

Let's
Skate!



LIMB IMPAIRMENT ICE SKATING COACHING RESOURCE



Let's Skate is an exciting project from British Ice Skating funded by Sport England, which will deliver opportunities for disabled people to get involved in ice skating – whether that's skating on the ice, volunteering, coaching or officiating.

We will be supporting rinks across the UK to deliver inclusive ice skating sessions, led by qualified coaches. British Ice Skating will showcase the impact of the Let's Skate project to celebrate our success and inspire prospective new skaters to try ice skating; with the aim of consistently developing new opportunities for everyone to be involved in the sport.

Throughout the project we will be working with rinks, coaches, officials, volunteers and skaters to gather feedback to shape future work and help us realise our potential. Overall, we will make ice skating welcoming, safe and accessible for all – with a view to offering pathways to competition, volunteering, coaching or officiating.

You can find out more about the project at iceskating.org.uk/lets-skate

Participation statistics tell us that there is still much work to be done to support disabled people in sport. The number of disabled people taking part in sport or physical activity is significantly lower across all age groups than the overall population.

Inspire and motivate disabled people to continue to play sport and take part in physical activity with the help of this advice:

- Involve disabled people in all of your sessions.
- Recognise a disabled athlete as an individual, not an impairment.
- Have a shared vision with your participants in terms of coaching goals and expectations.
- Communicate and work together to achieve their goals.
- Talk to your disabled participants about their impairment to plan effective coaching sessions and adapt practices.
- Know the sport you coach. Have a passion to develop yourself as a coach.

This resource has been put together by British Ice Skating in collaboration with Limbpower to support coaches in successfully coaching skaters with a limb impairment.

LIMB IMPAIRMENT COACHING RESOURCE:

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GENERAL INFORMATION ON LIMB IMPAIRMENTS

Impairment-specific awareness tips, in association with Limb Power, to give coaches the knowledge and confidence to support people who have had amputations in their sessions.

No two people with amputations are affected in the same way. Some amputees can function as well as any non-disabled person, while others are severely impaired. This depends on a number of factors, such as level of amputation, number of amputations, cause of amputation, other medical conditions, type of prostheses, prosthetic fit, length of residual limb and scar tissue. As an amputee cannot generate a muscular force to cause the prosthetic joint to rotate, other joints (most frequently the hips) will have to work harder to enable the movement. For instance, a lower-limb amputee will not be able to push the leg from the ankle; rather, they will pull the leg from the hip.

Below are some top tips for coaches to help them support participants in their sessions:

- Prosthetic limbs mimic real limbs in a more simplistic way. The coaching techniques you normally use are a good place to start, but you might have to make adaptations.
- If the participant is limited by their prosthesis, work with them on alternative exercises – keep the approach simple.
- Find out what the participant can do, or what may be preventing them from taking part (eg self- confidence, socket fit, pain, technology).
- Consider the individual's physique, mobility and application. Speak to the participant to understand their personal abilities and desires.
- Check the participant's range of movement as this can vary greatly.
- Participants may have a slower response time when initiating movement on command, due to their prosthesis.
- The participant may have limb movement restrictions. Therefore, they need to improve their basic movement skills, through drills.
- Be aware of any balance and coordination problems, and take these into consideration with any relevant drills or game play.
- Discuss pain threshold and tolerance with the participant in order to have a better understanding of specific issues and concerns, such as their pain management routine (eg use of medication).

2 UNDERSTANDING LIMB IMPAIRMENTS IN THE CONTEXT OF ICE SKATING

Before planning a session, it's important to recognise the diverse needs of skaters with limb differences, which may include upper or lower limb amputations, congenital limb differences, or the use of prosthetics.

These skaters often show great adaptability, but some specific considerations can support their safety, comfort, and confidence on the ice:

- **Prosthetic use and balance:** Lower limb amputees may skate with or without a prosthesis. Coaches should be prepared to support either option and consider how balance and movement patterns may differ.
- **Upper limb amputees:** May have reduced reach or grip. Activities involving arm movements (such as balance drills or partner work) may need adapting to suit individual needs.
- **Energy use and fatigue:** Skaters using prosthetics often use more energy to move. Build in opportunities for rest and avoid overloading drills.

By understanding these aspects, coaches can offer inclusive sessions that support each skater's strengths and abilities.



3 COACHING SKATERS WITH A LIMB IMPAIRMENT: PRE-SKATE PREPARATION

Session Readiness

A successful session begins before stepping onto the ice. Consider the following preparation steps:

- Health and prosthetic screening: Understand the type and fit of any prosthetics being used, and consult with medical or prosthetic professionals if adjustments may be needed before skating.
- Equipment check: Skates: Adaptations may be required for prosthetic feet – some skaters may use specially adapted or modified boots.
- Helmet: Mandatory for all beginners.
- Protective gear: Gloves are recommended, along with elbow/knee pads or stump protectors, depending on the individual's needs.
- Adaptation aids: Beginner skaters with lower limb differences may benefit from supports such as skate walkers or frame aids. Skaters with upper limb differences may prefer a coach or buddy for balance and confidence support during early sessions.



4 SKATE UK DISPENSATION MODEL

British Ice Skating Association is committed, as a service provider, to promoting Equality within Ice Skating, eliminating unfair discrimination. We believe that Equality is defined by the terms fairness, justice, inclusion and respect for diversity.

It is about making sure that everyone has an equal chance to participate in and contribute to the aspects of ice skating that interest them, and that no one is discriminated against unfairly for any reason, including – but not limited to – sex, gender, race, disability, age, religious or political belief, sexual orientation, social background, ethnic origin, language, marital or civil partnership status or pregnancy.

Sports Equality is also about recognising and acknowledging that inequalities do exist in sport, taking positive and proactive steps to overcome these inequalities, and making sure that any barriers standing in the way of people who are traditionally not involved in ice skating are removed.

The Dispensation Model, developed in collaboration with Activity Alliance and built into British Ice Skating's learn to skate program Skate UK, is a key part of our commitment to building Sports Equality. It's designed to make ice skating more accessible for people with disabilities.



**Find out more
about Skate UK:
iceskating.org.uk/skateuk**

Examples of the dispensation pathways options for learning Skate UK skills:

Exercise	Dispensation A (Reduced skill)	Dispensation B (Aided)	Dispensation C (Combined)
1. MOVING FORWARD	Move forward half distance (i.e half width of rink surface instead of full width)	Move forward aided (i.e full width of rink)	Both A & B
2. MOVING FORWARD (10 steps) & TWO-FOOT GLIDE (with dip)	Move forward 5 steps with a half dip (reduced dip movement)	Move forward 10 steps & two foot glide (with dip) aided	Both A & B
3. SIT & STAND INDEPENDENTLY	Stand up only (coach to place skater down on ice)	Sit & stand aided	Both A & B
4. STATIONARY SNOWPLOUGH STOP	Use only one foot instead of two to show an understanding of a sliding technique	Stationary snowplough holding onto barrier, skating aid etc (aided)	Both A & B
5. MOVING SNOWPLOUGH STOP	Use only one foot instead of two and reduced stopping technique and distance (as long as the skater stops)	Moving snowplough aided	Both A & B
6. MOVING FORWARD (10 steps) & TWO-FOOT GLIDE INTO A FORWARD LEMON	Move forward 5 steps with reduced lemon shape	Move forward 10 steps & two foot glide into lemon shape aided	Both A & B

5 MEET THE LET'S SKATE TEAM

The Let's Skate team is here to support people on their journey into ice skating – we are dedicated to making the sport more accessible for everyone. Please get in touch if you require further support or have any questions:
letsskate@iceskating.org.uk.



Finally, if you have any feedback on something you have experienced within the project, please do not hesitate to contact us and we will work together to create a better environment for all.



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