A SKATE LABS FIELD GUIDE

BUILD AND CARE FOR YOUR BOARD

Pick the parts, grip it, bolt it together, tune it and keep it rolling. A board you set up yourself just feels better.

SETUP AND CARE

12 PAGES

READ IT ON YOUR PHONE



TAPE 03 / WORKSHOP

02 START HERE

KNOW YOUR SETUP

A skateboard is a handful of parts and a few bolts. Build one yourself once and you'll never be stuck with a loose truck again.

IN THIS GUIDE

03 **The parts**

04 **Pick your sizes**

05 **Grip your deck**

06 **Mount the trucks**

07 **Wheels and bearings**

08 **Tune your trucks**

09 **Clean your bearings**

10 **Everyday care**

11 **When to replace**

PARTS AND TOOLS

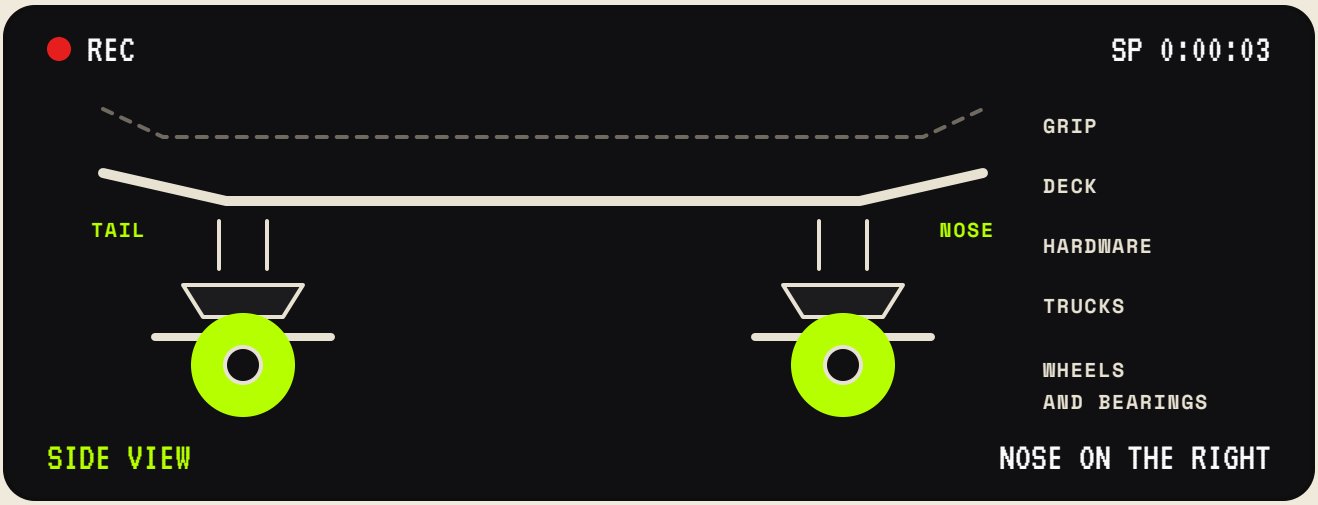
- ☐ **Deck and grip tape.** One deck, one sheet of grip.
- ☐ **Two trucks.** Sized to your deck width.
- ☐ **Four wheels, eight bearings.** Two bearings per wheel.
- ☐ **Hardware.** 8 bolts and 8 nuts. 7/8 inch fits most setups without risers.
- ☐ **A skate tool.** The T-shaped tool with sockets and a screwdriver tip. It does nearly everything.
- ☐ **A sharp blade and a file.** A utility knife for the grip, and a file or screwdriver to mark the edge.

SAFETY You'll be using a blade. Work on a table, in good light, and take your time. Rushing is how people cut themselves.

03 ANATOMY

THE PARTS

Here's what goes where. You'll see these words for the rest of the guide.

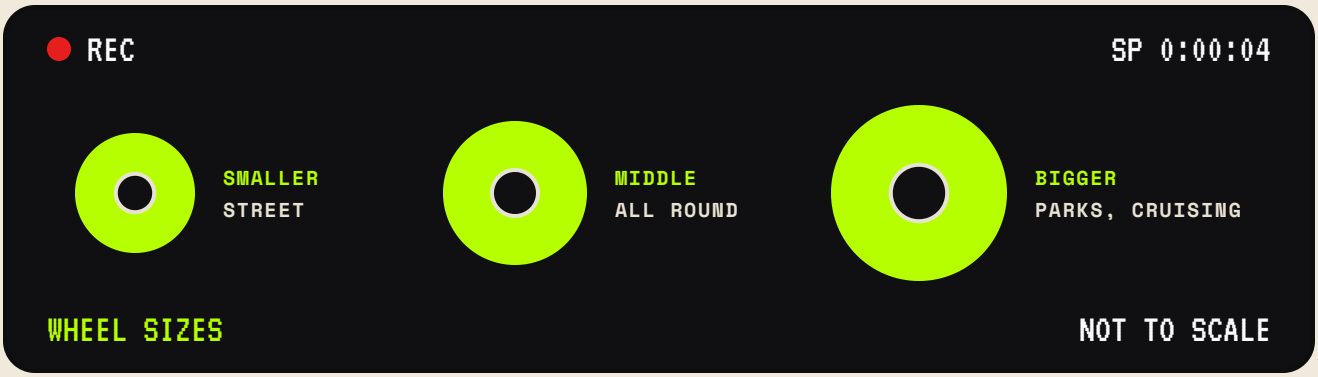


PART	WHAT IT DOES
Deck	The wooden board, usually seven layers of maple, with a nose and a tail that kick up.
Grip tape	The sandpaper-like sheet on top that keeps your shoes from sliding off.
Trucks	The metal parts that hold the wheels and let you turn.
Wheels	Made of urethane. Their size and hardness change how the board rides.
Bearings	Two per wheel, eight in total. They let the wheels spin freely.
Hardware	The bolts and nuts that hold the trucks to the deck.

04 SIZES

PICK YOUR SIZES

Sizes are personal and there's no wrong setup. These are common starting points, not rules.



PART	WHAT TO KNOW
Deck width	Most decks run from about 7.5 to 8.5 inches wide. Narrower is lighter and easier to flip. Wider feels more stable, and bigger feet usually like it.
Trucks	Match the axle width to your deck width so the wheels sit close to the edges of the deck. Truck makers list which deck widths each size fits.
Wheel size	Smaller wheels, around 50 to 53 mm, are light and suit street. Bigger ones, around 54 to 60 mm, roll over cracks better and suit parks and cruising.
Hardness	Rated on the A scale. Hard wheels, around 99A and up, slide and suit smooth parks. Softer ones, around 78A to 90A, grip and roll quietly on rough ground.
Risers	Thin pads under the trucks. They give bigger wheels more room and help stop wheel bite. Add them and you need longer bolts.

05 GRIP TAPE

GRIP YOUR DECK

Gripping a deck takes ten minutes and a steady hand. Go slow. Bubbles and wobbly edges are hard to fix later.



01 Lay it down

Peel off the backing and lay the sheet from one end to the other. Press from the middle out to push out bubbles.

02 Mark the edge

Rub a file or the side of a screwdriver all around the edge. It scratches a white line into the grip.

03 Cut it off

Stand the deck on its edge and cut along the white line, blade angled slightly outward. Sand the edge with an offcut.

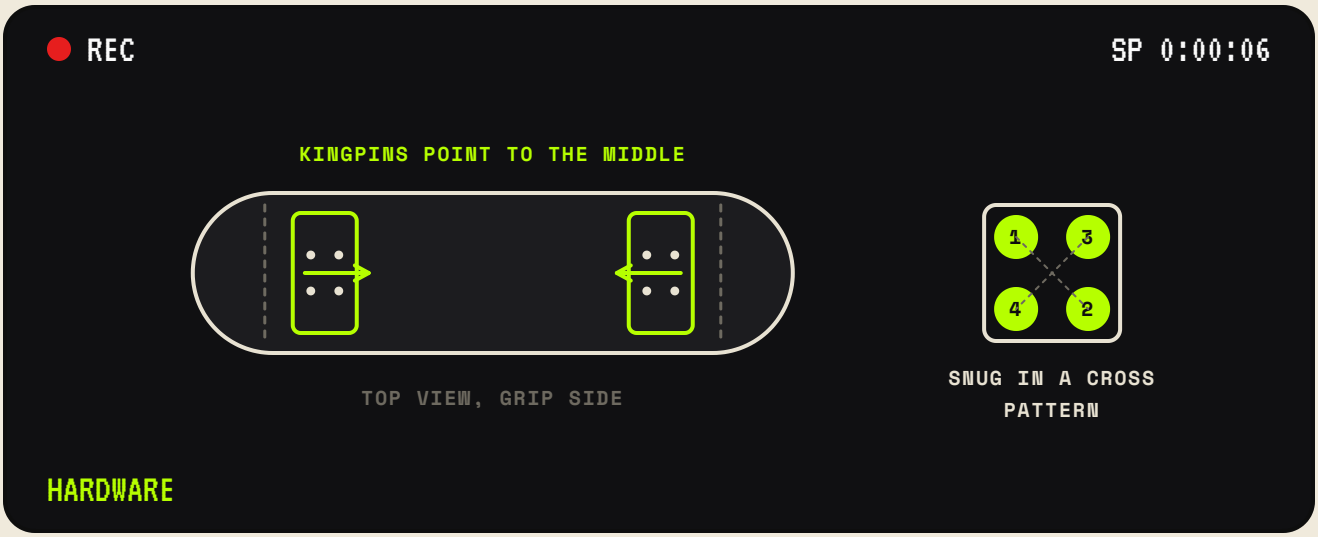
04 Poke the holes

Flip the deck over and push a screwdriver or the skate tool through each bolt hole from below.

SAFETY Always cut away from your body and keep your other hand behind the blade. A fresh, sharp blade is safer than a dull one you have to force. Never cut with the deck across your lap.

MOUNT THE TRUCKS

Trucks only go on one way, and it's easy to get backward.
The kingpins face each other, toward the middle of the board.



01 Bolts from the top

Push the 8 bolts down through the grip and the deck. If you use risers, they go on next.

02 Truck on, kingpin in

Set a truck's baseplate over each group of 4 bolts with the kingpin pointing to the middle of the board.

03 Snug in a cross

Thread the nuts on by hand, then tighten with the skate tool, holding the bolt head still with a screwdriver. Work corner to corner.

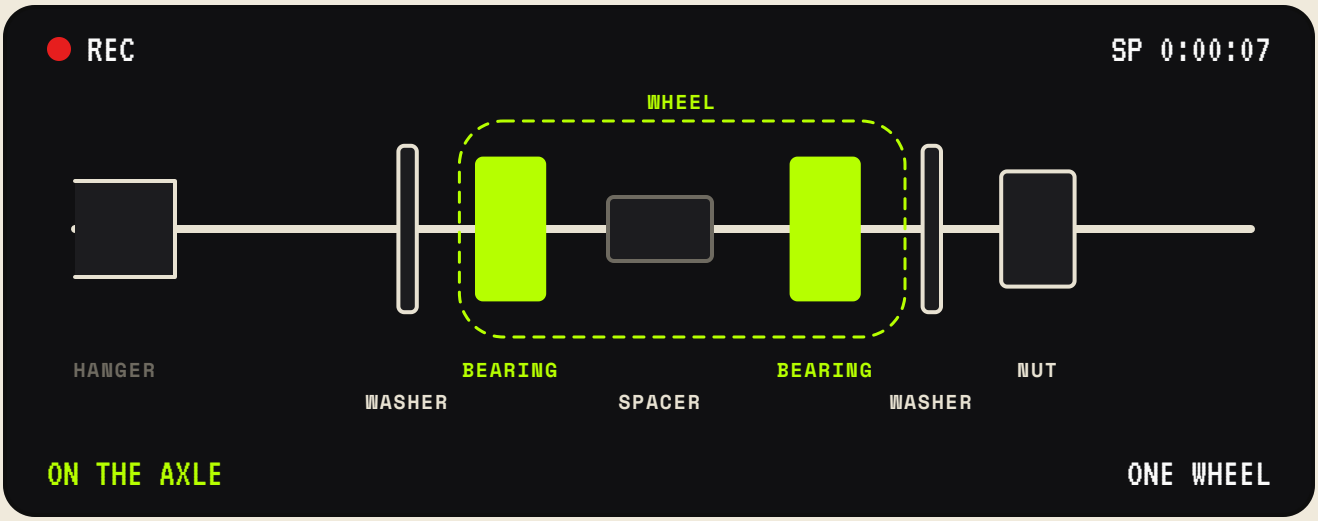
04 Flush, not crushed

Stop when the bolt heads sit flush with the grip. Cranking harder can crack the deck.

07 WHEELS

WHEELS AND BEARINGS

Two bearings go in each wheel. The axle of your truck is the best tool for pressing them in.



01 First bearing

Take the nut and outer washer off the axle. Slide a bearing on, set a wheel over it and push straight down until it seats flat.

02 Second bearing

Flip the wheel, drop in a spacer if you use one, and press the second bearing into the other side the same way.

03 Washers both sides

One washer goes on before the wheel and one after it, so the bearings don't rub on the hanger or the nut.

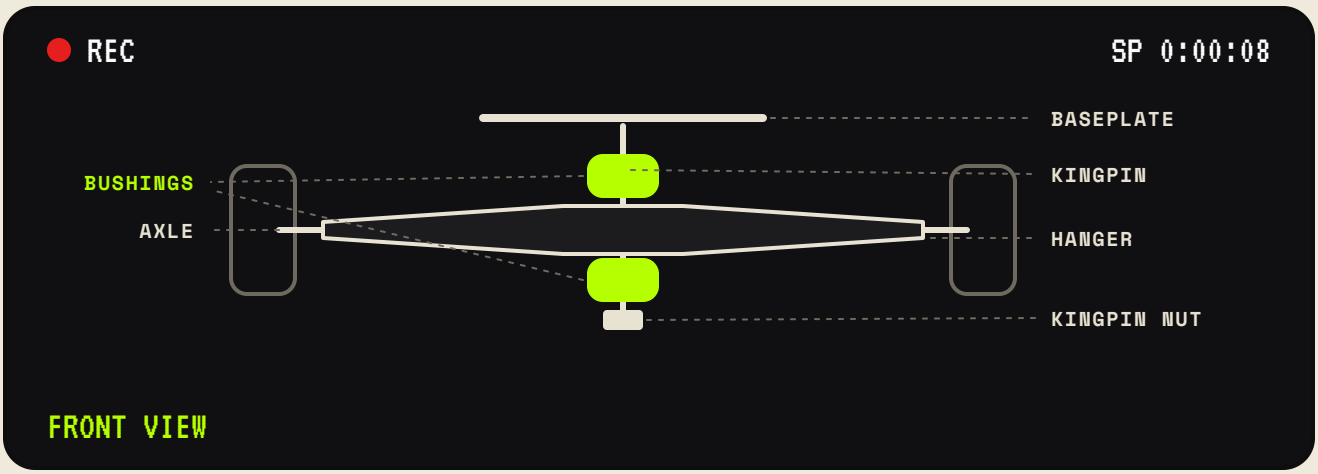
04 Tighten, then back off

Tighten the axle nut all the way, then back it off a touch so the wheel spins freely with almost no side to side play.

08 TUNING

TUNE YOUR TRUCKS

How loose or tight your trucks are changes how the board turns. There's no right setting, only the one that feels good to you.



Tight or loose

Tighten the kingpin nut and the board gets more stable and harder to turn. Loosen it and carving gets easier, but the board can wobble at speed.

Go a quarter turn at a time and ride between changes. Set both trucks the same to start.

Bushings

The urethane rings around the kingpin. How hard they are matters as much as the nut.

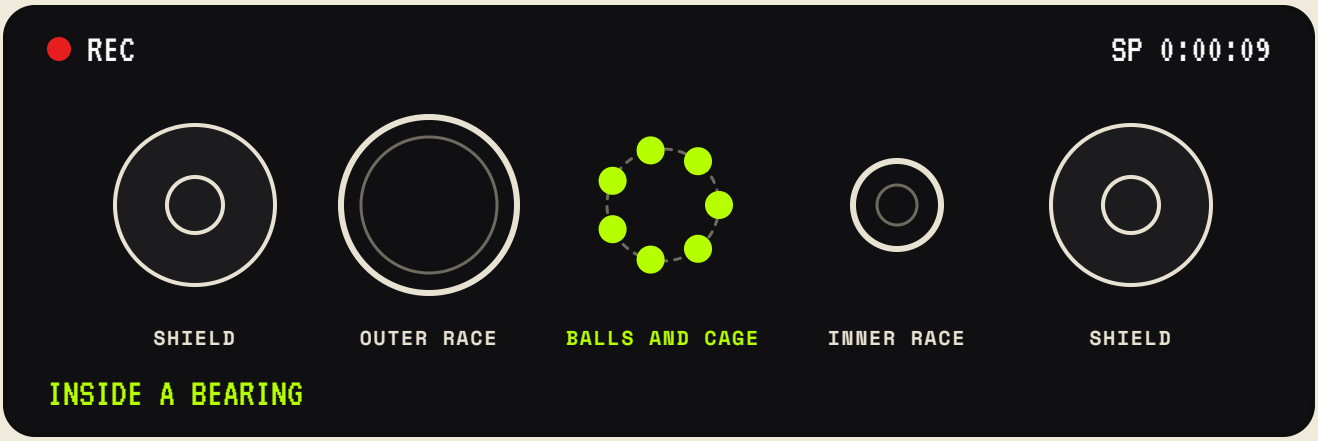
If they crack, squash flat or won't hold a setting, swap in a new pair.

SAFETY Never loosen the kingpin nut so far that it barely hangs on. Keep the nut fully threaded onto the kingpin, or it can work its way off while you ride.

09 BEARINGS

CLEAN YOUR BEARINGS

Slow, gritty, noisy wheels usually mean dirty bearings. A clean brings the roll back.



01 Pop the shields

Take the bearings out and gently lift the shields off with a pin. Some shields don't come off, so check what the maker says.

02 Soak and shake

Put them in a sealed jar of isopropyl alcohol or citrus cleaner and shake. Repeat with fresh liquid until it stays clean.

03 Dry them fully

Lay them on a paper towel and spin them until they're completely dry. Liquid left inside means rust.

04 Lube and close up

Add a drop or two of skate bearing lube to each one, spin to spread it, and put the shields back.

SAFETY Work somewhere with fresh air and far from any flame, because alcohol and many cleaners are flammable. Wear gloves, and skip household oils, which gum up and collect dirt.

EVERYDAY CARE

Most of looking after a board is just avoiding a few things.
Here's what keeps a setup alive longer.

01
Keep it dry

Water soaks into the wood, kills the pop and rusts the bearings. Skip puddles and rain. If it gets wet, wipe it down and let it dry at room temperature.

02
Store it, check it

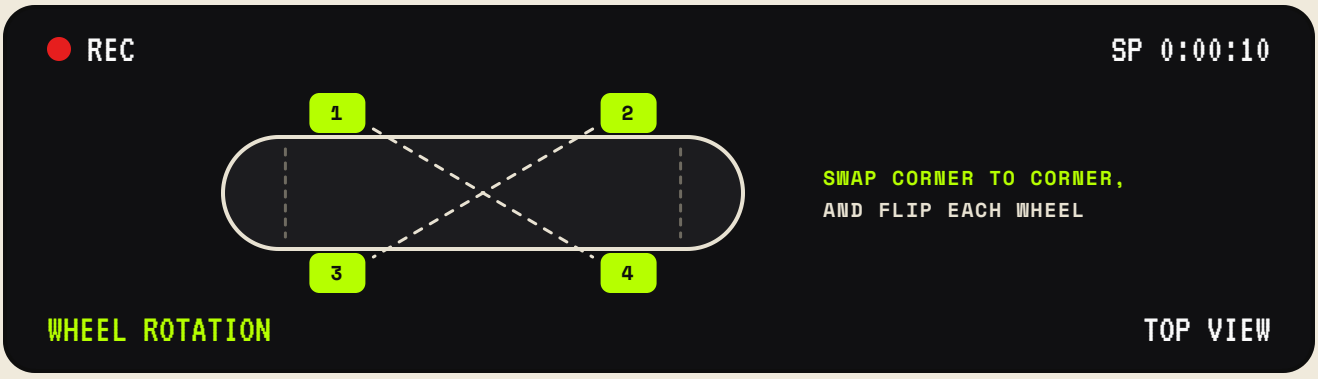
Keep it indoors, out of hot cars and away from heaters, since heat and damp warp wood. Check your bolts every few sessions too.

03
Clean the grip

Dirty grip gets slippery. Scrub it with a stiff dry brush, or use a grip cleaning block.

04
Rotate the wheels

Wheels wear unevenly. Every so often, swap them around and flip them so the inside edge goes out.



11 WEAR AND TEAR

WHEN TO REPLACE

Parts wear out. Knowing the signs keeps you off a setup that's about to fail.

PART	SIGNS IT'S DONE
Deck	Cracks, a soft or dead feel when you pop, deep chips, or a tail worn thin. A cracked deck can snap, so retire it.
Wheels	Flat spots that make the ride thump, or wheels worn into a cone shape.
Bearings	Still gritty or slow after a clean, or rusty.
Bushings	Cracked, squashed flat, or the trucks won't hold a setting.
Trucks	A bent axle, or a crack in the baseplate or hanger.
Grip	Worn smooth where your feet go, or peeling up at the edges.

BEFORE EVERY SESSION

- ☐ **Bolts.** Nothing loose or rattling.
- ☐ **Wheels.** They spin freely and don't wobble side to side.
- ☐ **Deck.** No new cracks, especially around the trucks.

THE LAST PAGE

NOW RIDE IT

You know the parts, how to put a board together, how to tune it and how to keep it rolling. Check your bolts, keep it dry, and go ride it.



NEXT

More field guides

Field Guide 01 covers your first tricks, from stance to the drop in. Field Guide 02 shows you how to film and edit clips on your phone.

PLAY

A Game of SKATE

Board ready? Global SKATE lets you play a Game of SKATE by video with a friend anywhere. It's in testing now at skatelabs.app.

See you out there.

SKATE LABS FIELD GUIDES