These custom made skates have it all, comfort, lightweight and most importantly proper lateral movement in the tongue and tendon guard. In the past I have modified my equipment including gloves and stick as well as the skates to get them to work properly for me.

There are some key components on skates that you should be looking at when buying skates. Heel lock, boot stiffness, tongue thickness, blade and holder quality and tendon guard movement. Some of these components can drastically effect your skating either positively or negatively. For instance if your heel moves around in the boot as you skate, it leads to loss of power and direction control.

Children's skates are not designed for skating or hockey they are designed more like shoes on blades with no arches. Young children should not be skating until they can fit into the skates properly. They do not have proper lateral movement and will skate like they are on stilts. After 50 years of teaching and fitting I have found that the more expensive skates are not better. Just finding something that fits and has the proper amount of movement is all you need to look for. In the event of getting heel blisters, you must leave the top eyelet undone. The top eyelet is restricting lateral movement and causing the heel to lift in the skate.

I am still disappointed, to this day, in all skate manufacturers for not understanding the need for foot movement in hockey skates. NHL players over the years have **adapted their skating** to the skates rather than the **manufacturers making** the skate to the **player's needs**. These are some points I put together on various skates I have owned;

Hinged - Larry's Rating: 7/10 **First skate designed with lateral movement**



Pros

Allowed 13° lateral
movement at the ankle
Maximum stability stride
and speed with my profile
Most comfortable fit
Comfortable liner
Light weight

Cons

Flimsy liner bad quality
Plastic boot too soft, would
twist
Not for playing hockey

Graf 727 – Larry’s Rating: 5/10



Pros

First tendon guard flex for heel turns
Blade holder properly aligned
Flexible tongue for forward lateral movement
Eyelets in proper position
Durable
Best skate at the time

Cons

Thrown forward
Heel too loose
Felt started too thick then compressed over time reducing stability in the skate
Heavy

Bauer Supreme One 65 – Larry’s Rating: 0/10

Cons

Boot too stiff
Tendon guard flex too stiff
Tongue too stiff
No heel or foot lock
Eyelets not in proper position
Could not heat mould
Worn only 6 times

Pros

High performance look



Graf G7 – Larry’s Rating: 3/10

Cons

Advertized to have lateral movement but did not have any at all
Did not fit when tried on
Could not get on heels for heel turns
Toe support collapsed
Not enough ankle support

Pros

High performance look



Micron Silver Medallics – Larry’s Rating: 7/10



These skates were the first computer generated models I helped design that were based on my foot and skating technique. They were also the first plastic boot design that provided support and lateral movement that was superior to the leather skate boots of the time. I still had to make some minor adjustments to the toecap, insole, rivets, blade and holders. The durable Microns lasted 12 years before falling apart.

MLX – Larry’s Rating: 9/10



The MLX’s are the first pair of skates I have not had to modify after purchasing. These skates were created by David Cruikshank and Scott Van Horne by combining hockey and speed skating boot designs. After putting my profile on the blades they worked perfectly giving me excellent balance and ability to get on my edges. Aside from the slight weight increase from the high end models, these skates are still light and agile. When the MLX’s are heat molded according to the instructions they give a perfect fit after the first

heel locks perfectly and with the interchangeable tongue you can get the level you want. The tongue also has a stiff strip to hold it snug against your foot preventing the foot from moving in the skate. Leaving the top eyelet undone and with the replaceable tendon guard you can get up to **incredible 20 degrees of lateral movement.**



skate.
The
comfort
plastic

an
The



improved eyelet system is pre-molded and gives the skate a snug but comfortable fit. These skates also use screws rather than rivets so they will not poke up through the footbed. Using these screws, the holder system is adjustable and makes it very easy to adjust on the fly. The lower half of the boot is carbon fiber which absorbs puck and stick impact very well to protect your foot.

Skate Sharpening - Profile



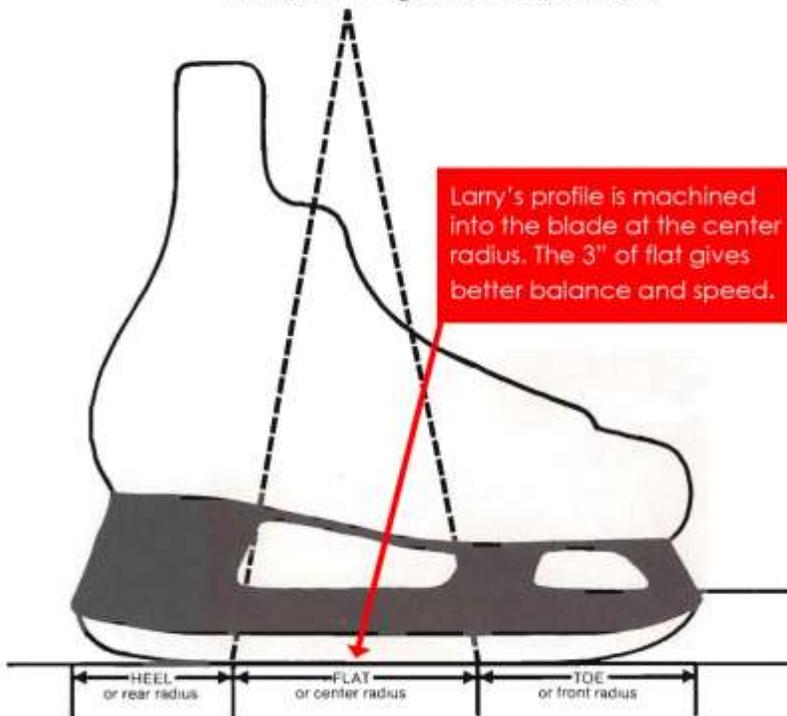
I have created and used my profile for over 65 years. A profile is a flat spot on the blades that a skater uses for balance and pushing off to gain speed. Profiling is also called Contouring by some but is the same thing.

Skates come out of the box with approximately a 9" or 10" radius. My profile puts approximately 3" of flat on the blade for the average adult. This allows the skater to have more blade touching the ice giving them more balance, speed, glide and long stride. Also there is a larger balance point to skate more upright and have more stability to stand up to hits. Because of the amount of blade touching the ice it will take less effort to stride as well as glide. With my profile there is no need to have different profiles for a forward or defense. Every player except the goalie uses the same skills and skates the same, the different positions just utilize some of those skills more often. However, you should be able to skate in any position at any time.

Both children and adults benefit from this profile. The technology exists to laser cut the profile on the blades during production before being shipped for sale. If the skate manufacturers realized this potential there would be no need to seek out someone to put a profile on the skates after purchase. Profiling only needs to be done once per pair of blades, so if they don't get damaged or replaced, the blades will hold the profile.

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TANGENT
center of weight from heel to toe



Skate Sharpening - Hollow



There are many different types of sharpening options out there but they are all gimmicks to get you to spend more money at their store. The conventional hollow is tried and tested and has been the best cut for almost a century. In the past 65 years of sharpening skates myself I have found that the 5/8" hollow is the best for all players. The 1" hollow is the best for goal skates.

Over the years I have approached every skate manufacturer and sport store to show them how and why this profile works better than the current methods. If you watch the players of the NHL closely you can see that they skate on their toes leaning forward most of the time. When my profile is put on the skates there is no need to be on the toes. While skating backward you can actually rest while in motion because you can set your heels down in the skate. Skating backward becomes effortless and you can do proper crossovers. Skates with a proper fit, enough lateral movement, and my profile will see a significant improvement in their skating because they are able to stand up and use both skates in their hockey stops as well as getting better speed, balance and stability.

