

# 45 degree kingpins

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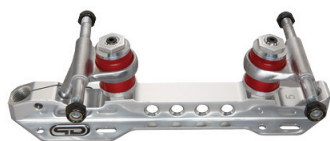
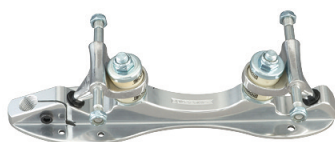
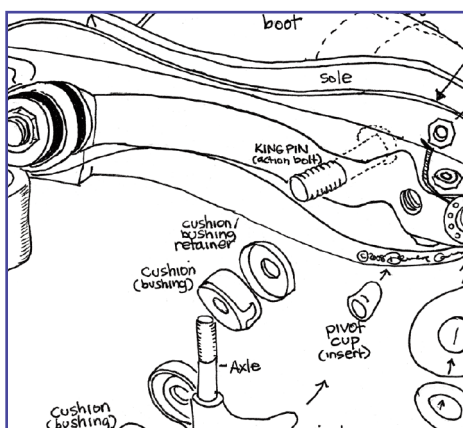
My Two Cents on 45 degree kingpins...

We've gotten a lot of questions about 45 degree angle kingpins lately. People ask us to debate the opinions they're reading on message boards or hearing from other shops, which is hard because I have never had the chance to discuss kingpins directly with anyone who does love the 45 degree angles. But I will tell you what I know. I can save you a lot of time reading this article by telling you this: just try them yourself. As with anything, you can gather up all of the opinions in the world, but those people AREN'T YOU. They probably don't skate like you or have your experience or style or body type. So what they (or I) think is nothing compared to trying it out and developing your own opinion based on your experience. But I have tried them – several times, and I loan out a pair of skates with 45 degree angle kingpins to skaters on our league, so I can tell you what conclusions we've arrived at from those experiences.

My guess is that a lot of the skaters who are evangelical about 45 degree kingpins probably skated on 45 degree kingpins before they played roller derby, and that probably informs their opinions. I skated on standard 10 degree kingpins first, so that informs mine. If you're interested in gathering opinions about 45 degree angle kingpins, you most likely fall into that latter category (or you'd already know if you like them!). Most skaters who start on 10 degree hate 45 – especially when they're switching from really lightweight nylon plates to the much heavier cast aluminum plates that are offered with 45 degree kingpins. So

that's something to keep in mind.

But, let's start from the beginning with the 10 / 45 degree thing. Forgive me if you already know this, but what I mean by that terminology is the angle of the kingpin. The kingpin is the bolt that comes out of the plate that the trucks are mounted on. Here's a diagram that shows you the names of the parts, if you're not sure which bolts are the kingpins:



Above are pictures of a 10-degree angle kingpin on the Reactor Plates and another on the PowerDyne DynaPro Aluminum Plates. See how the bolts that the trucks are on are angled just slightly off perpendicular from the plate? That's the 10 degree angle. That is standard for plates these days because a 10 degree

angle is sturdier – the closer it is to perpendicular, the less stress is on that little kingpin bolt. When it's angled more, your weight and all the force you put on it is hitting that bolt on an angle, more likely to break it. So that's one thing to keep in mind. I'm told that former speed skaters especially like 45 degree action. From what I understand about competitive quad speed skating, though, the demands of the sport are different. Athletes don't constantly have to make the kind of quick, jumping laterals and fast movements we do; speed skaters go fast in long loops and then occasionally make lateral movements (as small as possible) to get around a competitor. That's important – because a derby player has to cover a 14+ foot width of track (or find space through a pack that can be that wide) – and speed skaters would lose races if they went that wide, ever. So just another thing to keep in mind when weighing opinions, I think.



Above is a photo of a 45 degree kingpin on the SGI XK-4 DA45 Plates. See how the kingpin is angled significantly more toward the front and back of the skates? That's what the number refers to. What I found as a skater that \*learned\* on a 10 degree plate (though I wear my plates with a short axle to axle measurement and really like fast action, so I'm just the sort



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of skater who \*should\* like 45 degree kingpins) – is that I didn't like it because the angle of the kingpin put the pivot point almost under my toes. And as a derby player, I pivot off the ball of my foot to make fast movements. So having the pivot point in a different place made me feel like I was wearing skates that were too big – clown shoes – and I couldn't recover from fast movements as easily (to make the next one), if that makes sense. I wasn't sure the mount was exactly right on the first pair of skates I tried with 45 degree angle kingpins (and the first pair was single action, which was a hot topic a few years ago), and I'm a more experienced skater now, which I thought might also be a factor. So we recently got another pair of skates with the message board recommending a short forward mount of a DA45. I had a similar experience – which is to say it was absolutely awful. I'm aware that trying something really different can feel terrible when you're getting used to it, so I tried to give it enough time to grow accustomed to it. But I still hated it. Trish the Dish had a similar experience. We

know that different backgrounds, experience, and skating styles can make a difference, so we loan out those skates to skaters on our league who are interested in 45 degree – and so far every one of them has hated them. Maxxi, another skater that works at Sin City, said they made skating backwards a lot easier, but that they were an absolute curse on her (forwards) jamming.

So then Riedell sent me new skates with Revenge Plates. And I wore them for a few laps and then switched back to my old skates (with 10-degree Reactor plates) because the boot was hurting my foot. Compared to the Revenge-mounted skates, my Reactor plates felt like DOGS! So I kept switching back and forth and found that, to my surprise, the Revenge plates were 100% more agile and I absolutely loved them. And then I found out that the Revenge plates have a 15 degree kingpin angle (and that Probe nylon plates do, as well). I found THAT angle was enough to make them feel a lot more responsive – but not so much that it throws off your whole game trying

to control them. The Revenge plates are also lighter than all of the 45 degree angle plates I know of, and have the added bonus of having mostly easy-to-get, inexpensive standard sized replacement parts – and can be adjusted and fixed with standard skate tools. I get really frustrated with specialized (expensive) parts and components with weird thread pitches or odd fiber washers and bolts that need special tools and stuff. That sort of inconvenience and expense can mean a ride on the bench when your stuff breaks during a game (and that's really the only time anything ever breaks, isn't it?). So – anyway, that's how and why I arrived at my opinion. If you call our shop, you might get another opinion, depending on who you ask.

So – after testing all of them, my conclusion is that people should test drive 45 degree angle kingpins before they spend a ton of money on them. We get at least one skater a day asking about them and that's my advice: TRY THEM FIRST. You will never know how YOU will feel about them until you give them a try for yourself. 🔄