

MASTERING

SKATEBOARDING



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Foreword

Skateboarding has been around for quite a long time now. It originated in California by a group of surfers who wanted something to do when the waves were too calm to surf. The idea took off in no time at all and it seemed as if it was a crazy almost instantly. The skateboarding trend quickly spread around the United States and eventually worldwide.

Skateboarding can be enjoyed by many different types of people. There are people who skate just for fun and then there are professionals who actually make a living by doing what they love. Big competitions such as the X games can offer large payouts for the best skateboarders.

If you think that you could never be as good as skaters in competitions, you need to stop thinking like that! You may not be able to do all of the amazing tricks that they can right now but that is what practice is for. Professional skaters did not wake up one day and have the talent that they do. They had to put a lot of blood, sweat and tears into their skateboarding skills and that is why they are as good as they are.

If you plan on learning to skate it is important that you know the basics of skateboarding. Remember, it is important that you always put your safety first. Helmets and pads should always be worn.

The following chapters of this book will go over skateboarding and will give you some tips and tricks that will help you to improve your skill level.

Mastering Skateboarding

Chapter 1:

Introduction to Skateboarding

Synopsis

Skateboarding is not only a good outdoor activity for children but can also be enjoyed by even older individuals. It is also a good recreational activity that can also function as an ideal exercise plan. Exercising by using skateboards uses quite a few muscles such as the back and leg muscles, thus improving the agility and foot flexibility of the individual. The individual is also able to sharpen abilities and learn something new.

Skateboarding has also become a booming industry. There is a lot of money that can be made in this market. Some of the higher quality decks and accessories can be quite expensive and can rack in a lot of revenue. The skateboarding industry brings in an estimated \$4.8 billion in annual revenue.

In the early 1940's skateboards were nothing more than wooden boxes with roller skate wheel attached to the bottom. Now they are highly advanced in their design and this is a lot of what allows skaters to push their tricks to new levels. Many of the things you see done on skateboards today would not be possible using the older skateboards of the early years.

Skateboarding Basics

This action sport involves riding and performing tricks using a skateboard. For most it is simply another form of recreational activity while for others it can be a very competitive sport to take up. There are now a huge amount of skate parks to facilitate this sport in a safe and conducive environment. Most of these skate parks are designed to include ramps for further enhancing the skating experience. Early skate tricks consisted mainly of two dimensional maneuvers, like riding on only two wheels, spinning only on the back wheels, high jumping over a bar and landing on the board again, hippie jumping, long jumping from one board to another and finally slalom. However now there are much more innovative moves incorporated into the competitive arena of skate boarding.

As with all activities, there are also some safety issues that are usually recommended to ensure the skating experience is injury free or at least minimalized. Although severe injuries are relatively rare, there is still the possibility of sustaining these if the correct safety gear is not used. Also when skating, all involved should be aware of each other and be considerate in the way the skating motions are executed. Most of the items that would be considered necessary for one reason or another would include a helmet, elbow pads, knee pads, wrist guards and any others that would help in minimizing the impacts of injury.

Chapter 2:

Choosing the Right Skateboard Ramps

Synopsis

When looking for a suitable skate board ramp, an individual should first take the time to find out as much as possible about the various different types of ramps available and their primary functions. As with all sports, there is a chance of getting injured while skating on ramps. It is very important that you wear all of the safety gear necessary and that you do not try to do anything out of your skill level.

Making the Right Choice

The following are some tips on how to go about choosing suitable ramps for skateboarding:

- Determining the style intended in the skateboarding experience should ideally be the first step to take before actually making a purchase. This is mainly because the style that is going to be used will have a direct impact on the choice of the ramp or rail. Therefore, having some knowledge before would help you to make a suitable purchase. Also the area where the individual intends to skateboard is another deciding factor in the type of skateboard ramp to purchase.
- The size of the ramp and its length is also directly reflected on the types of movement and tricks performed. Beginners may have difficulty even on an 8 foot half pipe ramp because of the size and speed required to perform the tricks or to simply skate on it. Taking on smaller ramps and shorter rails maybe a better option to start with for beginners.
- The right material should also be used to create the ideal conditions on the ramp and rails. The ramp should also be made from weatherproof material to ensure it is able to withstand any and all types of weather, such as rain, snow, wind and any others.
- The individual should also consider if there is a need to make adjustments to the ramp due to any unlevel conditions of the surface it is going to be placed on. Therefore, there would be a need to pick a ramp that can be easily adjusted or modified to fit into the space that is available.

Chapter 3:

Selecting Your Skateboard Deck

Synopsis

There are many elements to consider when making a skateboard deck purchase. However with a little knowledge, an individual can make an informed decision that will be beneficial to their needs. Understanding the different sizes of the wheels, the types of boards and the hardness of the wheels should all be points of consideration when deciding on the appropriate board to select.

There is also a decision to make on what type of design you want on your board. There is a lot of really cool art work that comes on some decks. These decks may be a little bit more expensive but some of them are more than worth the price. You can even get decks that feature designs created by some of your favorite professional skaters.

You need to be aware of the fact that certain skateboards are used for certain things. For example, you would not want to try to use a long board at a skate park. It is important that you know what you are looking for before you make a purchase.

Choosing the Right Deck

The following are some useful tips to go by, when trying to make an informed decision on what skateboard deck to purchase:

- Skateboards can either be bought off the rack or ordered for custom specifications. This would invariably involve the budget the individual is willing to set aside for their purchase. Long boards can cost around \$120 - \$500, while classics are usually around \$80 - \$400 and then the street/verts can cost anywhere from \$50 - \$150.
- Buying off the rack or otherwise known as buying a complete is a popular option for most individuals who are really only interested in skateboarding as a leisurely activity. Thus it would be possible to make such a purchase at any reputable store. Buying online is also popular but has the disadvantage of not allowing the individual to test the item. Most completes would cost around \$50 - \$200 while custom made boards can range from \$90 - \$500.
- If the intended purchase is meant to be ridden on the streets, getting a 7.5 – 8.0 deck would be sufficient, however if the ride is meant to be vert, then 8.0 and upwards is probably better. Considering the height of the individual, is also another contributing point that should be considered while making a purchase on a skateboard deck.
- The trucks are also an equally important aspect of the skateboard and should be given due consideration. They should ideally be no more than 10 inches. The width would be 7.5 trucks on a 7.5 deck.

Chapter 4:

Things to Consider Before Buying Skateboarding Shoes

Synopsis

Obviously being designed specifically for skateboarding use, skate shoes are invariably flat soled and made of rubber or polyurethane, suede or a composition of leather with double or triple stitching.

The general idea behind most skate shoes is to ensure durability and comfort. The skate shoes are often subjected to the abrasiveness of the skateboard's grip tape which is regularly worn by skaters. For this reason skaters tend to wear out the shoes at an accelerated pace, thus requiring a new pair every so often.

The following chapter will go over the benefits of skate shoes as well as some things you need to consider before purchasing a pair. Keep in mind, skate shoes can be expensive so it is important that you get a pair that is right for you so you do not waste your money.

Selecting Skate Shoes

As mentioned before, skate shoes can be quite expensive. There are certain things you can look for in skate shoes that will ensure that they will be able to last through the demand that skating puts on them.

Often, materials such as super suede, action leather and plastic underlying the toe cap area can help to increase the durability of the skate shoe. Lace loops and protectors are often used and designed to prevent the laces from being shredded by shielding the common areas that come in contact with the grip tape. Other features to look out for would include triple stitching with thicker treads, as this will help to prevent ripping, more width so that there is more contact space with the board and a thicker tongue and sides to compensate for any imbalance and lastly a deep sole pattern for the ideal grip.

Some of the integrated features that should ideally be part of skateboard shoes chosen would include cup soles, vulcanized rubber soles, air pockets in the heels, canvas, shoelace protectors, dynamic grip technology, super suede, lace loops that ideally hide the shoelaces, fusion grip rubber shoes as it lasts longer, asymmetric stabilizers and shock absorbing insoles.

In order to properly care for skateboarding shoes, an individual needs to ensure the shoes are kept clean after each use. If there is any repair needed, the stitching in the footwear should ideally remain within the current holes as much as possible. Avoid using half soles as this will come apart more easily.

You also have the freedom to express your sense of fashion while you are selecting skate shoes because there is a wide variety of them. You can find the perfect shoes with the perfect design on them for you.

Chapter 5:

How to Improve Your Balance

Synopsis

While some people seem to have the natural ability to balance well on anything, there are others, who may need some help in finding ways to maintain their balance. Being able to balance well on a skateboard is a very important aspect of skateboarding.

Work on Your Balance

The following are some ways to assist an individual to maintain proper balance while using a skateboard:

- There are currently three common skating types, all should be tried to find the most suitable fit. The usual skateboard is usually 32 inches long and 7-8 inches wide on average and the wheels are mounted onto trucks which are screwed into actual board. The grip tape on the surface, allows the shoes to stay on the board. The fish board is an older version of the current design and is also 32 inches long but is wider at 11 inches. These are very heavy and thick with much wider truck wheels. These wheels are mounted much closer to the back of the board. These models are harder to come by as they are not produced in the main stream. The longboard version ranges from 3 1/2 to about 6 feet long and can go up to 8 inches wide. Here the grip tape covers part of the boards and there are small openings to accommodate larger and thicker wheels.
- With this information the individual should then decide on the stance most comfortable when using the board. Placing the left foot forward and facing the right would be the regular position while the opposite stance would be the goofy positions. Then by doing some simple exercises, an individual would need to decide which foot is the more dominant one and then using the dominant foot for the push off would be advised.
- The general position to adopt would be to place the front foot near the bolts on the board and the back foot slightly at the top of the tail of the board. This will help to provide better balance.

Chapter 6:

Finding Popular Skate Parks

Synopsis

Skate parks are usually built as all-purpose recreational areas where skateboarding can be conveniently practiced and perfected. These skate parks are usually designed to have different levels of challenging designs to facilitate the various different levels of skateboard competency.

It is important to remember while you are at a skate park to not try and do something that is out of your skill level. You do not want to get hurt as an injury will just prevent you from skating.

You also want to try and find skate parks that are equipped with an emergency phone or some other form of emergency alert system. Many of the newer skate parks are beginning to equip these. These emergency phones are great for if someone gets hurt and needs help fast.

The following chapter will go over the basics of finding the most popular skate parks.

Finding the Best Skate Parks

A skateboard park may contain several different features such as half pipes, quarter pipes, spine transfers, handrails, fun boxes, vert ramps, pyramids, banked ramps, full pipes, pools, bowls, snake runs stair sets and any other interesting additions that would challenge the user. The three main categories usually followed in the basic designs are the bowl, street plaza and the flow parks.

The bowls are designed to heighten the pool skating experience and can allow the skaters to move without taking their feet off the board to push. The curves provide an easy ride around and come in a variety of shapes and curves. The street plaza parks are usually more favored among skaters as the obstacles in this park are designed to look like natural street terrain such as incorporating stairs, railings, planters and benches in its makeup. The flow parks combine elements of both the bowl and the street plaza in one area and the skater can enjoy the different features in one place.

Publically owned skate parks are usually free, while private one usually charge a nominal fee for use of their facilities. As this sport has its own popular following, there are quite a few famous skate parks around the world. These would include the Skate Lab at Atlantic Beach Florida, Black Pearl Skate Park in Cayman Islands, Louisville Extreme Park, SMP Skate Park Shanghai China, Marseille Skate Park in France, Stoke Plaza, Stoke On Trent in England, Kona Skate Park in Jacksonville, Florida, Amazing Square Skate Park Japan.

You can also look online to find some really good skate parks. Social networking sites are also another good place to turn when you are trying to find the most popular skate parks.

It is important to be courteous when skating at a skate park. Cutting people off and getting in the way of their runs is not accepted and doing so will not make you any friends. You do not want to make a bad impression your first time at a skate park because in many cases, most of the people there are there on a regular basis.

Chapter 7

Cool Tips to Skate Hills (highly dangerous)

Synopsis

Skating can be a great form of exercise and an awesome activity to do with your leisure time. However, some people may not be satisfied with just casually skating or going to skate park. Some people may want to bump their skating up to the next level. One great way to extinguish your desire for adrenaline might be to try downhill skating.

Downhill skating is actually quite a popular sport and many people are beginning to flock to it because its nearly unmatched amount of adrenaline it provides. You can reach very fast speeds while skating on hills and you can also take corners at break neck speeds.

Downhill skating can be very dangerous however and as with any other sport, there is always a risk of getting injured. This risk is heightened when certain safety guidelines are not met and negligence is taken on the part of the rider. Helmets and other important equipment such as gloves are extremely important while downhill skating.

The following chapter will go over the basics of downhill skating and will provide you with some tips to help better your skills with it.

Downhill Skating

The following are some tips on how to enjoy and yet cope safely with skating hills:

- Perhaps learning how to stop effectively and safely would be the first concern to concentrate on. When the skater is able to do this without sustaining any injury, more difficult maneuvers can be tried. Tightening the trucks with the front trucks looser than the back one should always be done, as the back ones usually start to wobble after some use. This is important to help minimize wobbling at fast speeds.
- Staying calm and in complete control of all the actions executed while on the skate board is also something to master as the confidence will allow the skater to focus well and enjoy the experience. Learning the various techniques of being able to bail out or abandon the ride without sustaining any injury is also something to be learned.
- Crouching at higher speeds will help to give more stability than the standing stance would. Keeping your legs loose and yet weight out evenly on the skateboard will help to keep your balance. Exercise slowing down tactics once there is contact with the ground after any air lifting moves. The idea is to not outrun the hips because if the run is too fast it forces a forward fall. Scrutinizing the hill's surface before actually attempting it will give the skater all the necessary assisting information to ensure a smoother and more enjoyable experience is forthcoming.

- If there are more speed wobbles than the skater is comfortable with, it is advised that you apply more weight over the front and back trucks as this will smooth them out a bit.

Never try to do something that you are not comfortable with. Practice makes perfect and if you practice enough you will be able to skate any hill, eventually. If you try and do something out of your skill level you have a very high chance of being injured, especially when it comes to skating down hills.

Chapter 8:

Strategies for Skateboarding Faster

Synopsis

When a person uses the right techniques in the correct location they can reach some truly remarkable speeds on a skateboard. One important thing to remember is that if you are trying to use a skateboard for the means of going fast, it is probably a better idea to go for something like a long board instead of a classic or street board.

Long boards can be a bit more expensive but you will notice how much faster you can go on them. It can be a bit tricky to master the skill of turning corners at fast speeds, but with enough practice you will be able to do it in no time at all.

The following chapter will go over the basics of skating faster and will provide you with some tips to help you improve your technique.

Go Faster!

There are some very simple methods you can adopt when trying to put more speed into your skating experience. Some of these would require some physical execution while other would be more to do with the mind.

The following are some tips on how to create more speed for your skate boarding experience:

- Perhaps skate boarding with people who are more competent in the sport would help the individual to be inspired to push the boundaries and aim for faster speeds. By observing these more advanced skaters, the individual will be able to gain valuable insight on how to create the elevated speeds desired.
- Choosing to skate outside the individual's comfort zone is also another way to push for higher standards and faster speeds. By practicing more and incorporating all the tips learned and observed, the skater will be able to fine tune their skating skills until the desired skills are achieved. Having sound knowledge of all the ways to better the skating techniques will also help in the quest to achieve higher goals.
- Bending the knees is also another tip that can be used to create faster speeds on the skate boards as this helps to elongate the stride more effectively. The bent knees will allow the skater to reach out and push much faster during the skating stride.
- In order to keep the speeds consistent, the skater would be advised to bring the feet back closer to the middle once the launch into the skating

motion is executed. This will not only help to prolong the ride but will also allow for the speeds to be picked up.

- Arm movements are also pivotal to the speed increasing strategy. Swinging the arms about too much will cause unnecessary friction that will eventually cause the slower speeds, thus the individual should try to maintain a more aerodynamic position.



Chapter 9:

Jumping Tactics for Skateboarding

Synopsis

If you want the ultimate thrill out of your skateboarding experience, jumps are the way to go. It is very important that you are comfortable with your skill level before trying any big jumps though. You can really get an amazing thrill from flying through the air. Most people who have experienced this thrill compare it to what a bird must feel like. For that split second that you are in the air, you feel truly free.

Always wear appropriate safety equipment when attempting to do jumps with your skateboard. Doing jumps and tricks with your board can be a great way of having fun and can be moderately safe as long as responsible safety precautions are taken.

The following chapter will go over some tactics that you may want to try and implement into your technique to better your skill with skateboard jumps.

Improve Your Jumping

Learning how to jump while still managing to stay with the skateboard is something that can be learned with practice and is usually a very common move to master. With some practice and know how, any skater should be able to manage this without much difficulty.

The following are some tactics that should be tried to perfect your jumping motion while skateboarding:

- Standing on the skateboard with the back foot just slightly over the edge of the board and the front foot around the middle will help to prepare the skateboarder for the actual jump sequence. The balance created by this particular stance will help to keep the skateboard closer to the individual during the jump.
- Bending the knees and pressing the tail end of the board down to the ground with the back foot is also recommended as a good strategy to start the jump and finish it without actually losing complete contact with the skateboard. In quick succession, push the front foot towards the nose end of the board. As the front foot slides up to the front of the board, there should be some added pressure to push the board towards the ground.

Most of these steps if followed well, will allow the board to be as close to the skater at all times and this is necessary to ensure successful skateboarding moves. The motions are designed to simulate the skate board practically sticking to the feet of the skater throughout the continuous skating movements. Wearing protective gears is also strictly encouraged as it will help to cushion any impact resulting from a fall or the loss of balance and

coordination by minimizing injury possibilities. Jumping tactics are usually noted for the thrills and excitement they bring out in the skateboarding sport.

Chapter 10:

Safety Tips for Skateboarding

Synopsis

The importance of safety in any type of physical activity cannot be stressed enough. This is true as well when it comes to skateboarding. Your body is a precious thing and you only get one. You need to make sure that you take care of your body and that you keep it safe at all times when you are skateboarding. As stated before, never try to do something that is too far out of your comfort zone or skill level.

Always wear the appropriate safety gear and stay away from crowded streets. Common sense will play a large role in keeping yourself safe. You need to listen to your brain when it tells you something is a bad idea, because it most likely is.

The following chapter will go over the importance of safety and will provide you with some tips to help keep you safe.

Stay Safe!

In order to enjoy a session of skateboarding without injury, an individual will have to be well aware of all the safety measure that should be adhered to and practiced at all times.

The following are some of the safety tips that should be noted to ensure injuries are not prevalent in the skateboarding experience:

- Perhaps the most important element that will contribute to better safety measures would be the use of correct protective gear. With this recommended gear being used, the injuries sustained will be less likely to be severe as the gear is designed to absorb much of the negativity from the event contributing to the injury. The protective gear will be able to effectively create the mental comfort that will transcend into the quality of the skateboarding experience.
- Taking the time to look over the route or the area identified for the intended skateboarding session would also be a good idea. This will allow the individual to be able to see and understand all the elements that should be factored into the style and speed adopted for the particular stint. Being prepared both mentally and physically with a proper game plan to execute during the stint is important.
- Keeping in optimum physical shape is also another important part of staying safe while skateboarding. If the individual is healthy and physically capable to skateboard, the accompanying reflexes will help the individual stay sharp and alert at all times. This of course will heighten the possibility

of being able to avoid possible injury as the mind will be able to effectively work as one with the body.

- Although it may seem a rather strange suggestion, learning how to fall is just as important as learning how to stay on the skateboard throughout the ride. Falling properly will allow the individual to get over the fear of falling and concentrate more on enjoying the skateboarding experience.

Wrapping Up

Skateboarding is a sport and a form of entertainment that has been around for a very long time. Skateboards will also continue to be around for a very long time. This is due to the fact that skaters are always finding ways to make the sport new and exciting all over again. New tricks are constantly being created and the new designs of skateboards are allowing skaters to do more and more with them.

It seems like there is a skateboard for everything these days from doing jumps to skating downhill. There are even mini boards now that are convenient to use to get back and forth from school or the corner store. No matter what your needs are, there is sure to a board that fits them.

The most important thing to remember is to always make sure that you are putting your safety first. There can sometimes be peer pressure to not wear safety gear because it is not thought of as cool. Do not listen to this! It does not matter what others think, what matters is that you are safe at the end of every day.

I hope that this book has answered your questions and has been helpful for you. I hope that you are able to use some of this information to enhance your skating skills.

Thank you for your time and I wish you the best of luck, get out there and skate!