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OFF-ICE TRAINING: WHAT HELPS FIGURE SKATERS IMPROVE

A Parent's Guide to Understanding How Physical Development Supports Better Skating

1. THE GOAL OF OFF-ICE TRAINING

The goal of off-ice training is to help skaters develop the strength, balance, and body control needed for skating.

Off-ice training is not separate from skating. It helps develop the physical qualities that support what skaters are trying to do on the ice. When the body better supports technique, skating often becomes easier, more efficient, and more enjoyable.

2. BUILDING PHYSICAL QUALITIES THAT SUPPORT SKATING

Off-ice activities can help skaters practice skating-specific movements and elements while improving coordination and body awareness. Other exercises build strength and movement patterns that support skating.

Different exercises serve different purposes, but together they help develop the physical qualities that can directly support better skating.

3. OFF-ICE TRAINING SUPPORTS ON-ICE TECHNIQUE

A skating coach teaches a skater what to do. Off-ice training helps develop the physical qualities that allow a skater to better perform those skills.

For example, a coach may ask a skater to hold a stronger landing position, maintain better posture, or jump higher and rotate faster. Developing strength, stability, and body awareness off the ice helps support these movements.

Off-ice training does not replace coaching or change technique. Instead, it helps build the physical foundation that supports the technique being taught on the ice.

4. STRONGER ATHLETES BECOME BETTER FIGURE SKATERS

After spending 35 years in figure skating, one thing has become very clear: stronger athletes become better figure skaters.

This doesn't mean every skater needs to train like an elite athlete or spend hours in the gym. It means that developing strength, balance, control, and body awareness can help skaters move better, feel more confident, and continue progressing on the ice.

Physical development and technical development work together. As skaters become physically stronger and more capable, they are better able to perform the skills their coaches are teaching.

When the body better supports technique, skating often becomes easier, performance improves, and the sport becomes more fun!

5. WHAT DOES EFFECTIVE OFF-ICE TRAINING LOOK LIKE?

Off-ice training should help skaters develop the physical qualities that support skating while also being safe and appropriate for the individual athlete.

A younger skater may benefit most from activities that develop coordination, balance, body awareness, and movement quality. As skaters mature and gain experience, training may gradually include more challenging movement patterns and progressive resistance exercises.

Off-ice training should consider a skater's age, experience level, goals, and physical development. The most effective programs are progressive, individualized, and designed to complement the work being done on the ice.

6. WHAT SHOULD YOU LOOK FOR IN AN OFF-ICE PROGRAM?

- Understands the physical demands of figure skating
- Focuses on developing the physical qualities that support skating
- Provides age-appropriate and individualized guidance
- Progresses appropriately as the skater develops
- Complements, rather than replaces, the work being done on the ice

If you'd like to learn more about how off-ice training may support your skater's development, you can schedule a free Off-Ice Movement Assessment.

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