

What is Athletic Retirement?

Athletic retirement is when an athlete stops competing in their sport, which can subsequently bring about changes in beliefs about oneself and others.

This means that you, the skater, will experience a lifestyle change that impacts you mentally and physically. It is likely that a period of adjustment will take place for not only you, but also for those around you who know you as a figure skater and have supported you throughout your skating career.

This leaflet has been designed to guide you through your transition from athlete to retired athlete, and provide advice on how to achieve a more positive experience as you move on from figure skating.

How Can I Best Manage My Experience?

Some examples include:

- **If you haven't yet retired, try to plan for life after retirement** - discuss your opportunities and education with parents or a careers advisor to explore your options.
- **Keep active** - exercise regularly to keep your weight under control and help you to maintain good health following a decrease in training.
- **Find a new focus** - explore other interests or take up a new hobby.
- **Remember** that your self-worth is not defined by your skating career.

Use this information leaflet to educate yourself and others about moving on from figure skating. Seek support from your parents, friends, and coaching team by expressing your thoughts and feelings about moving on from figure skating.

Moving On From Figure Skating: A Guide



retirement

For Novice, Junior, and Senior
Figure Skaters

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Why Do Figure Skaters Retire?

There are numerous reasons why skaters retire. Each situation is very personal, and should receive due consideration by you and your support systems.

There are two main categories of retirement:

1. **VOLUNTARY** - Where you make the decision to retire. The situation is entirely in your hands and you feel ready to leave skating. For example, retirement may be because your **priorities have changed** or you **no longer enjoy skating**.
2. **INVOLUNTARY** - Where you have little to no involvement in the decision-making process. Examples may include **career-ending injuries** or being **unable to maintain the high costs of figure skating**.

A voluntary retirement is often easier to cope with than an involuntary one. Therefore, it is important that you fully understand the nature of the situation that surrounds your retirement from skating.

What Are Some Potential Challenges?

Some skaters who retire find the experience more difficult than others, especially if the retirement was involuntary.

Some difficulties include **weight gain** and **loss of confidence**, however the most profound challenge you may face during or after retirement is the impact on your **self-identity**.

If you have been a figure skater for a long time, or are known to those around you for your skating talents, the loss of this reputation can be source of distress.

It is not uncommon to feel 'lost' or unsure of your purpose, but discussing this and acknowledging your feelings may offer comfort. Remember that you are not alone throughout your retirement.



What Are the Positive Aspects of Retirement?

While retirement is assumed to be negative, there are many aspects that will impact you and your life in a positive way.

For example, you may experience:

- **More time to pursue interests and opportunities that you couldn't when you figure skated.**
- **Less stress in everyday life**
- **Less risk of injury and burnout**
- **More time to spend with friends, family, and significant others**
- **Less body weight controlling behaviours**
- **Being able to take a more active role in your life choices instead of your parents or coaches**

As you progress through your skating retirement, being aware of the positive aspects will allow you to take advantage of them and make the most of the new lifestyle that comes with athletic retirement. Instead of dwelling on the past, remember that you now have more control of your future.