

BY REBECCA DAVIES | SKATEBOARD GB COACH & JUDGE

The Ultimate Skateboard & Safety Gear Buying Guide

Choosing your first setup or upgrading your gear can feel overwhelming with all the technical jargon. This guide breaks down every component step-by-step so you can make the right choice for your body, shoe size, and skating style without wasting money!

1. FINDING THE RIGHT DECK (BOARD SIZE & TYPE)

The width of a skateboard deck (measured in inches across the top) determines how stable or agile the board feels. Body size, shoe size, and personal preference matter much more than age when choosing your board width!

Micro & Smaller Decks

6.5" – 7.75"

Micro/Mini (6.5"–7.25"): For very small skaters (shoe size ≤ 2). Proportioned so young beginners balance without over-stretching.
Narrow (7.5"–7.75"): Light skaters or technical freestyle (flip tricks). *Note:* Narrower boards flip easily but offer less landing area.

Full-Size & All-Round

8.0" – 8.25"

The All-Round Standard: Highly recommended size range for most skaters seeking optimal safety and balance.
Why Width = Stability: Gives feet room to land cleanly. Even with small feet (e.g. size 4), an 8.0"–8.25" deck builds confident ramp and park riding.

Vert, Transition & Bowl Decks

8.25" – 8.75"+ Wide

Maximum Footroom: Extra-wide decks specifically engineered for maximum foot surface, high-speed stability, and control on large transition ramps, deep bowls, and vert walls.

💡 Growing Kids & Growth Spurts (A Quick Tip for Parents!)

Between **ages 7 and 9**, kids enter a prime growth spurt phase where foot size can jump multiple sizes in a single year. If your child is around this age or right on the border between sizes (e.g., moving from size 2 to size 3), **size up to the next board width**. A slightly wider deck offers far better stability, lasts through growth spurts, and saves replacing gear prematurely!

2. COMPLETE SKATEBOARD RECOMMENDATIONS BY BUDGET

When buying a complete setup (pre-assembled board, trucks, wheels, bearings), sticking to reputable skate brands ensures safety, proper pop, and components that turn properly.

Tier	Price Range	Recommended Brands	Who It's For
Entry / Starter	Low (£35 – £55)	Enuff, Venom, Mini Logo (Kids)	Brand-new young beginners testing the waters without over-investing.
Mid-Range / Best Value	Medium (£60 – £90)	Globe, Element, Santa Cruz, Powell-Peralta	Progression skaters wanting quality maple decks, solid trucks, and smooth bearings.
Premium / Custom	High (£100+)	Custom Builds (Baker, Girl, Creature + Independent/Thunder + Bones)	Seasoned park/vert skaters, adults wanting durability, or competitive athletes.

⚠️ Buying Warning: Avoid Department-Store / Toy-Brand Boards

Be cautious of cheap, unbranded toy-store boards (including mass-market character or celebrity-branded boards found in

3. UPGRADING SMART: STEP-BY-STEP UPGRADES

You don't need to replace your entire board when your skills progress or speed needs a boost! Upgrade piece-by-piece:

- 1 Start with Bearings (Best Value Speed Boost):** If the board feels sluggish, changing bearings is the cheapest and most effective way to instantly get more speed and a smoother roll without buying new wheels or a deck.
- 2 Upgrade Wheels & Build a Collection:** Visiting different parks (smooth indoor wood vs. rough outdoor concrete) calls for different wheels. Keeping two wheel sets lets you swap for varying terrain.
- 3 Trucks Last Longest:** Trucks rarely need early replacement unless grinding heavy metal ledges. If your board feels heavy as you grow, upgrade to lightweight hollow-axle models to pop tricks easier.
- 4 Decks & Graphics:** Scratches and chips around edges are normal and don't impair performance immediately. When replacing a worn deck, transfer your trucks, wheels, and bearings right over.

4. SKATEBOARD WHEELS: DUROMETER (HARDNESS) & SIZE

Wheel Hardness (Durometer "A")

- 78A – 87A (Soft):** Ultra smooth and quiet. Best for rough asphalt, crusty street pavement, or cruisers. Absorbs pebbles easily.
- 90A – 95A (Medium / All-Rounder):** Sweet spot for beginners on mixed surfaces (outdoor tarmac + indoor parks). Smooth without knee-rattling.
- 97A – 101A+ (Hard):** Fastest on indoor wood, Skatelite, and smooth concrete bowls. Easy to slide, but bumpy on rough pavement.

Wheel Diameter (Size in mm)

- 50mm – 53mm (Small):** Slower top speed, but accelerates quickly and keeps board light for flip tricks and technical street skating.
- 54mm – 56mm (Medium / All-Rounder):** Perfect balance for all-round park, transition, and street skating. Maintains solid ramp speed.
- 58mm – 60mm+ (Large):** High speed for vert ramps, bowl riding, and cruising. Requires higher trucks or riser pads.

5. SKATEBOARD TRUCKS: SIZING & WEIGHT

Trucks are the metal axles that enable turning and control board maneuverability:

- Matching Truck Width to Deck Width:** Axle width should match deck width within 0.25 inches. Narrow trucks cause instability/wobble; overly wide trucks catch your shoes when pushing.
- Standard Steel / Aluminum Trucks:** Highly durable, cost-effective, and excellent for all skill levels.
- Hollow Kingpin / Hollow Axle Trucks:** Feature hollowed-out steel pins to shave weight. Ideal for younger skaters needing a lighter setup for easier Ollie pop.

6. BEARINGS: SPEED & DURABILITY

ABEC 3 (Slow–Medium)

Budget-friendly, safe speed limit for very young or hesitant beginners needing control while learning balance.

ABEC 5 – ABEC 7 (Medium–Fast)

Standard, reliable roll speed engineered for everyday skatepark and street progression.

Skate-Rated / Super Fast

(e.g., Bones Reds, Bronson): Built for skate impacts rather than industrial use. Smooth, durable, fast across all ramps.

Ceramic Bearings (Premium)

Ultra-lightweight bearings that do not rust or heat up under friction. Designed for top-tier competitive performance.

7. SAFETY GEAR: HELMETS & PROTECTION PADS

Properly fitted safety gear builds confidence, prevents injury, and keeps skaters riding longer!

Helmets (Crucial Fit Tip)

MUST be multi-impact certified (CPSC or EN 1078). Avoid uncertified soft-foam caps!

- **Budget (£20–£30):** SFR, Enuff — Solid protection with basic padding.
- **Mid-Range (£35–£55):** Pro-Tec Classic, REKD Elite — High-density foam & great ventilation.
- **High-End (£60–£90+):** S1 Lifer, Triple Eight Sweatsaver Dual Certified — Deep fit, high-impact foam for bowl/vert.

Pad Sets (Knees, Elbows & Wrists)

Wrist guards prevent beginner wrist impacts; heavy knee pads are mandatory on ramps.

- **Budget / Kids (£20–£35):** SFR Junior, Enuff — Plastic caps, soft backings for flatground.
- **Mid-Range (£40–£65):** REKD Energy, Rampage, Pro-Tec — Extra foam, anti-slip contoured sleeves.
- **High-End (£75–£130+):** 187 Killer Pads, Pro-Tec Street/Ramp — Thick replaceable hard caps & memory foam.

8. WHERE TO BUY: ONLINE, LOCAL STORES & DIRECT COACHING ORDERS

Online & In-Person Core Skateshops

SkateHut

Online UK Superstore

Massive selection of complete setups, decks, safety gear, and rapid delivery options.

Lost Art

Liverpool City Centre

Legendary independent skateshop with expert skater staff and top-tier core brands.

Note Skateshop

Manchester

Manchester's go-to core shop for dedicated skater advice, custom setups, and quality gear.

Ordering Directly Through Rebecca (Chester, Flintshire & The Wirral)

Local Service

If you are local to **Chester, Flintshire, or the Wirral (including Ellesmere Port)**, you can source complete skateboards and protective equipment directly through my coaching service!

Available Gear Lines:

- **Complete Skateboards:** Enuff completes (ideal beginner-to-mid range).
- **Safety Gear & Helmets:** REKD Energy pad sets & Core Protection gear.

Ordering Process & Mobile Shop:

Items are ordered per client to guarantee exact size, fit, and certified protection level tailored specifically for your skater. *(Keep an eye out for my upcoming portable skate workshop and trailer shop on-site!)*