

traveling light for derby

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does anyone go anywhere without their skates anymore?

I won't go anywhere without my skates again. You can bank on a chance to scrimmage if you come without your gear! Of course the reverse is also true; if you do bring your stuff, you run the risk of hauling heavy skates around and not getting to skate. So the trick is to come prepared, but make it as painless as possible to bring your stuff. After a couple hundred derby trips, I've managed to get a long weekend of derby down to one carry-on bag. No lie.

Here's how:

street clothes:

1. Check the Internet to see what weather you can expect during your trip. I use Weather.com; they have a couple dozen ways for you to look it up and it's pretty dummy proof. Use this info to help you figure out your street clothes. If you're going for a long weekend and you think it's going to be chilly at night, you could need at least one pair of jeans. But you can get away with just that one – or maybe not bring pants at all if you pack a couple skirts and tights, which take up way less room. Skirts and tights are also great for warm-in-the-day, cool-at-night situations, of course. Bring a hoodie (or better yet, plan on wearing it).
2. Don't be tempted to bring too many street-wear t-shirts! Wear your team / league shirts in the airport (represent!) and if you're not seeing people the day you get in, you might want to bring one to wear the first time you do connect. But if you're anything like most of us, you're going to end up with a few new shirts on any derby trip; you'll be buying one from the host league you're visiting or picking up souvenirs at the event... or, hopefully, you'll get lucky and trade shirts with a newfound BFF. I bring so few – usually three! Yet I almost always come home with clean shirts (coming home with clean clothes in my bag is my personal indication of failure).

skating clothes:

1. If you're going for a game, you obviously need to pack your uniform first, including your lucky whatevers and all that. Tip to toe, everything you need for the game. But for the rest of the time, or for non-game trips: can you use any of those skirts from #1 above to scrimmage? Good girl! Don't forget the bootie shorts and you're ready with scrimmage bottoms.

I bring a pair of tights and a set of scrimmage bottoms for each day. I always bring one pair of b-ball shorts (call me crazy but I like a fall back on those days when I don't want to stand out because of my snappy outfit, for whatever reason).

2. Now multiply the number of days you're going to be gone times two. That's how many pairs of panties AND skating socks you'll need if you're lucky enough to scrimmage every day. Panties don't take up much room, so you can afford to have a few extras on hand.

3. Don't forget black and white shirts with your name on them. Good grief, people! There is just no excuse to not carry b&ws in your skate bag at all times. This is a bit of a pet peeve of mine, if you can't tell. But seriously, you want to be the one that shows up at a scrim with just your black shirt, no name on it? You can pin your name on, I suppose, but you've still cut your chances to decide who you want to skate with and against IN HALF. Think that one through! You could miss out on a chance to floor your hero! Or whip your secret derby crush. So, for a trip, you want at least one black and one white for each day you think you could get to scrim. I have piles of tanks (instead of tees) with my name already on them just for this purpose. I actually prefer to scrim in a tee, but beaters take up less room in my bag. Be ready to part with some of them (see Street Clothes #2)!



other crap to bring:

I could write a whole article about what wheels you need, but generally speaking, I think most travel situations are covered by hybrid indoor/outdoor wheels, or, if you know you're going to scrim and don't want to be slowed down, a decent set of grippy wheels. I like the hybrids the best because you can skate outside in them, and they still perform well (if a little slow) on any track. If you can only bring one set and you really can't figure out in advance what the floors you could be on are like, you could fall back on 62mm outdoor wheels. I personally don't recommend bringing taller outdoor wheels for scrimmaging, because those are rad for street skating, but in my opinion, not so rad on the track. In a game situation or any other trip, your best bet is always to ask the people you're visiting (or for big events, you could ask the hoi polloi online at any number of gigundous derby message boards) what wheels they recommend for that SPECIFIC floor. Wheels are heavy and take up a lot of space, so if you can avoid bringing more than the ones on your skates, you'll be glad. If you must bring more than one set of wheels, make sure you have bearings in the spares so you can change them out fast!

Of course you're gonna need your pads and helmet. Please wash them before you pack. You will thank me for that one, I promise. Soak your mouthguard in a Tupperware dish of mouthwash before you go, then give it a quick scrub with a toothbrush, rinse, then pack. Mmm, minty goodness!

I have blogged on the joy of arm socks many times, so I'll spare you. But suffice it to say that if you choose not to marinate in your own bacteria every time you skate, you're going to need a set of arm socks for each night you might scrimmage. I bring two each day for long all-day training sessions so I can put fresh ones on after lunch. If you don't know

what I mean by arm socks, google "Tank Girl." If you are going somewhere hot, men's t-shirt sleeves make great unders for knee pads, as well.

To tool or not to tool? I have seen lots of discussions on whether to bring tools in your carry-on. Sometimes I do, sometimes I don't. So far, I've never had one confiscated.

But then again, when I do bring one, it's usually my tiniest little Otto wrench, which is under four inches long. But I hardly ever bring one, because you can ALWAYS borrow a tool when you need one in our crowd.

Finally, toiletries. Only you know what you can live without. On behalf of the rest of us, please do bring your toothbrush, toothpaste and deodorant. I actually keep a roll-on deodorant in my bag at all times (the compressed goo type of deodorant will for sure melt or find some other way to end up all over your bag and stuff – but that could just be that I have lived in the desert too long). I always have a tampon (just in case! When I don't need it, someone else does). I bring one loud color of lipstick, one eyeliner, etc, just in case I feel a burning need to dress up. But I'm not so much of a makeup girl, I admit. Pack a book of matches for shared bathroom situations. I also keep travel size shampoo, conditioner and soap in my bag as well, but you can always get that stuff at a local drugstore or grocery, so I don't sweat it.

PACKING

If you choose wisely and are conservative about what you need once you get there, then you have a small pile of shiz gathered up, ready for your skate bag. At this point, I usually weed out a few more t-shirts. For this to be useful info, hopefully you have a skate bag that fits in carry-on in the first place. So, get it ready by taking all the disgusting crap that you've been lugging around out of it. Throw all that stinky stuff in the laundry, and air out your

bag. Does everyone play skate bag tetris or is it just me? Pack just your absolutely mandatory gear back in carefully like puzzle pieces so you have a space for your clothes. Even though my skate bag doesn't smell too bad, I still put my scrim clothes in a plastic shopping bag and my street clothes in another, and then when my bag is expanded, I can fit it all on top of my gear with a pair of flip flops... and I'm

done! If I'm only going for a long weekend, I don't bring extra shoes... so I guess this whole article ultimately hinges on the premise that you can survive with just a pair of shoes (the ones you wear in the airport) and your skates. Why not? Shoes are for walkers! You're a skater!

Till next time, I remain Ivanna S. Pankin, #22. 🍷

