GENERAL

how to make a skateboard go faster

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How to Make a Skateboard Go Faster

Whether you're a seasoned rider looking to shave seconds off your run or a beginner who wants to feel the wind in your hair, increasing the speed of your skateboard can be a thrilling challenge. Speed isn't just about raw power; it's a blend of equipment, technique, and maintenance. In this guide, we'll walk you through every factor that contributes to a faster skateboard, from the choice of deck and wheels to the subtle art of the push. By the end, you'll have a clear roadmap to boost your board's velocity while keeping safety and performance in check.

Understanding Speed on a Skateboard

Speed on a skateboard is determined by the relationship between the forces you apply and the resistances you encounter. The primary forces are:

- Propulsive force – the push you generate with your foot.
- Rolling resistance – the friction between the wheels and the surface.
- Air drag – the resistance from the air, which becomes significant at higher speeds.

Balancing these forces is key. By reducing resistances and maximizing the push, you can achieve greater velocity. Let's explore each factor in detail.

Key Factors That Affect Speed

1. Deck Design and Material

The deck is the foundation of your board. Its shape, size, and material influence how well the wheels can roll and how the board reacts to pushes.

- Deck Width – Wider decks provide stability but add weight. A slightly narrower deck (around 7.75"–8.0") reduces mass, allowing faster acceleration.
- Deck Thickness – Thinner decks (around 2.5"–3.0") are lighter but may feel less sturdy. Choose a thickness that balances speed and control.
- Material – Traditional maple offers a good blend of strength and flexibility. Some riders opt for composite or carbon-fiber decks for reduced weight.
- Deck Shape – A board with a slightly concave shape enhances foot placement, improving push efficiency.

2. Trucks: The Pivot Point

Trucks determine how the board turns and how the wheels align with the deck. They also affect the board's overall weight.

- Truck Width – Wider trucks can handle larger wheels, which can travel faster but may increase drag. Narrow trucks reduce weight but limit wheel size.
- Material – Aluminum trucks are standard; some riders use lighter alloys for speed.
- Adjustment – Tightening the kingpin bolts reduces wheel wobble, allowing smoother, faster rolls.

3. Wheel Size and Hardness

Wheels are the most direct influence on speed. Two main attributes matter: diameter and durometer.

- Diameter – Larger wheels (90–110 mm) cover more ground per rotation, reducing the number of turns needed to travel a given distance. However, they can be heavier and less maneuverable.
- Durometer (Hardness) – Harder wheels (95–100a) roll faster on smooth surfaces due to lower deformation. Softer wheels (80–90a) grip better on rough surfaces but slow you down.
- Wheel Shape – A flatter profile reduces rolling resistance on smooth surfaces.

4. Reducing Rolling Resistance

Rolling resistance is the friction that opposes wheel motion. It can be minimized by:

- Choosing the right wheel hardness – As mentioned, harder wheels reduce deformation.
- Maintaining wheel cleanliness – Debris and oil increase friction. Clean wheels regularly.
- Using proper bearings – High-quality bearings reduce internal friction. Look for ABEC-5 or higher ratings.
- Lubricating bearings – A light coating of bearing grease can further lower resistance.

5. Push Technique

Speed isn't solely about equipment; your push technique can make a huge difference.

- Foot placement – Position the front foot near the center of the board for balance, and the back foot near the tail for maximum push power.
- Stride length – A longer stride delivers more force per push but requires more stamina.
- Timing – Push in sync with the board's rotation to maintain momentum.
- Body position – Keep your weight low and centered to reduce air drag and improve stability.

6. Proper Footwear

The shoes you wear affect traction, comfort, and push efficiency.

- Low-top shoes – Provide better ankle flexibility.
- Stiff soles – Offer more support for powerful pushes.
- Grip soles – Ensure good contact with the deck for a clean push.

7. Maintenance and Upkeep

A well-maintained board performs faster. Regular checks and upkeep keep your skateboard in peak condition.

- Check for loose screws – Tighten all screws, especially in trucks and bearings.
- Inspect wheels – Replace worn or damaged wheels.
- Lubricate bearings – Every few months or after heavy use.
- Clean the deck – Remove dirt and oil that can increase friction.

Step-by-Step Guide to Boost Your Skateboard's Speed

1. Assess Your Current Setup

   Measure your deck width and thickness.
2. Check the size and hardness of your wheels.
3. Inspect trucks and bearings for wear.

- Switch to a lighter, slightly narrower deck for better acceleration.
- Choose a deck with a smooth, flat surface to reduce friction.

- Use lighter trucks or adjust the kingpin tension for smoother rolls.
- Consider aftermarket trucks with improved pivot mechanics.

- Select larger diameter wheels (90–110 mm) for speed.

- Opt for a durometer of 95–100a for smooth surfaces.
- Ensure the wheel profile is flat to reduce rolling resistance.

- Replace old bearings with ABEC-5 or ABEC-7 rated ones.
- Lubricate bearings with a thin layer of grease.

- Practice a longer stride with a powerful push.
- Maintain a low, centered stance to reduce air drag.
- Use a smooth, rhythmic push to keep momentum.

- Clean wheels and deck regularly.
- Check for loose screws and tighten as needed.
- Replace worn wheels and bearings promptly.

- Wear a helmet, knee pads, and elbow pads.
- Practice on flat, smooth surfaces before attempting high speeds.
- Know your limits and never push beyond your skill level.

Common Mistakes That Slow You Down

- Using Soft Wheels on Smooth Surfaces – Soft wheels deform, increasing friction.
- Ignoring Bearing Maintenance – Dirty bearings create internal drag.
- Overly Wide Trucks – They add unnecessary weight and can reduce acceleration.
- Poor Footwear – Shoes that lack grip or flexibility hamper push efficiency.
- Neglecting Deck Condition – A deck with scratches or oil buildup increases rolling resistance.

Safety Considerations When Pushing for Speed

While chasing faster runs can be exciting, it also comes with risks. Always prioritize safety:

- Wear protective gear (helmet, pads).
- Choose a safe, flat, and obstacle-free area.
- Keep a clear line of sight and avoid traffic or pedestrians.
- Start with moderate speeds and gradually increase as you gain confidence.

Frequently Asked Questions

What wheel size is best for speed?

Wheels between 90 mm and 110 mm are ideal for speed on smooth surfaces. They cover more ground per rotation and reduce the number of turns needed.

Do harder wheels always mean faster speed?

Harder wheels (95–100a) roll faster on smooth surfaces because they deform less. However, on rough or uneven surfaces, softer wheels (80–90a) provide better traction and can be faster overall.

How often should I replace bearings?

Replace bearings every 6–12 months or whenever you notice increased noise or reduced speed. Regular lubrication can extend their lifespan.

Can I use a skateboard designed for tricks to go faster?

Skateboards designed for tricks often have smaller wheels and a more flexible deck, which can hinder speed. For speed, choose a board with larger wheels and a stiffer deck.

Is a lighter deck always better for speed?

A lighter deck can accelerate faster, but it may feel less stable at high speeds. Balance weight with stability based on your riding style.

Conclusion

Making a skateboard go faster is a blend of smart equipment choices, meticulous maintenance, and refined technique. By selecting a lightweight yet sturdy deck, opting for larger, harder wheels, upgrading bearings, and perfecting your push, you'll experience a noticeable boost in speed. Remember to maintain your gear regularly and never compromise safety for the thrill of velocity. With practice and attention to

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