

How to build your own Outdoor Skating Rink

By Phillip Melchers



If part of surviving winter is keeping yourself occupied, then building a skating rink in your backyard is a good activity. Building a rink is simple, yet time consuming, with an end result that is unlimitedly rewarding. Where skiers may find difficulty building worthy slopes in their backyard, skaters can rejoice in having their favourite winter activity at their doorstep. Even if hockey isn't your sport, a private skating rink is a great place to teach the kids how to skate, or spend some time with a loved one doing arm-in-arm rotations by winter moonlight.

Building a skating rink starts with a vision. Before anything, one should have a clear idea on the location, preferably as flat as possible, the size, limited only by your materials, and quality of their rink ranging from amateur (I just want to skate) to professional (I want something to show off!).

Once the vision has been carefully sketched out, it's time to plot out your rink using pegs and string. In terms of measuring the height of your rink, the rink should be planned to compensate for a layer of snow, about an inch deep that will be used as a base, and a layer of ice, about three inches deep, which is generally how thick ice needs to be in order to support an average adult.

With the rink now plotted, the next step is to build your border and to prepare to fill it in. Depending on how you want your rink to look, this border can be made simply out of snow, PVC piping, or for the more ambitious, wooden boards. No matter what is chosen to build the border, the process to actually filling the rink is relatively the same. The first step is to sprinkle a light layer of water over the base of snow, and letting it freeze over night. The idea here is to strengthen your snow base which will make it easier to fill, and stop water from seeping through the snow into the grass.

When a good strong base has been achieved, the next step is to place a tarp over the snow and to start flooding. Depending on the size of the rink, this process should take about three days. Each day must have a minimum temperature of -6 degrees Celsius. Be careful not to fill your rink too fast, for this will cause ice blisters to appear which will make keeping a smooth surface difficult. When building a skating rink, haste makes your efforts waste. The key is to be patient.

Your rink is finished once it is flooded, frozen, and ready to use. As an added step, try adding a bit of decoration to your rink. By doing a quick search online, you'll see that



there is quite the community of rink builders out there, who only prove that when it comes to building a rink your imagination is the only limit.

Although this tutorial may seem basic, a quick search online can provide more in depth, step by step tutorials on how to build a rink, or even places where you may purchase rink starter kits. Really with the internet as resourceful as it is, as long as you are interested and have the time, then there really is no excuse as to why you shouldn't build your own rink. Like anything in life, the first and only step to building a skating rink, is to just actually do it. **LH**