

Fall for Practice

The best time to think about falling is before you fall. Don't practice on the pavement, but look for a soft lawn to practice falling.

A good fall is when you don't injure yourself. Try rolling into a fall. Instead of falling flat, put a roll into it so your body is more flexible. It's better to bounce than to slide after you fall.

If you begin to fall, lower your body as close to the ground as possible. This method reduces the impact of hitting the ground. Do not land on your head or spine. It's better to land on the fleshier parts of your body, like your arms and legs, and have them absorb most of the fall.

Now you know why all of the skateboarding safety tips suggest wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants. Protect the areas of your body you're most likely to land on.

Better safe than sorry

Like any sport in which participants careen down hills at the speed of light, leap over large objects and even travel upside down, skateboarding is as dangerous as it is fun. Skaters need to use caution, or they'll wind up earning bruises and broken bones instead of medals. Here are a few basic rules of safety to follow:

Choose a board with a blunt edge over a pointed one. You'll go just as fast, and you won't run the risk of being jabbed.


Cover your body. A thrasher's clothes should include long pants and long-sleeved shirt, hightop sneakers, knee and elbow pads, gloves and a helmet. Be especially careful to protect yourself when trying out new moves.

Stay away from busy streets. Lots of skaters are taking to the streets without realizing the noise from their boards masks the noise of oncoming cars. Don't risk it.

Watch out for hills. It's hard to control your speed when you head downhill.

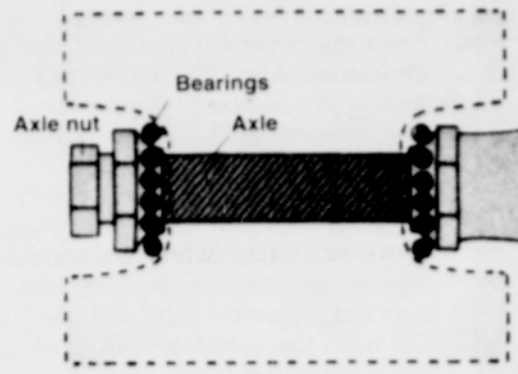
Don't try to learn everything at once. Learn one move at a time and don't try anything that makes you feel uncomfortable. Take it slow, and you'll come out with all the right angles.

SKATEBOARDS
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Keep your board in shape



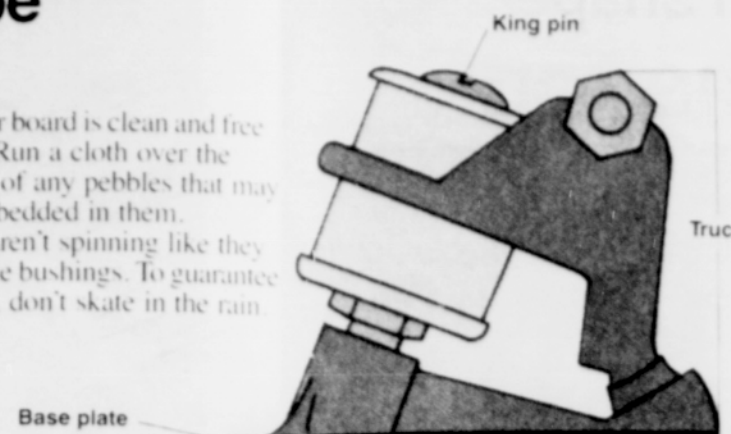
Haul out the tool box from time to time and tighten any loose screws or bolts on your board. Skateboards are the easiest wheels you'll ever own to maintain.

Check the trucks — the units that hold the wheels to the board. They need to be tightly fastened to the board.

Check to make sure the kingpins are attached or well-seated into the base plate, which is attached to the skateboard. The kingpins are also called action bolts or suspension bolts.

Make sure your board is clean and free of grease or oil. Run a cloth over the wheels to get rid of any pebbles that may have become embedded in them.

If the wheels aren't spinning like they should, replace the bushings. To guarantee the bushings last, don't skate in the rain.



Hitting the big time on four wheels

LAGUNA, CA — Bob Schmelzer has quick feet, but put some wheels under them and watch him move. This 22-year-old can spin the wheels of a skateboard with the world's best.

At last year's World Freestyle Championships, Schmelzer finished fourth. In 1985 he finished second at the World Freestyle Open Championships. "The better the competition, the better I skate," Schmelzer said.

Skateboarders from Europe, Sweden and Japan take the sport more seriously than Americans, he added. "They don't have surfing. Skateboarding is the sport they all try to do well."

Before Schmelzer got into skateboarding, he was the national men's outdoor speed roller skating champ in the 15 and younger division. Then the outdoor rink where Schmelzer had been training for nine years shut down. "I felt obligated to buy something from their shop, so I bought a Rocco freestyle board," he recalled. Schmelzer was 16 at the time.

Until two years ago, Schmelzer spent every Saturday performing street acts with his partner Per Welinder. Then an agent caught their act and signed them up. Since, they've opened for Beach Boys, Wang Chung, Rick Springfield and Eddie and The Tide concerts; appeared with



Skateboarder Schmelzer

Huey Lewis and The News; and worked in Hollywood.

In their first film, they did skateboard stunts for Michael J. Fox in *Back to the Future*. "We had to teach Fox how to skate, but he doesn't have much potential," Schmelzer revealed.

Now, Schmelzer and Welinder perform 15 times a month for Catchit, their sponsor. "My practice time is really limited with my schedule," said Schmelzer.

Schmelzer guarantees to be at this year's world competition. "The competition will only get stronger. The tricks that are being performed now are far out from what people expected several years ago," he explained, adding that skateboarding will wheel on forever.

Do you want to see awesome skateboarding?

Here's your chance. Champion skateboarder Bob Schmelzer is coming to Portland to perform some of the hottest, flatland/freestyle boardin' you'll ever see. Bob was the guy who did the skateboard stunts in the movie *Back to the Future* for Michael J. Fox. He also did those rad Mountain Dew commercials, and he has opened concerts for the Beach Boys! **DON'T MISS THE FRESHEST SIDEWALK SURFIN' AROUND**

Bob's visit is sponsored by:







Schedule

Bob is appearing at the following locations:

Saturday, May 30, Noon,
at Nordstrom in Clackamas Town Center

Saturday, May 30, 1:30 p.m.,
at O'Bryant Square - SW Park and Washington
(2 blocks northwest of downtown Nordstrom)

Saturday, May 30, 3:30 p.m.
at Nordstrom in Washington Square

Sunday, May 31, 1:00 & 2:00 p.m.
at Vancouver Mall in front of Nordstrom




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