

# ICE SKATING: THE SPORT THAT TAKES EFFORT

BY LAUREN

Pretend it's a normal day, after school, and you're a champion ice skater like Michelle Kwan or Rachel Flatt. You aren't doing your homework or lounging on your couch watching cartoons, you are at the rink training. Training, training, training. Besides school, that's pretty much all you do. You might even have to cut out some schooltime for training. Right now, you are entering the rink, and school is over. Other champion skaters dressed in white skating outfits whiz and whirl around you, like fresh white snowballs twirling through the air. Soon, you're doing it too. You glide across the ice, jump, twirl, leap, and then, 10 spins in a row. Once you're done, it's time to do it all over again. Welcome to the life of a champion skater. It's hard!!

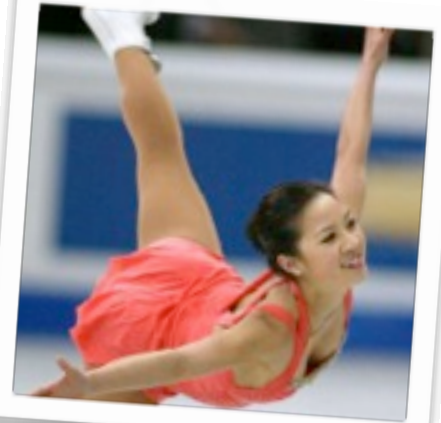


So, let's start from the beginning. Let's say your goal is to be an Olympic ice skater. If you want to do this, you should start skating from ages 3 to 6. How about you started skating at age 3, and now you are 6, and have started competing. You must have some talent, which will help you reach the Olympics. Your parents and coaches must find this talent pretty early on. You will train many, many hours a day, with multiple sessions. But don't think this is too much- just wait until you get older!



# AROUND THE RINK

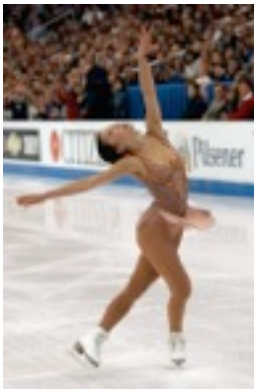
Wow! That must take a lot of effort!!



Now, let's say you are 13. Here is a competition you might have gone to, or be going to: the World figure skating championships. For this competition you work hard. You have about three sessions of skating a day, two in the morning, and one in the afternoon. After a few years, you're 16, and ready to try out for the Olympics. Now, you have about four sessions a day.

Finally, it's the big day, and you are on the ice, doing your routine. You try your hardest, and are as graceful as can be. You finally finish, and skim of the ice like a ballerina. As you step off the ice you have many questions soaring through your mind: "Did I qualify? If I did, am I ready for the Olympics? What if I didn't? Was my whole entire life that I devoted to training all just a waste?"

Then, you hear the names of the girls who qualified, and one of them is ...YOU!!! You did it! All that hard, hard work, and all the effort you put into it, really paid off!



## MICHELLE KWAN

Michelle Kwan was born in Torrance, California July 7, 1980. Her parents are Danny and Estella Kwan. She has two older siblings: Ron and Karen. Michelle became interested in skating when she saw her brother playing ice hockey. Michelle started skating when she was five. Her natural talent paid off, and she was competing by the time she was six. She finished first place at her first competition. One day, Michelle's grandmother gave her a golden dragon necklace for good luck, and Michelle wore it at every competition after that. Michelle got eighth place in her first attempt at the World Figure Skating Championships in 1994 when she was 13. In another attempt in 1995, she finished fourth, winning her first world title in 1996. She finished third place in the 2002 Olympics.

Michelle Kwan had to put in full effort to reach her goals.

