



Box 1832  
Valleyview, Alberta  
T0H 3N0  
(780) 524-8475  
[www.powerplushockeyskating.com](http://www.powerplushockeyskating.com)

## Power Plus Hockey Skating Inc.

---

### Season Startup Tips

August, 2011

#### Why Prepare for the Fall Hockey Season?

It's August, and you might be wondering why it's important to start thinking about hockey so soon. Can't you just wait till September, then play yourself into shape? Well, if you play league hockey, that may not be a great idea, for a couple of reasons.

First, a controlled return to the ice will help you avoid injuries and get the most fun out of the game. Second, you might play in an Association that uses "fall tryouts" to evaluate players and assign them to teams based on skill level. If you've been away from hockey all summer and have a bad tryout, you're going to have to live with your team placement for the rest of the season.

One way to avoid a bad tryout is to do some preparation in August. The following tips from Tina Caron, owner of Power Plus Hockey Skating, will help you head into tryouts with confidence.

#### Equipment

Thorough preparation starts with your equipment. Proper fit is everything! In late July, you should try on all your equipment, including skates, to be sure it all still fits. If not, order new equipment right away, so even if there are production backorders, your equipment will still arrive in lots of time for you to get it adjusted and broken in.

Some other equipment tips:

- if you get new skates, skate in them several times before tryouts, making any fine adjustments needed
- even if your skates aren't new, get them sharpened before first use
- be sure your helmet still fits. Signs of a too-small helmet include general discomfort, headaches, pressure points, and a red line across the forehead when the helmet is taken

off. Buy helmets to have a roomy feeling, but make sure the helmet can be adjusted to a firm, comfortable fit.

- be careful when buying used equipment, especially helmets. Every helmet should have a CSA sticker and a date of manufacture. If you buy a secondhand helmet older than 5 years, you're not getting the benefits of the newest design advances. Also be aware that a used helmet may have been through a serious impact. Buy with caution.
- always carry extra laces in your skate bag. You never know when one of yours will get cut in a scrimmage.

### **Physical Preparation**

You also want to prepare your most important piece of equipment—your body. A few weeks of physical preparation will help you head off startup injuries and maximize your tryout performance. Ideally, you'll want to start ramping up your hockey-related activities at least 3-4 weeks before tryouts. Ideal activities involve the same kind of motions used in hockey: quick changes of direction, speed, short bursts of power, and so on. Games like soccer are ideal. Plain skating is excellent. Start with light activity and increase in intensity and duration (time you do the activity) each week.

One area of physical preparation that can be overlooked in hockey players is neck strength. In growing athletes, neck muscles tend to strengthen more slowly than other muscle groups, which can put players at risk from hard checking. The average Peewee player has a head weight of 6-8 pounds, plus an additional 2-4 pounds for the helmet. That's a lot of weight, so strengthening your neck muscles can be important for protecting you against injury. Who wants to miss games when it could have been avoided?

The good news is that most upper body exercises, if you do them with proper head and shoulder form, tend to strengthen your neck muscles too. The American Council on Exercise ([www.acefitness.org](http://www.acefitness.org)) website shows some exercises for neck strengthening. As with any exercise, if you feel any discomfort, stop immediately and see a physician.

### **Hydration**

Proper hydration is a key to good performance—especially if you've been outside in the sun for a few hours before heading into the rink! For best performance, drink well before starting any activity, then drink about a cup of fluid during every 15-20 minutes of activity. After you're done, try to drink at least two cups of fluid afterward. It will rehydrate you, and also help flush out any lactic acid that could make you sore the next day. If you're using sports drinks, you might want to dilute them. Plain water is always good to drink.

**Mental Preparation**

If you can get in some pre-season skating, you can use it to start developing a pre-game routine. The human mind responds to routine and ritual! Most top-level players have worked out a routine that they follow before every game. Your pre-game routine can include things like checking over your equipment, warming up, dressing, mentally reviewing game goals, and so on. Experiment and find out what activities, in what order, help you feel the most prepared.

**Camps**

To get ready for the fall season, some players attend a hockey camp. Power Plus is running a series of August camps designed specifically to help players gear up for fall. 45/45 + 45 Camps will be held at the Coca Cola Centre in Grande Prairie from August 8-12, 2011 and Aug 15-19, 2011. Each 5-day camp combines power skating, conditioning, hockey-specific dry land training, and high-tempo on-ice drills, skills, and scrimmages. There are camps at every level from Novice through to Junior.

Power Plus is also running a Junior/College Prep Camp from Aug 15 - 18, 2011 to prepare junior/college level players for Fall camps.

Both camps are a great way to break in your new gear and ramp up for the coming season, both physically and mentally.

For more information, visit [www.powerplushockeyskating.com](http://www.powerplushockeyskating.com) or call Tina at (780) 524-8475, or email [tina@powerplushockeyskating.com](mailto:tina@powerplushockeyskating.com).