

Heat Molding Your Speedskate Boots

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Most models of speedskate boots, especially newer models can be heat molded, to create a custom or semi-custom fit without the price-tag of purchasing a custom boot. We can use an oven to apply heat to the entire boot, or we can use a heat gun to heat specific areas of the boot where discomfort occurs. For these models, the boot can be heat molded as many times as you need for a good fit. If you outgrow your skates the next owner can mold them as many times as they need, too, to get a good fit.

Many vendors list their molding instructions online. Visit their website, confirm that you have a moldable model, and confirm their molding instructions. Molding instructions vary slightly from vendor to vendor.

Here are general instruction, for heat molding boots, followed by specific instructions from Bont and Pass, two popular boot manufacturers.

Items needed

- Sharpie pen for marking location of blades (if attached)
- Tools to remove blades for skates
- Oven
- Chair to sit in
- Newspapers or towel made from natural fiber such as cotton
- Oven mitts or small hand towel for handling hot boots.

Prepare the boots and your feet

If blades are attached, use the sharpie to mark the location of your blades. When we are done molding, we will want to put blades back onto the boots in the same location.

Take out any bolts that may be in the bottom of the boots. (they are probably not in the skates.. but just in case, take them out of the boots) If blades are attached, remove the blades as well.

Loosen the laces in the boot, so that you will be able to easily put on the boots when they are hot. .

Prepare your feet the same way that you would for skating. If you normally wrap feet with athletic tape before you skate, then do it for the molding process, too. Wear the same style socks that you will skate in. Cycling or running socks that prevent blisters are best.

Bake the Skates

Turn on your oven to 200 degrees Fahrenheit and put your boots right onto the rack of the oven. Tuck in any laces so that they are not loose or able to touch the oven rack. Bake them for 10 minutes.

Do NOT use a microwave Oven.

While your skates are baking, set up a place where you can sit and put the skates on. If the place is in a carpeted area, you may want to put a towel on the floor in front of the chair where you will be sitting.

Mold the Skates

When the boots have baked for 10 minutes, turn off the oven. Take the boots out of the oven (with oven mitts to protect your hands) and take them to the towel where you will sit and put them on. Be careful not to touch any metal on the skates, such as lace eyelets, and you will get burned.

Put the skates on quickly while they are still hot. Make sure the tongues are straight and pulled up as much as you can. On many models of boot, the tongue is also heat moldable. Lace up the skates nice and tight.

If the boot has a buckle and strap, do NOT use the buckle. Using the buckle while it is hot can ruin the buckle and strap. Also be cautious to not pull too hard on the boot while it is hot. During this time, any glue in the boot is also soft, and it might be possible to de-laminate the boot if pulled in the wrong direction.

Stand up on the towel (the towel protects your carpet fibers from melting). Stand up in base position. Then roll your feet from side to side so that your skates will shape to your feet in all positions. Do not roll from heel to toe while in the boot, as you may flex the bottom of the boot, making it non parallel for mounting. Finally, sit in the chair in a skating, base position, while the boots cool. This should only take 5 – 15 minutes.

If you need to rush the cooling process, you can place an ice pack, or bag of frozen peas onto the area that you want to cool.

When the skates have cooled you can take them off. They should be mostly molded to your feet now. Repeat as necessary. Two or three times should get all the “tender spots” out of the boots.

Bont

Heat Molding Instructions From: www.bont.com/items/faq/faq.htm

Q: How do I Heat Mould my Bont Boots?

A: Your boots have been constructed using a special 'heat moldable' material. If necessary, the heel and ankle area of the boot can be heated, using a hair drier on the inside and outside of the boot, to make the fit more comfortable. When the boot has been heated sufficiently, so that it feels quite hot (do NOT scorch the leather, keep the drier moving in a circular motion), place the boots immediately onto the feet and lace firmly. You should NEVER wear boots with bolts only in the base, as it can damage the boots. Leave on until cool. The heating process takes a few minutes to do properly, so don't rush it. Be patient and do a good job. CAUTION: bolts used to attach frames should, for safety, be turned a minimum of 3 times into the nut. DO NOT PUT YOUR BOOTS IN THE MICROWAVE.

Q: How do I heat mold my boots in the oven?

A: Pre heat oven to 85C or 185F. Remove all bolts, frames, wheels etc from the boot. Place the boots in the oven for 20-30 minutes. Higher temperatures will damage the boot. Caution: Do not place feet in hot boots, let them cool a little first. Test the boot temperature with your hand before placing foot inside. Mount the frame to the boot and stand on it without wheels. Tighten the boot with the laces and wait until the boot cools. If there is a certain area giving you problems, push that area out using the handle of a screwdriver until the boot cools. You can heat mould the boots as many times as you like.

Pass Atlantic Skating Shoes

Heat Molding Instructions From: **Web: www.passk8.com**

Heat oven to approximately 190 degree's Centigrade (375 degree's Fahrenheit).
Once desired temperature has been reached, turn off oven.

Place one boot (with laces in and mounting screws out) in the middle of the oven on a cold tray. It is easier to work on one boot at a time.

Leave boot in the oven for approximately 10 - 15 minutes or until they feel soft and pliable. Check boots every few minutes to monitor their condition.

Remove boot and quickly put it on and tighten up laces. Wear a sock that is slightly thicker (or pad out the area of the foot/ankle that needs molding. Stick the pad - about 1/8 inch thick - directly to pressure area with tape onto the bare skin and put sock on top being careful not to move pad) than the ones usually used to skate in. Stand or sit in a skating position and gently rock from side to side to insure proper shaping in the ankle area.

Remember, while the boots are hot, they will be weaker than when cold, so be careful and do not rock forward and backward. Usually the boots will be well formed after one heating, but can be reheated if necessary. It will take only a few minutes for the boots to re-harden after being removed from the oven.

Note

Do not use a microwave oven. Do not use the buckles, if fitted, when heat molding, as there is a possibility that damage may occur to the buckle and strap while hot.

Fine Tuning the Fit

If, after two or three moldings, you still have a spot or two that bother you, you can use a heat gun to "touch up" those spots. A hair dryer usually will not produce enough heat to mold boots.

Heat the boot with paint stripping heat gun. Make sure to heat the entire problem area evenly. Use a side to side or circular motion to evenly distribute the heat, and to avoid scorching an area.

Take care not to make one area too hot, as this may scorch and shrink the leather.

One of the signs that the leather is too hot is that the leather will start to change texture as you approach the scorching point. Also be cautious to keep heat away from rubber and plastic parts, such as buckles, Velcro, and insoles.

Once the boot has been sufficiently heated, you can do one of the following to push out the offending area:

- 1) Use your thumbs to ease the boot into the desired shape (it may be a good idea to wear gloves).
- 2) Use the butt end of a screwdriver to push out the offending area.
- 3) Use a "Ball & Ring" pliers to push out the offending area.

The club has one of these if you wish to borrow it.

4) Use a pad under your sock to stretch out the offending area, and use your foot inside the boot to press out the offending area. Try using mole-skin, ore mole-foam, built up, then held in place with tape underneath of your skating socks.

A combination of these methods may be needed to get the results you want.

Keep pushing until the boot cools. Try boot on for fit and if there is still some discomfort, repeat process until problem ceases.

Most massed produced boots are not made in the USA, and are not specifically designed for American feet, which are often wide. Certain models of shoe stretchers can be used to widen boots during the heat molding process.

When the boots feel comfortable it is time to skate in them. It is only after doing this can you be certain of the fit. A boot can feel comfortable in a standing position and painful when used. If your foot is tender from a poor fit prior to molding, it may have to heal before proper fitting can be finalized.

The club has the following tools available to help you heat mold your skates:

- A heat gun
- A Ball and Ring Stretcher.
- Several sized of shoe stretchers



A Ball and Ring stretcher