

# Curious about Nordic Ice Skating?

1. There's a wonderful community of Nordic skaters in New England and upstate New York.

To meet us, please join one of these Google groups:

**Adirondacks:** <https://groups.google.com/g/adknordicskating>

**Maine:** <https://groups.google.com/g/menordicskating>

**New Hampshire:** <https://groups.google.com/g/nhnordicskating>

**Vermont:** <https://groups.google.com/g/vtnordicskating>

Or join one of these Facebook groups:

**Maine & New Hampshire:**

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1417937071773660>

**Vermont:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/VTNordicSkating>

**Western Massachusetts:**

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/hilltownpondskaters>



2. Recommended Gear for Nordic Ice Skating

**Nordic ski boots and blades** – Nordic boots are warm, comfortable, supportive and easy to put on. Nordic blades perform well on rough, bumpy and snow-covered ice, give you much more glide, and are detachable to allow for occasional land portages.

**Ice claws** – Self-rescue claws should always be easy to reach, worn high on your chest or on a backpack strap, not tucked away in a pocket where you can't reach them.

**Ice poles or ice pike** – Ice poles (***not ski poles!!!***) or an ice pike are critical for measuring ice thickness and strength, crossing ice discontinuities, and to help propel yourself against a headwind.

**Throw rope or throw bag** – Whether you throw it to someone who's fallen in the water, or you're in the water yourself, the lifeline you carry should be easy to reach on the outside of your clothing.

**Helmet and pads** – Helmet and pad styles are up to you. Whether you use a ski helmet or a bicycle helmet, make sure it uses MIPS Safety System technology. Consider knee, elbow and hip pads.

**Personal flotation device (PFD)** – Can provide extra insulation for warmth and padding in a fall, as well as flotation should you break through the ice. Self-inflating PFD's are not recommended.

**Backpack** – Containing food, water, and a full change of clothes sealed inside a dry bag, including jacket, mitts and hat, in case your clothing gets wet. Plastic bags are recommended to put inside wet boots, and a plastic sheet or foam pad to stand on while changing. If you choose to wear a drysuit or a wetsuit, you don't have to carry a complete change of clothes, just an extra set of mitts and hat.

**Cellphone and Whistle** – Cell phone service isn't reliable and your phone may not work if it gets wet. A whistle can help alert others. (Most models of ice claws have an attached emergency whistle.)

3. A Few Points to Consider

(a) **Always skate with a partner or group.**

(b) Ice thickness and strength can be highly variable. **The ice must be tested continuously.**

(c) **The size and location of hazards can change** throughout the day.

Minor cracks in the morning may become large cracks in the afternoon.

(d) Just because you see people on the ice doesn't mean the ice is totally safe.

(e) Seek out experienced skaters to learn more about how to Nordic skate on 'wild' ice.

(f) **Carry All The Gear, All The Time – ATGATT** – and practice how to use it.

4. For more information, please visit these websites, or scan this QR code:

**Jamie Hess's site:** <https://nordicskaters.squarespace.com>

**Chris Boone's site:** <https://catamounthardware.com>

**Bob Dill's site:** <http://lakeice.squarespace.com>

**Gordon Giesbrecht's site:**

<http://www.umanitoba.ca/faculties/kinrec/about/giesbrecht.html>

