

KEY INSTRUCTIONAL POINTS

Skating is to hockey what running is to soccer. Skating is the foundation upon which all other skills are built. The level of performance attained by a player in passing, shooting, checking and stickhandling, are directly related to one's skating ability. The time spent improving a player's skating is a worthwhile investment due to the carry-over value to the many other aspects of the game.

Upon completion of this section, you will be better prepared to:

- Understand and describe the key elements of skating
- Basic Stance
- Edges
- Starts and Stops
- Striding
- Turning
- Pivots

BASIC STANCE

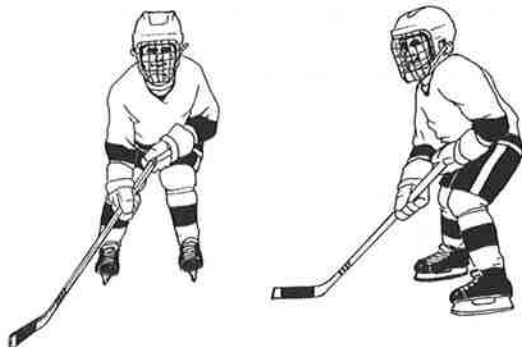
The basic stance, or "ready" position, permits a player to move in any direction from a solid base of support. It is particularly effective during face-off alignments or in front of the net when screening the goaltender or waiting for a rebound. This position is also used when executing many of the basic skills such as passing, shooting and checking.

Key Points

- Feet are shoulder width apart, pointing slightly outward
- Knees and ankles are flexed at approximately 45°
- The upper body leans slightly forward (approx. 45°) with the weight of the body on the balls of the feet
- The shoulders, knees and toes can be joined by a straight line when in the basic stance
- Head up, eyes looking forward
- The stick is held with both hands, blade flat on the ice and slightly to the side of the body

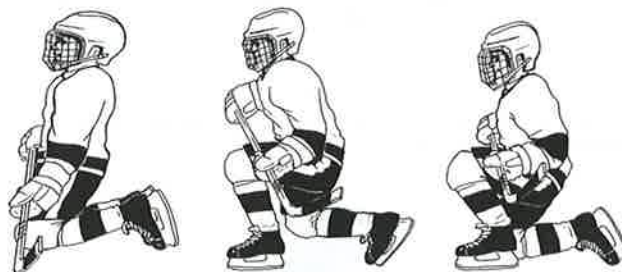
BALANCE

Balance is a basic skill required for the development of all hockey skills. A player who has developed balance can puckhandle, pass, and shoot much easier.



GETTING UP FROM ICE

1. Always come to the knees.
2. Don't place hands on the ice. Keep both hands on the stick.
3. Slide one leg forward so that the blade of your skate is on the ice and follow with the other.



SKATE EDGES

Understanding the basic edges of a skate blade is important to teaching skating. The skate blade has two edges: inside edge and outside edge.

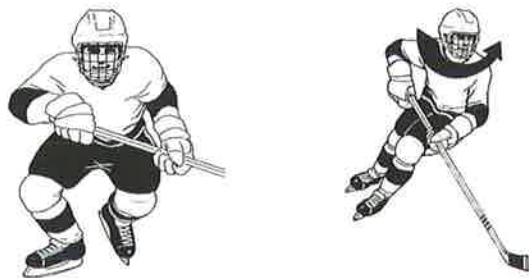


Although both skate edges play a role in propulsion, the inside edge is primarily used for "pushing" or "driving".



Inside edge

Outside edge

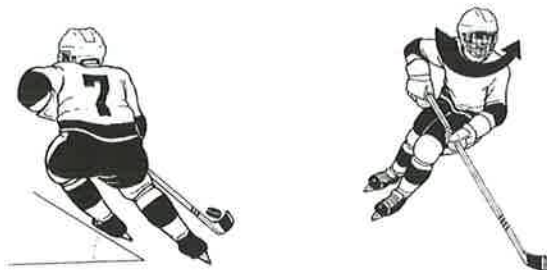


The outside edge, although sometimes used for propulsion purposes, is primarily used for turning and stopping. Figures to the right illustrate the use of both edges during a turn.

Weak skaters have control of only two edges while average skaters have mastered three edges. In both cases, individuals should strive for control of all four edges in order to become proficient skaters.

Inside edge

Outside edge



GLIDING ON TWO SKATES:

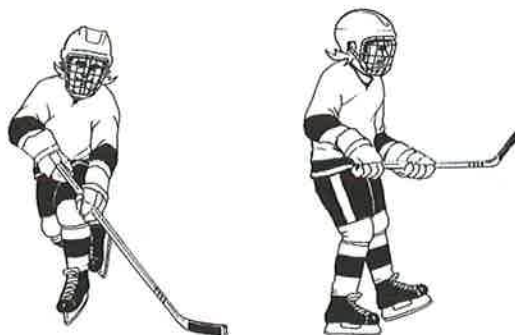
1. Take a few skating strides to gain momentum.
2. Assume the basic stance.
3. Common errors:
 - a) Ankles cave inwards or outwards.
 - b) Knees press in towards each other.
 - c) Legs are straight.
 - d) Body is twisted.
 - e) Upper body leans too far forward.
 - f) Head is looking down at the ice.
 - g) Not having two hands on the stick.
 - h) Stick not close to the ice.



GLIDING ON ONE SKATE

Basic principle in skating is that one foot must be under the body's centre of gravity at all times. Skating involves being on one foot or the other most of the time. It is therefore essential that hockey players learn to balance and glide on one foot.

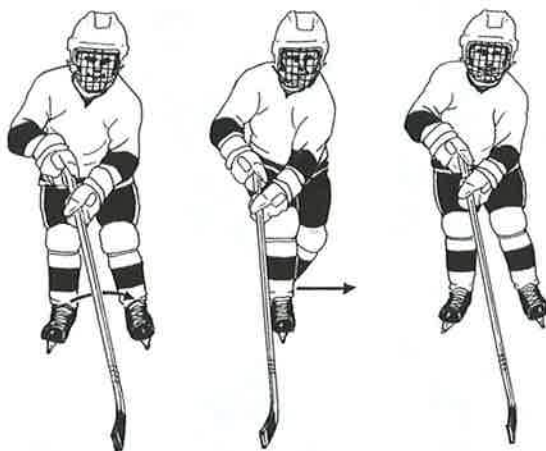
1. Take a few skating strides to gain momentum.
2. Glide on one foot.
 - a) Keep the blade of the supporting skate flat on ice, not on the edges.
 - b) Maintain the basic stance on the supporting leg.
 - c) Glide in a straight line.
3. Common errors:
 - a) Basic stance.
 - b) Weight is not being brought forward on supporting leg.
 - c) Player is on the inside or outside edge of skate.



SKATE EDGES CONT...

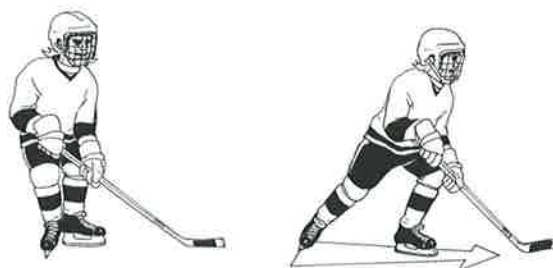
MOVING SIDWAYS

1. Players start from basic stance.
2. The body moves at right angles to the direction of movement. Do not turn body in the direction the player is going.
3. Steps must be taken flat-footed.
4. Keep the stick out in front of you.
5. Walk slowly at first. As the players pick up the drill, speed up the tempo.
6. Progression:
 - a) Put the right skate in front of the left skate.
 - b) Take the left skate from behind the right skate and place it back in the normal stance position.
 - c) Repeat steps one and two as many times as required.



T-PUSH

1. Point the front skate in the direction of movement.
2. Place the back skate slightly behind the front skate, thus forming a "T".
3. Keep the whole blade flat on the ice. Keep weight on the back skate.



SCOOTING

Scooting involves T-push, helps to improve pushing power and leg extension.

1. Place the left skate behind the right skate, forming a T-push with left skate.
2. Push down and out with left leg, fully extend the left leg and glide on right skate.
3. Bring left skate quickly up into T-push position behind right skate before the next push is made.
4. Practice using both skates.

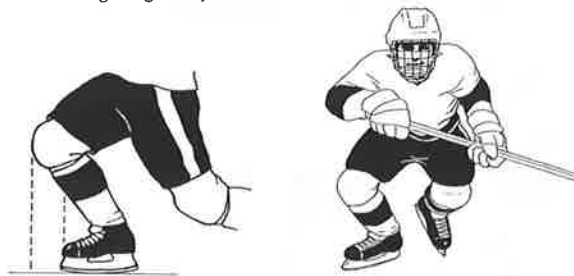


FORWARD STARTS

The ability to start quickly should be one of the first skating skills mastered by young hockey players. There are three types of forward starts used and depending on the game situation: front, crossover and T-starts.

Key Points

1. Basic stance is the starting position.
2. Centre of gravity is shifted forward with the body weight placed on the inside edge of the drive skate.
3. Body weight is placed over the drive leg which is rotated outward at an angle of approx. 90° from the player's chosen course.
4. As the number of strides increases, the player takes progressively longer strides, pushing more to the side rather than to the back.
5. Initial strokes (3 to 4) are short and quick, without gliding.
6. The drive leg is vigorously extended at the hip, knee and ankle.



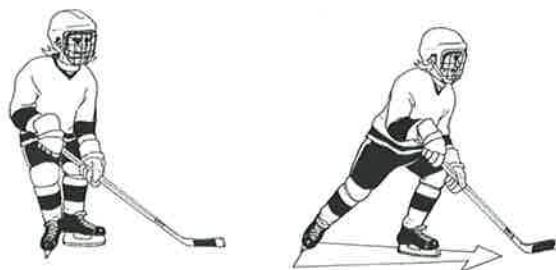
THE T START

The "T" Start is used when a player is stationary and knows beforehand the direction one wishes to travel. This is the case in some face-off situations. It is also used to teach beginners how to start as it is easier to master than the front start.

The primary difference between the "T" Start and the front start is in the positioning of the skates.

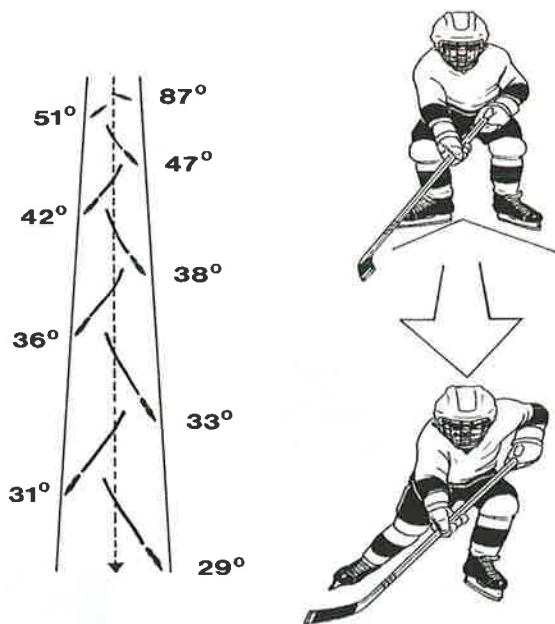
Key Points

1. Both legs are flexed slightly.
2. The driving leg is positioned at a 90° angle to the desired direction of travel, thus creating the "T" position.
3. The start is initiated by a thrust of the driving leg (inside edge).
4. Without any gliding motion, the lead foot is raised and rotated outward ready to perform another driving motion.



FRONT START

1. Players in basic stance, skates shoulder width apart, knees flexed, and back straight.
2. Turn heels in to make a "V" with your skates, while leaning slightly forward. This puts weight on front part of blades.
3. Drive off with either the right or left skate on the first stride and alternate legs with each stride. First stride with each foot is a short driving stride. More like running.
4. Next two strides are longer. Angle of the blade nears 35°- 40° at about the third or fourth stride.
5. Skates are low to the ice for quick recovery.
6. Gradually straighten up as speed increases to the maximum.
7. Should be in full stride after the first six strides.

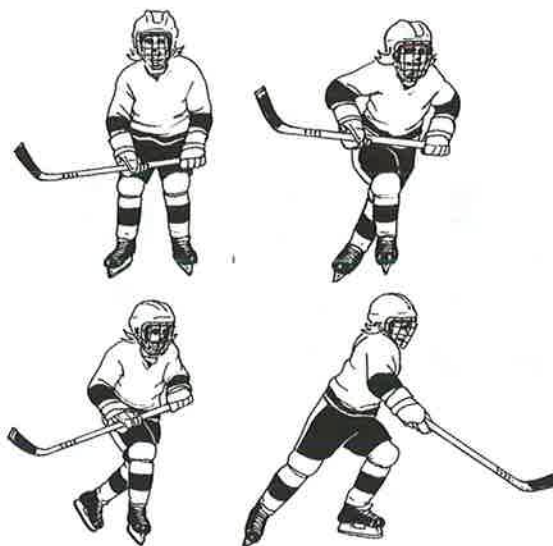


THE CROSSOVER START

A crossover start is used when a player wishes to start rapidly after a two foot parallel stop. It is also used when a player is sideways to the direction one wishes to go. It can be defined as a front start preceded by a crossover action of the leg.

Key Points

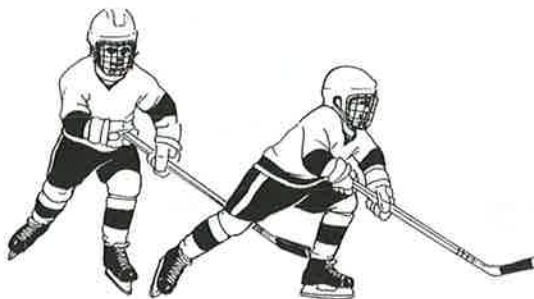
1. Skates are slightly closer together than in the basic stance.
2. Skates are parallel and perpendicular to the desired direction of travel.
3. The head and shoulders are turned in the desired direction.
4. The body leans towards the desired direction.
5. After the crossover, the outside skate is placed at a 90° angle to the desired direction.
6. Perform only one crossover to assume a forward starting position.



STRIDING IN FORWARD SKATING

Power is developed by taking fast, short strides. As speed increases, long and less frequent strides may be taken to maintain speed.

1. Stride starts with feet close together and all weight on the pushing foot.
2. Foot is turned 35°- 40°, and the push is to the side and down, pressing the blade deeply into the ice.
3. As pushing foot is forced out to the side, the knee of the other leg is pushed forward.
4. Push skating leg down and out as far as you can, until completely extended including ankle and foot extension to tip of toe.
5. When stride is finished, the weight is transferred to the forward foot and pushing foot comes slightly off the ice.
6. Knee of back leg is pulled forward with knee bending and pulled close to the gliding foot. Foot is kept close to the ice.
7. You are now ready to start the next stride with the opposite foot.



FORWARD SKATING

The efficiency of the skating stride depends on applying a few fundamental principles and optimum development of the muscles used in skating. Careful attention should be paid to the following key points when teaching forward skating.

Key Points

1. Basic Stance is the starting position.
2. Power is derived from a full and vigorous sequential extension of the hip, the knee and the ankle in a lateral thrust (to the side and not to the back as in the initial stroke).
3. The knee of the gliding leg must be well flexed extending beyond the toe of the skate in the gliding state.
4. The weight of the body is transferred over the striding leg at the beginning of each stride.
5. Recovery is executed in a circular motion, with skate low to the ice, passing under the centre of gravity.
6. Shoulders should be kept perpendicular to the intended direction with the muscles of the upper body relaxed.
7. The stick can be held in one or two hands depending on the game situation. The shoulder and arms muscles should be relaxed.



BACKWARD STANCE

1. Skating backwards is like sitting on a chair.
2. Keep the knees bent and back straight.
3. Feet and knees are shoulder width apart.
4. Lower centre of gravity by keeping the butt down.
5. Keep head up, chest out, and shoulders back.
6. Weight evenly distributed along blade of each skate.



C-CUT FOR STARTING BACKWARDS

1. Start from basic stance.
2. Turn heel of right skate (driving leg) outward as far as possible. Rotation of leg at the hip also takes place inwards.
3. From bent knee position and pressing on the ball of foot, extend the leg by pushing hard and making a semi-circle cut in the ice with the blade. Ensure weight is on driving leg.
4. Final thrust comes from the toe of the skate blade as the ankle is flexed.
5. Return the right skate to its original place beside the left skate.
6. The left leg (supporting leg) must stay directly under the players' body.
7. Repeat with left skate.



V-STOP FOR BACKWARD SKATING

1. Spread feet shoulder width apart.
2. The toes of both skates are turned out and the heels are turned in.
3. The body leans forward. This forces the inside edges of skates against the ice.
4. Slight bend in knees during final phase of stop.
5. Legs become extended during final phase of stop. Pressure is thus exerted through the skate blade.
6. When stop is completed the player should end up in the basic stance, prepared to go off in any direction.



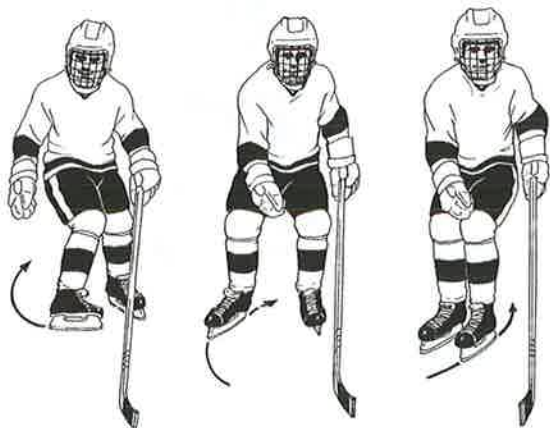
BACKWARD SKATING

1. Players are in basic stance.
2. All weight should be on one foot, with feet close together when stride begins.
3. Using the front part of blade, push straight out to side until pushing leg is straight.
4. When stride is completed step to the opposite foot and lift the foot you have pushed with.
5. Bend knee of free leg and pull it in towards the skating leg keeping the foot close to the ice.
6. As free foot comes close to the skating foot, start striding with the opposite leg.
7. Continue alternating action with both feet. Ensure weight is over striding leg.



BACKWARD C-CUT

1. Start from basic stance.
2. Turn heel of right skate (driving leg) outward as far as possible. Rotation of leg at the hip also takes place inwards.
3. From bent knee position and pressing on the ball of foot, extend the leg by pushing hard and making a semi-circle cut in the ice with the blade. Ensure weight transfer is on to the driving leg.
4. Final thrust comes from toe of the skate blade as the ankle is flexed.
5. Return the right skate to its original position beside the left skate.
6. The left leg (supporting leg) must stay directly under the player's body.
7. Repeat with the left skate.



GLIDING BACKWARDS ON ONE SKATE

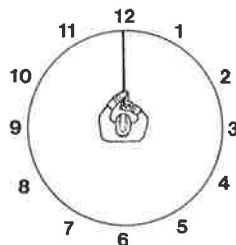
1. Player is in motion backwards.
2. Lift one skate off the ice.
3. Keep supporting leg under player's centre of gravity.
4. Keep blade of supporting skate flat on the ice, not on the edges.
5. Glide in a straight line.



ONE O'CLOCK - ELEVEN O'CLOCK STOPS

One o'clock refers to pushing out with right skate towards one o'clock. Eleven o'clock refers to pushing out with left skate towards eleven o'clock.

1. A stop in which the player remains facing forward.
2. Glide on two skates in basic stance.
3. Turn heel of right skate out and the toe of right skate in. Push skate out and down towards one o'clock.
4. Keep weight on the ball of your foot as you stop.
5. Keep knees bent and the back straight.



FORWARD SKATING CONT...

FRONT-FOOT STOP (INSIDE EDGE)

Technique is essentially the same as the two-foot parallel stop, except the inside leg is held back slightly above the ice.

1. From a regular skating stride, snap the skate of the front leg at a 90° angle to the direction of motion. Initiate with a rotating action of the hips and shoulders.
2. The weight of the body is on the front leg.
3. Pressure on the ice is applied on the inside edge and on the front part of the blade while extending the leg vigorously.
4. Inside leg is slightly off the ice ready to initiate a new movement.



FORWARD STOPS

For safety reasons, the stop should be one of the first skills taught. Use the various lines painted on the ice as stopping points in order to eliminate any unfortunate accidents which may occur close to the boards.

Stops are essential in avoiding checks, shaking off opponents or changing directions. The three types of stops commonly used are: two-foot parallel, outside leg and inside leg stops.

To stop sharply, weight should be distributed as evenly as possible over both skates, and pressure should be exerted on the front part of the blades while extending the legs vigorously - inside skate (outside edge) and outside skate inside edge.

Skates 6-8 inches apart.



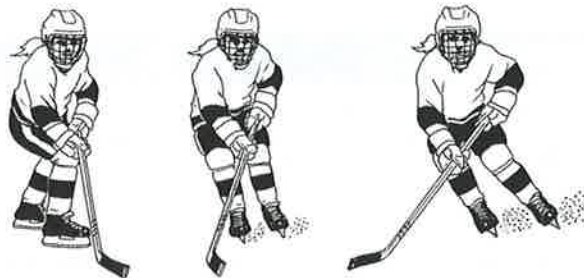
Inside skate beyond outside skate.



TWO-FOOT STOP

Will stop more quickly than a one o'clock or eleven o'clock stop.

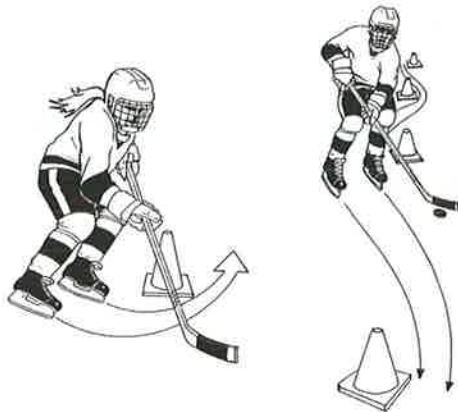
1. Glide on both skates as you approach the stopping point.
2. Basic stance — head up, knees bent, back straight, and feet shoulder width apart. Must turn sideways to the direction of travel, by turning the body to a right angle to the direction of motion. Turn initially to just the strong side.
3. Begin the stop by turning the shoulders first with the hips and legs following.
4. Turning the hips swing the outside leg into braking position. The inside leg acts as a pivot while turning into a braking position. Skates are shoulder width apart with the inside skate slightly ahead of the outside skate. The weight is equally distributed on both skates.
5. Extend the legs vigorously while exerting pressure on the front part of the blades. We are using the inside edge of the outside skate and the outside edge of the inside skate, especially the inside edge of the lead skate.
6. Keep head and shoulders straight.
7. Keep two hands on the stick.



FORWARD STOPS CONT...

GLIDE TURNS

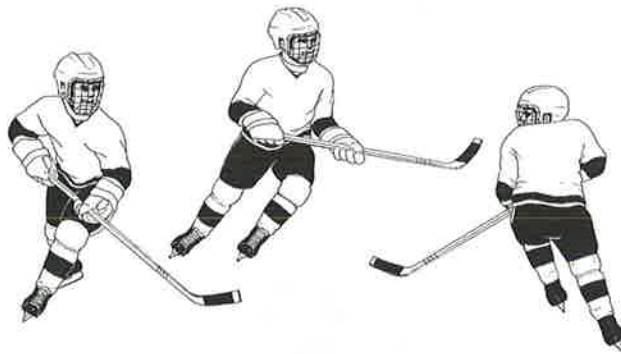
1. Skates are shoulder width apart.
2. Lead with the inside skate.
3. Head and shoulders initiate the turn.
4. Bend knees and lean inside.
5. Rock back slightly on the heels.
6. Follow the stick.
7. Perform the drill in both directions.



TIGHT TURNS

Permits a player to change direction in a very limited space while expending the least energy. Must be mastered to both sides.

1. Stop skating and let yourself glide into the approach.
2. Head up, knees bent, and feet shoulder width apart.
3. Place the skate on the side you wish to turn directly in front of the other, heel to toe.
4. Turn your head and shoulders in the direction you want to go and bring your arms and stick to the same side.
5. Lean well from the hips down inside the half circle that your skates will trace on the ice.
6. Weight should be as evenly distributed as possible on both skates. Pressure is on the outside edge of leading foot and inside edge of following foot.
7. Skates should be close together and centre of gravity ahead of skates, in order to be able to crossover after the tight turn and to accelerate rapidly.
8. Do not sit back on your blades.
9. Once skates have traveled a complete half moon on the ice, player executes a crossover start by bringing the back leg over the front leg in order to accelerate out of the turn.



FORWARD TURNS

To change direction, turns are more energy efficient than stops and starts. It is essential that individuals learn to turn equally well in both directions because of the nature of today's game (e.g. flow and rapid transition). The three types of forward turns are: sharp, crossover and forward-to-backward pivot.

Key Points

1. The skate on the side of the desired turn is placed slightly ahead of the other skate.
2. The head, shoulders, arms and stick are turned in the desired direction of travel.
3. The body leans significantly in the desired turning direction; the upper body leans slightly forward.
4. The outside leg then crosses over the inside leg in order to accelerate out of the turn.
5. Weight should be placed on the outside edge of the lead foot and the inside edge of the back foot.
6. For a sharper turn, more weight will be placed on the back of the blades.
7. The amount of knee bend will be determined by the desired quickness of the turn.

SHARP TURN

The sharp turn is one of the most difficult techniques to master, but it is also one of the most useful. The player must execute a change of direction of 180° in a very limited space while attempting to maintain the highest possible speed.

A glove, a puck or a face-off spot on the ice are good markers for teaching sharp turns. Avoid teaching sharp turns around tall cones as it prevents players from leaning well into their turns.



FORWARD TURNS CONT...

FORWARD CROSSOVER TURN

Forward crossovers are used to change direction while attempting to gain speed.

Key Points

1. Rotate the head, shoulder, arms and stick in the desired direction of travel.
2. The body leans well into the circle with the trunk bent slightly forward.
3. The weight is transferred from the inside to the outside leg which now thrusts by an extension of the hip, knee and ankle.
4. To increase speed, bend the knees as much as possible before extending the driving leg.
5. Body thrust is alternately carried out by both legs, while the body weight is kept above the drive leg.
6. Following a vigorous extension of the hip, knee and ankle of the inside leg (outside edge), the outside leg (inside edge) crosses over the inside leg.



CROSSOVER PUMPING

Used to keep speed or to increase speed while skating on a curve.

1. Skating on the circles.
2. Push outside skate out toward the side keeping the blade in contact with the ice until the leg is fully extended.
3. Push down on the ball of your foot at the end of the push so that you are using your ankles to get that little extra push from each stroke.
4. Lean into the circle from the waist down by pushing your hips into the circle and keeping your inside shoulder up.
5. After extension in step 2, swing your outside leg over the skate and place outside skate parallel to the inside skate.
6. The inside skate then pushes to full extension outward under the body (using outside edge).
7. When fully extended, return it quickly to its original position under the body and beside the outside skate.
8. Repeat the sequence in a continuous manner, pushing with equal force with both strokes.
9. Repeat in both directions.



BACKWARD TURNS

Backward turns in both directions are essential for mobility and positioning, and are skills that should be mastered by all players.

Backward lateral crossovers permit a player to move laterally in order to remain in front of an attacker. They can be executed from a stopped position or while skating backward. The mechanics of this movement are similar to those used during the backward crossover start. (See previous)

Key Points

1. Basic stance is the starting position.
2. The hips and trunk turn slightly towards the direction of the crossover; the head remains straight.
3. Facing the play, the body is moved in the desired direction of travel by the extension of the outside leg (inside edge) followed by an extension of the inside leg (outside edge).
4. The outside leg crosses over in front of the inside leg and is brought down on the ice. This action is repeated until the desired position is attained.
5. The body weight is shifted to the leg that remains on the ice.

BACKWARD CROSSOVER TURNS

The backward crossover turn is used to shift from backward to forward skating without having to come to a complete stop.

Key Points

1. Basic stance is the starting position.
2. Head and shoulders open in the direction the player intends to pivot.
3. The outside leg extended, and exerts force (inside edge) on the ice by a vigorous extension of the hip, knee and ankle.
4. The inside leg (outside edge) extended and the outside leg (inside edge) is brought back to begin the final stage of backwards to forwards transition.
5. The inside leg (outside edge) completes its final thrust, the weight is now on the outside leg (inside edge), when the pivots to assume a forward skating position.

One-leg backward stop



BACKWARD TURNS CONT...

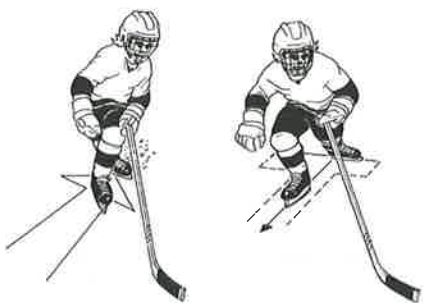
REVERSING DIRECTIONS

1. Perform a two-foot stop.
2. Perform a T-push to get started in the reverse direction.
 - a) Place front skate in the direction of movement.
 - b) Place the back skate slightly behind the front skate, thus forming a "T". Keep the whole blade flat on the ice. Keep weight on the back skate.
 - c) Give a strong push with the back skate. This involves a straightening of the back leg pushing the skate down against the ice.
 - d) Stress the head up, knees well bent, leg fully extended, and recovery skate close to the ice on recovery.
3. After T-push resume striding to gain speed.



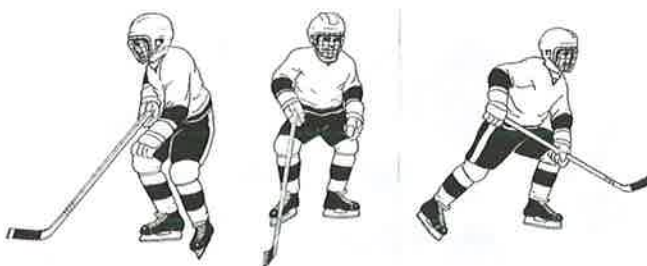
BACKWARD ONE-FOOT STOP AND T-PUSH

1. Player is in motion backwards.
2. Left leg extends and transfers weight to right leg.
3. Left leg now being weightless begins to swing back,
4. Shoulders, hips, and legs turn in a counter-clockwise direction as the left skate is planted in a braking position.
5. Left knee is bent and the weight is transferred from the right leg to the left leg.
6. The majority of resistance comes from the left skate.
7. Right skate and knee move under the body.
8. Skates are now in a position for T-push start.



PIVOT (BACKWARDS TO FORWARDS)

1. Players are in motion backwards.
2. To turn to the left, transfer the weight to the right skate.
3. Turn is started by rotating the left shoulder backward. The torso and hips will follow.
4. Lift the left skate off the ice and turn it as close to 180° as possible. Glide straight back on right skate.
5. Transfer the weight to the left foot to complete the turn.
6. At moment of weight transfer, the player must dig in his right skate and push hard, fully extending the right leg.
7. You are now ready to start forward striding.
8. It is important to accelerate out of the turn.
9. Must learn to turn to both sides.



PIVOTS (FORWARD TO BACKWARD):

1. Players gain forward momentum and coast on the left skate.
2. The player straightens up and rotates his right skate outward (as close to 180° as possible) in almost a heel to heel position. Turn is started by rotating right shoulder backwards. The torso and hips will follow.
3. Transfer the weight from the left skate to the right skate; step down on right skate and unweight yourskates by going from bent knees to straight legs. This will help in transferring from left to right skate.
4. Finish pivot by turning the left skate so that it is parallel with the right skate.
5. Push to side with right skate and start to skate backwards.
6. Must learn to turn both sides.



PUCKHANDLING STANCE

1. Stick length.

When on skates, the stick should come up to an area between the collar bone and chin, so that free movement of the top hand in front of the body is possible.

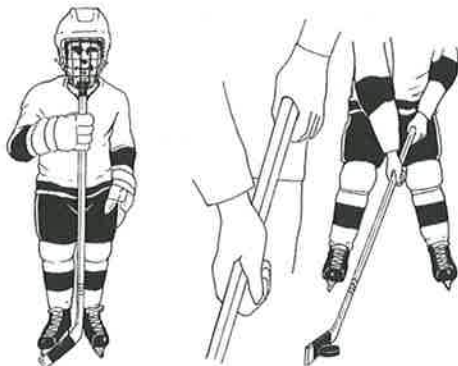
2. Stick lie.

When assuming the correct skating stance, the blade should be flat on the ice.

3. Younger players should have junior size sticks that have narrower shafts and shorter blades.

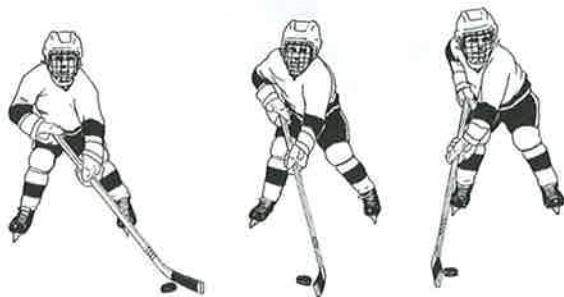
4. The grip.

- The top hand must be right at the end of the stick.
- The lower hand should be 20 -30 cm down the shaft.
- The "V" formed by the thumb and the forefinger should be pointing straight up the shaft.
- Blade of stick is flat on the ice.
- Keep the head up and use peripheral vision to look at puck. Younger players should be allowed to look and feel for the puck.



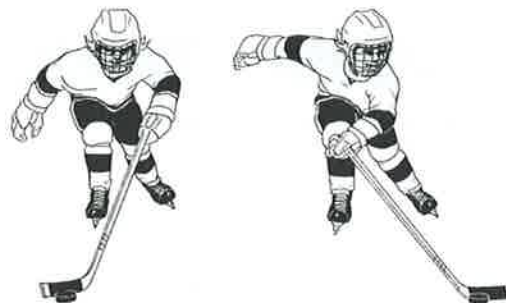
STATIONARY PUCKHANDLING

- Assume puckhandling stance.
- Move the puck from side to side by rolling the wrists. This cups the stick on both the forehand and backhand, thus, allowing better control.
- To roll the wrists, turn the toe of the blade inwards and the heel outwards, then reverse direction.
- Puck is handled in the middle of the blade.
- Keep arms and upper body relaxed.
- Puck control must be smooth, rhythmical, and quiet.



OPEN-ICE CARRY

- Players have control of stick with top hand only. The puck is pushed ahead with the bottom edge of the stick blade.
- Arm action is in a slight forward thrust by straightening the arm at the elbow.
- The puck should be pushed alternately with the blade pointed to the left then to the right.
- Push the puck only slightly ahead.

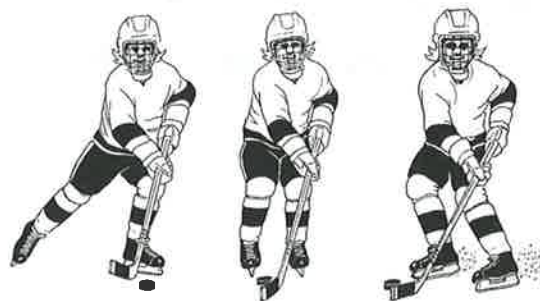
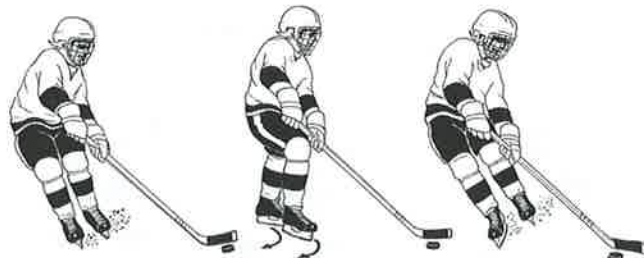


USE OF FEET TO CONTROL THE PUCK

- Turn toe out so that puck can be controlled by the skate blade.
- Players should take a quick look down but not for too long. Try to keep head up.
- Keep puck within one metre of skates.

STOPPING WITH PUCK

- When stopping, the puck is kept under control by cupping the stick blade over the puck.
- Keep two hands on the stick.



BACKWARD TURNS CONT...

TOUCHING KNEE TO ICE WHILE CONTROLLING THE PUCK

Player should slide bottom hand down the shaft of stick, this keeps blade flat on the ice.



PASSING

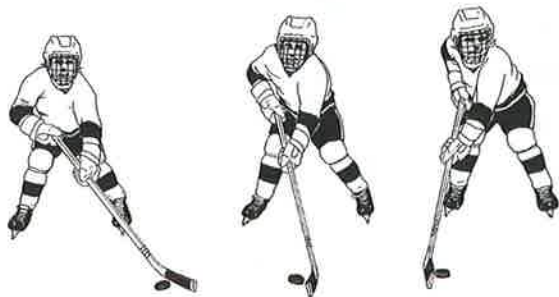
Passing is a skill that requires a great deal of practice. Introducing your players to all aspects of this skill is essential.

Key Points

1. The hands should be in a comfortable position, similar to that used when dribbling the puck.
2. The arms should be held out in front of the body.
3. The eyes are fixed on the target. (Note: the head does not necessarily turn to face the target, as this would telegraph the pass.)
4. The stick blade is perpendicular to the target upon releasing the puck.
5. The stick blade follows through towards the target.

Here are some other considerations with respect to passing:

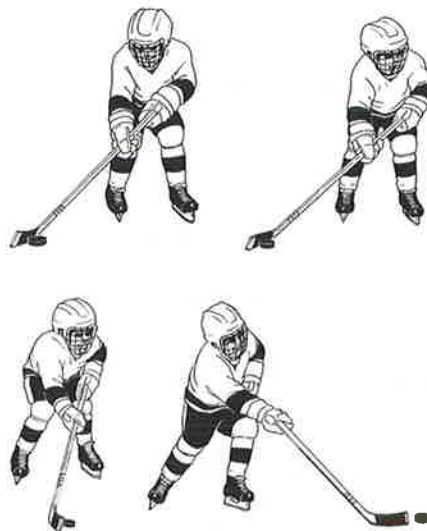
- A. The passer should use the appropriate type of pass in a given situation.
- B. A pass should not force the receiver to slow down. A passer should "lead" a receiver in motion, thus permitting reception in full stride.
- C. When it is not possible to pass to the stick of the receiver, pass to the skates, behind the receiver, or to an open space.
- D. The passer ordinarily does not stop skating after making the pass, but moves to a position of support.



PASSING - FOREHAND SWEEP PASS

NOTE: It is very important that each player has a stick which is not too long.

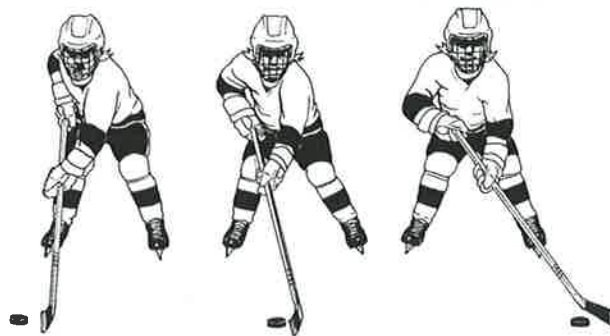
1. Player is in the normal puckhandling stance.
2. Bring the puck beyond the plane of the body. Puck is in the middle portion of the stick blade.
3. Stick blade should be at right angles to the target.
4. Body weight is on the back leg.
5. Head is up looking at the target.
6. Puck is propelled toward target with a sweeping action of the arms. Pull with the top hand and push with the bottom hand.
7. As the puck is propelled, the weight is transferred from the rear leg to the front leg.
8. Follow through low and towards the target.
9. Be prepared to receive.



PASSING CONT...

RECEIVING A PASS

1. Head up looking at the puck.
2. Present a target, stick blade on the ice.
3. Keep blade at 90° toward direction of puck.
4. As the puck contacts the blade, some give is allowed providing a cushioning effect.
5. Be prepared to pass.



TYPES OF BACKHAND PASSES

It is essential that the backhand pass be perfected. As it is a very difficult skill, it should be given special attention.

Key Point

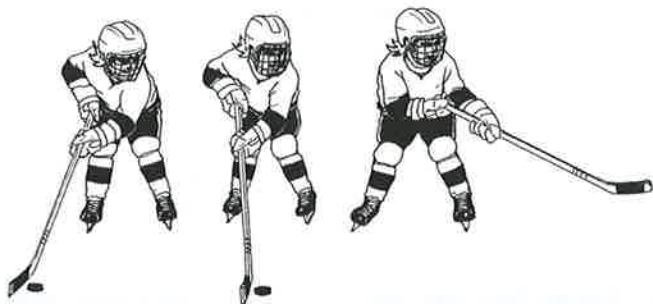
A player must be able to execute a backhand pass without cutting down on skating speed, changing direction or excessively rotating the shoulders.

BACKHAND PASS

Like its forehand counterpart, this is perhaps the most often used backhand pass.

Key Points

1. The grip on the stick is similar to that used when stickhandling and tightens during the passing action.
2. The weight of the body should be transferred from the leg furthest from the receiver to the closest leg.
3. The upper hand must move in front of the body to maintain the blade perpendicular to the target.
4. The length of the sweep will depend on the time available and the distance of the receiver.



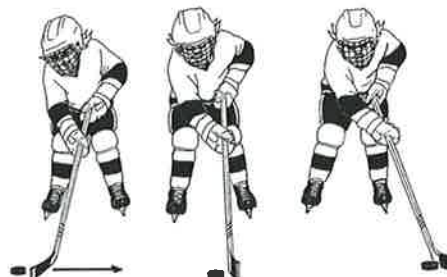
BACKHAND SWEEP PASS

1. Hands are well away from the body.
2. Bring the puck beyond the plane of the body.
3. Shift the weight to the back leg.
4. Head up, looking at target.
5. Cup the blade of the stick over the puck.
6. Sweeping action of stick across the body to slide the puck.
7. Shift weight to the front foot.
8. Snap and roll wrists.
9. Follow through low.
10. Be prepared to receive.



RECEIVING PASS BACKHAND

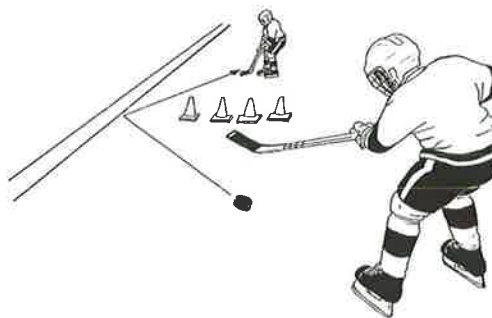
1. Head up watching puck.
2. Stick is on the ice for a target.
3. Cup your stick and cushion the impact by relaxing the wrists.
4. Be prepared to pass.



TYPES OF BACKHAND PASSES CONT...

BOARD PASS TO PARTNER

1. Make boards work for you in passing the puck.
2. Used frequently by defenseman in their own zone.
3. Useful when a defender is between you and your receiver.
4. A puck passed off the boards rebounds away at the same angle. In other words, the angle onto the boards equals the angle off of the boards.



SHOOTING

The ability to shoot the puck in various situations that arise during a game of hockey is an invaluable skill. Hockey players should have a complete arsenal of shots from which to choose. An incomplete player is limited to only one or two types of shots.

Key Points

1. Accuracy is the most important. (Hard, quick shots that miss the net are not much of a threat).
2. Get the stick blade traveling as fast as possible.
3. Speed of execution (i.e. quick release) is as important as the speed of the puck. The element of surprise is a very important factor in shooting.
4. When advantageous, make use of possible screens when shooting at the goal.
5. Always keep the stick close to the ice around the net, and react to the movement of the puck after each shot (e.g. a rebound).
6. Master the various shots in order to have the right shot for any game situation.

For a better understanding of shooting skills, each shot can be broken down into three phases: preparatory, execution and follow-through. This breakdown also permits a better and more complete analysis of the skill, and thus facilitates corrections.

PHASES OF SHOOTING

PREPARATORY PHASE

1. Preparation to release the shot (e.g. backswing in a slap shot).
2. Movement of 4 joints into position.

EXECUTION PHASE

1. Forces generated in the direction of the shot.
2. Impact of the stick with the puck.
3. Body movements (e.g. trunk rotation, weight transfer and shoulder flexion).

FOLLOW-THROUGH PHASE

1. Begins once the puck leaves the blade of the stick.
2. A good follow-through ensures that body segments do not decelerate too soon.

TYPES OF FOREHAND SHOTS

The sweep shot, so named because of its motion, is a valuable tool to players of all ages. This is one of the more accurate shots as the puck is in contact with the stick throughout the shooting motion. The sweep shot can also be deceptive, as a pass can be made from the same sweeping motion.

Key Points

1. The spread of the hands on the stick is somewhat wider than that used when stickhandling.
2. The puck is brought to the side of the body, and should be well behind the left skate.
3. Maximum force is transferred to the stick by bending the trunk forward and shifting body weight from the back to the front leg.
4. The grip should tighten and the wrists should snap before or as the puck reaches the forward leg.
5. The puck is propelled with a snap of the wrists. In one motion, the top hand snaps forward then back towards the body while the wrist is rapidly extended. The bottom wrist flexes and whips the stick through towards the target.

TYPES OF FOREHAND SHOTS CONT...

WRIST SHOT

The wrist shot is a surprise shot which depends on the quickness of release. It is a useful shot around the opponent's net, where space and time are often limited.

FLIP SHOT

A technique used to hit the upper corners of the net is to close in, or to lift the puck over the sprawling goalkeeper.

1. Puck is on the toe of the stick blade which is near the front foot.
2. Lift is given by tilting the blade so that only its bottom edge contacts the puck.
3. Deliver from in front of the body with a scooping action of the stick by the wrists.
4. Need a quick snap of the wrists and a high follow through.

Backhand is similar, except puck is closer to the heel of the blade to get better action.



FOREHAND WRIST SHOT

1. Basically the same grip as passing.
2. Bring puck beyond plane of the body.
3. Keep the puck in contact with the stick blade.
4. Weight is on the back foot.
5. In the process of sweeping the puck forward, the weight is transferred onto the front foot.
6. Snap and roll the wrists. Pull the top hand and push the bottom hand.
7. Follow through low for a low shot, and high for a high shot.

TYPES OF BACKHAND SHOTS

SWEEP SHOT

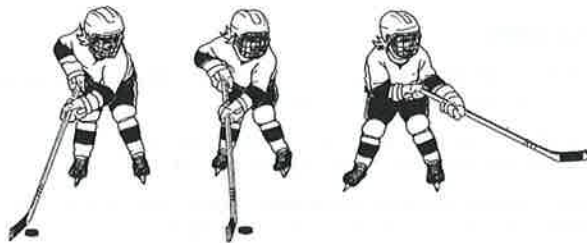
The sweep shot is perhaps the most commonly used backhand shot. It is both fast and accurate.

Key Points

1. Grip is usually wider than in the stickhandling position.
2. With the skates directed at the target, the shoulders are rotated sideways and the trunk is slightly bent over the puck.
3. The front knee is well flexed.
4. The sweeping action is directed at the goal by a vigorous rotation of the trunk and shoulders, a forceful extension of the legs, followed by a dynamic action of the arms and wrists.
5. During this action, the weight of the body is transferred from the back leg to the front leg as the puck travels from the heel to the toe of the stick blade.

BACKHAND SWEEP SHOT

1. Basically same grip as passing.
2. Bring puck beyond plane of the body.
3. Weight is on the back leg.
4. In the process of sweeping the puck through the weight is transferred to the front foot.
5. Head up looking for opening.
6. Snap and roll the wrists. Push the top hand and pull the bottom hand.
7. Release the puck and follow through low.



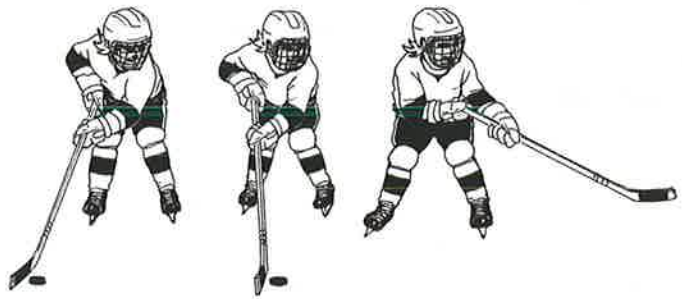
TYPES OF BACKHAND SHOTS CONT...

WRIST SHOT

The backhand wrist shot is usually used by a player who has faked a move to the forehand side to bring the puck to the backhand for a quick shot on the goaltender. Since the player is in a forward skating position, the wrist shot becomes the best tool in this particular situation.

Key Points

1. The hands are spaced slightly farther apart than during the dribble.
2. The puck is placed on the heel of blade to the side and slightly in front of the player.
3. The puck is then whipped in the direction of the goal by a vigorous rotation of the shoulders and a dynamic action of the arms and wrists.
4. There is a limited transfer of weight.



DEKES

The deke is a second means accessible to a player who wishes to become free of an opponent and maintain possession of the puck. It may also precede a pass or shot in order to mislead an opponent.

Key Points

1. A fake must be based on deception by having all the appearance of reality.
2. Dekes should be initiated at a sufficient distance from an opponent to avoid being stick checked.
3. Change of speed and directions are important factors to the success of any deke.
4. Acceleration after completing the deke is often important (be certain that drills allow for practice of this).
5. If possible, dekes should be based on a knowledge of the opponent's weaknesses.
6. A deke must give the opponent enough time to go for the fake before the player undertakes the intended action.
7. While deking an opponent, the player would make an effort to remain fully aware of the whereabouts of teammates and opponents.

It is important to remember that dekes are a creation of the imagination that can be perfected through practice. Here are some basic dekes which can be modified or combined in many ways to suit the situation, the skills and needs of each player.

TYPES OF DEKES

BODY FAKES

1. Change of Direction: the player feints with the head and / or shoulders in one direction, then goes in the other direction.
2. Between the legs: After a deke with the head, shoulders or stick, the player slips the puck between the opponent's legs and recovers it behind the opponent.

SKATING FAKES

1. Stop and Start: the player skates at full speed as if to outskate the opponent, then stops abruptly and starts in another direction.
2. Change of Speed: the player slows down, forcing the opponent to do the same, then accelerates rapidly, catching the opponent flat-footed.
3. Directional Skating: the player does crossovers in one direction, and when the opponent moves to cover, cuts back in the other direction.
4. Using the Boards: the player acts as if to skate between the player and the boards, but cuts around the opponent, banks the puck off the boards and then retrieves it.

STICK FAKES

1. Fake a Shot: the player fakes a shot, waits until the opponent reacts, then skates around the opponent.
2. Fake a Pass: The player fakes a pass with the head or the stick, then skates on goal, or dekes the opponent.

SKATING FAKES

Two types of skating fakes:

1. Change of pace:
 - a) To change pace, increase or decrease the shove your pushing leg
2. Body deke:
 - a) Drop your head, shoulder, or hips, one way, then move the other.



TYPES OF DEKES CONT...

BODY FAKES

Body fakes may include movement of the head, upper or lower body, in a deceptive movement designed to get the defender to adjust position or lean in the wrong direction. When this occurs, the puck carrier accelerates quickly in the opposite direction before the defender has time to recover. These fakes are normally initiated just outside the checking range of the opponent. This allows the puck to be moved through the defensive triangle which is formed by the skates and stick of the defender.



LOOK AWAY

The puck carrier, by looking or glancing at a teammate and indicating a passing intention may force the defender to momentarily adjust position in the direction of the potential pass receiver. This results in the creation of space or an avenue for the puck carrier to attack the net.

Keeping body between opponent and puck



DRIVING THE NET

An offensive player, with an initial outside position on a defender, uses strong crossover strides or leans heavily with an extended inside leg and arm in order to cut to the front of the net for a potential scoring opportunity. The attacker attempts to drive to the far post and maintains one's body position between the puck and the defender so as to protect the puck.



SHOOTING AND PASSING FAKES

FAKE SHOT

The attacker, by initiating a shooting action, may force the defender to momentarily 'freeze' in a shot blocking response. This allows the puck carrier to accelerate past the defender and attack the net.

WALKOUTS

When in possession of the puck in the offensive zone (behind the goal line or along the side boards), a player should take advantage of any seam or lane to attack the net. The puck carrier fakes a pass to force the defender to adjust one's position and then accelerates through the open lane to a potential scoring position. In the same way, a player receiving a pass should fire through an open lane created by a defender who fails to adjust one's position.

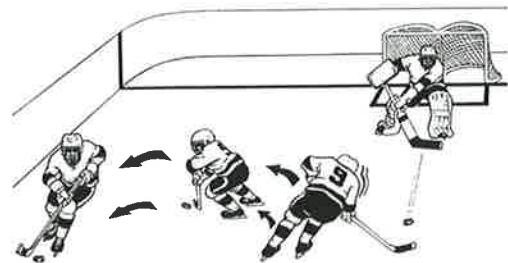


SHAKING A DEFENDER ONE-ON-ONE

The puck carrier must also be able to maintain possession of the puck when under checking pressure by a defender. Use of the body, skates and stick, as well as evasive skating movements, are required to shake a defender one-on-one, quickly enough.

TURN UP

This is an offensive manoeuvre used by players who have just recovered a loose puck while skating in the direction of their own net. It may also be used by puck carriers who are momentarily forced to retreat towards their own net. The offensive player first executes a fake by dipping the shoulder and angling the skates as if to turn in one direction. The puck carrier then rapidly makes a tight turn (preferably towards the near boards) with the puck in the opposite direction and accelerates as the turn is completed. The attacker is now in a position to pass to a teammate or skate with the puck.

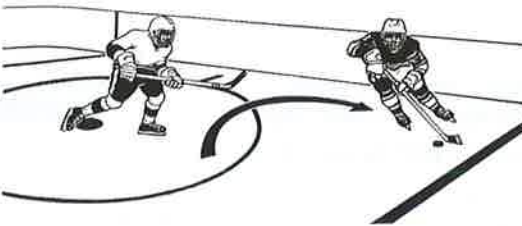
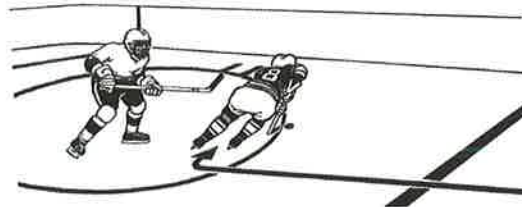


SHOOTING AND PASSING FAKES CONT...

DELAYING

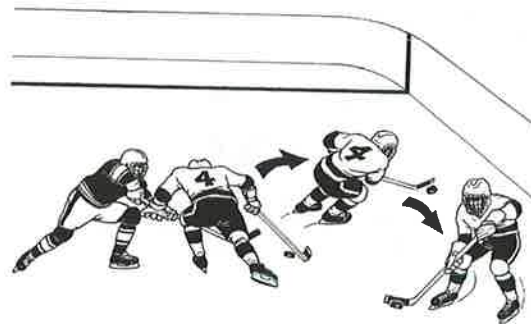
When an attacker is cut off from moving to the net with the puck, a delay movement can create time and space for the attacker by:

1. Tight turn towards board to create space between puck carrier and defender.
2. Player as off wing 'fades' to outside and momentarily creates space for self-skate or laterally. Quick stop - facing inside of rinks.



TURN AWAY PIVOT

When the outside drive to the net is cut off by a defender, the puck carrier pivots away from the defender by 'driving' out towards the boards. This involves a semi-glide turn to the outside and is completed with the puck carrier facing towards the middle of the ice looking for a potential pass receiver.



QUICK STOP

As another option, the attacker may execute a quick stop facing the in direction of the middle of the ice. If the defender is not able to stop as quickly, the puck carrier will have space and time in order to look for a passing option or attack the net. Against a skilled defender, it will be necessary for the puck carrier to move laterally with the puck immediately after the quick stop, in order to gain the necessary space.

PROTECTING THE PUCK

In tight checking situations, it is necessary for the offensive player to protect the puck. This involves use of the skates and stick maintain possession of the puck, while using the body to establish position, thereby keeping the defender away from the puck. If unable to break loose from the checker, the attacker may attempt to hold off the defender until a teammate moves in to provide support. In some cases, it may be necessary to freeze the puck to force a stoppage in play.

CHECKING SKILLS

Checking is carried out to gain possession of the puck. However, before teaching checking, it is imperative that skating skills be taught as they are the base upon which checking skills are built. Elements of skating skills, speed, agility, balance and strength are key skills required in the art of checking. The coach must recognize that before checking skills can be taught or developed, the player must be introduced to and have functionally mastered the basics of skating.

Upon completion of this chapter, you will be better prepared to:

- Relate skating skills to checking skills
- Instruct or teach checking skills in a progressive manner
- Instruct or teach protection skills
- Instruct your players in the rules pertaining to checking
- Checking from behind
- Curbing stick infractions

SKATING SKILLS & THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH CHECKING

Each of these skating skills has a direct relationship with checking skills. The majority of mistakes made when checking an opponent stem from incorrect body position on the skates, which is directly related to skating skill.

For example, when a two foot stop is completed, both legs must be in a position to initiate the drive into the new skating position. If the legs are not in a proper flexed position, both time and power are lost. The drive should be initiated by the back leg, so that at no time are the legs crossed. If the legs are crossed over at the precise time of a check, the attacking player has only to move to the side to beat the checker.

Fundamental body position errors and leg movements errors such as this example creates compounding problems in all other forms of checking skills, from the poke check to the body check. Therefore, skating should be taught in a progressive fashion (i.e. the basics of the forward and backward skating stride switch to speed of leg movements, correct body position for two and one foot stops both forward and backward, quick starts, lateral movements, forward and backward crossovers, pivots from forward to backward) and once mastered, a coach should start teaching checking.

CHECKING WITHOUT MAKING CONTACT

Angling can be considered as a player's first line of defense. Body and stick positions are important in checking without making contact. This section will examine angling as one technique of checking without making contact.

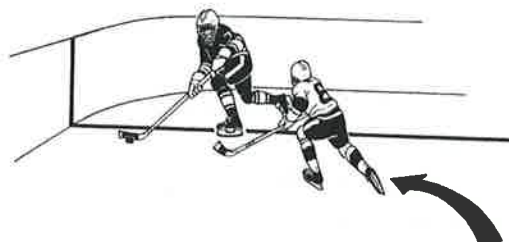
ANGLING

Angling is the ability to force an opponent to go in the direction you want. This would normally be towards the board or to the outside of you.

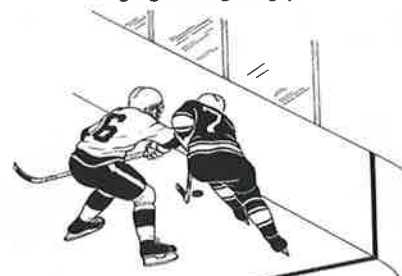
Key Points

1. Remain between the puck carrier and the pass receiver, gradually reducing the puck carrier's space.
2. Skate parallel to the opponent or in an arc or circular movement, but not in a straight line.
3. Skate slightly behind the opponent, thus not allowing the opponent to turn up ice to the inside of you.
4. Adjust your speed to the opponent's speed.
5. Your stick is always on the ice in the position to intercept a pass, and as a decoy to force the opposition to the desired direction.

Angling



Angling: Closing the gap



Angling: Establishing contact



Angling: The pin



STICK CHECKING

Stick checking may be considered the second line of defence as angling forces the opposition to a position where contact can be made with the stick.

When you stick check, you must maintain control of both yours' and your opponent's sticks. Stick checks can be effective to:

1. Delay the advancement of the opposition
2. Force a loss of puck control by the opposition
3. Control the puck (become the offensive team) yourself (or a teammate)

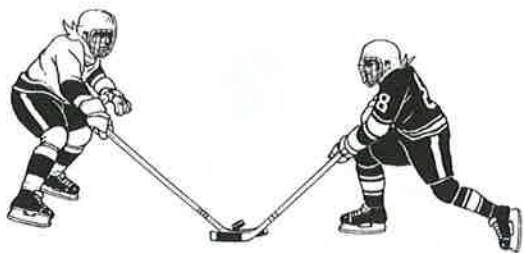
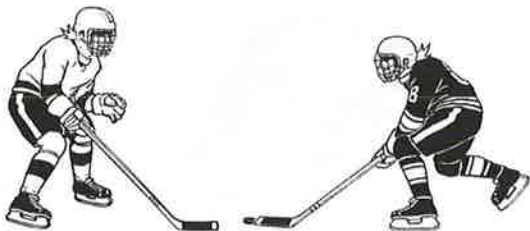
This section will examine six types of stick checks: poke, sweep, hook, hit, stick lift, and stick press.

POKE CHECK

Key Points

1. Primary vision is on the player: peripheral vision is on the puck.
2. Stick is held with one hand.
3. Keep the elbow slightly bent and close to the body.
4. Perform a quick extension of the forearm to poke the puck.
5. Legs always remain in a flexed (bent) position.
6. When required, keeping skating.
7. Maintain balance throughout the check.

Major Problem: Player lunges at the opponent, causing the legs to straighten, therefore leaving the defending player in a poor body position to react if the poke, check is missed.



SWEEP CHECK

This check is valuable in many different situations, yet is often overlooked in the checking arsenal.

Key Points

1. The hockey stick and blade should be on the ice.
2. Sweep the ice surface in a circular motion.
3. Maintain movement while performing this check, as it will enable you to back check or pin the opponent along the boards, should you miss the sweep check.
4. You should control this check with either hand when possible.

The disadvantages of the sweep check are that if you miss the puck, and trip the opponent, you may be called for a tripping penalty. Also, you're out of position if you get beat by the puck carrier.



HOOK CHECK

Key Points

1. One hand is on the stick.
2. Stick blade is flat on the ice.
3. The puck will be controlled by trapping it in the curve where the shaft meets the upper part of the blade.
4. Hook the puck towards you.
5. Can be executed from both a forward position and backward skating position.
6. To lengthen your reach, you can perform this check while on one knee.



STICK CHECKING CONT...

HIT (THE BLADE OF THE STICK)

Key Points

1. Skate parallel to the puck carrier.
2. When the puck is on the puck carrier's stick blade, on the opposite side of you, hit the stick to provoke the loss of puck control.
3. To be effective, you must forcefully hit the stick near the heel of the stick blade.

Blade contact

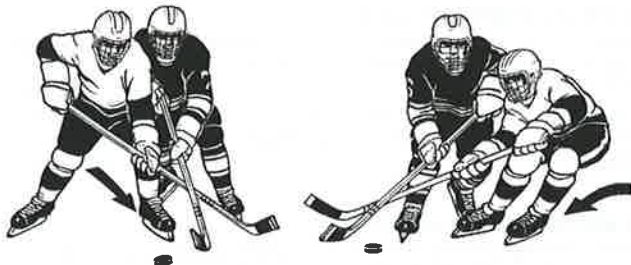


STICK LIFT

Key Points

1. Approach the puck carrier from behind.
2. When close enough, lift the shaft of the opponent's stick near its heel and compete for possession of the puck.

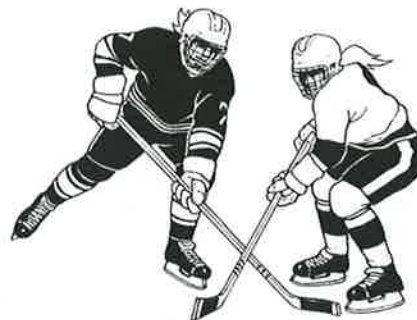
Note: If you are close enough to the puck carrier, you should position your body in front of the puck carrier. The stick lift may be done when approaching the opponent from an angle. Surprise and strength are key requirements for this skill.



STICK PRESS

Key Points

1. The stick is placed over the shaft, below the opponent's bottom stick hand.
2. Just as the opponent is to receive a pass, or move to redirect the puck, press down firmly.



PROTECTION IN BODY CHECKING

It is very important to have the ability to avoid or prepare oneself for a check.

To avoid being checked:

1. Keep the head and eyes up, scanning the play.
2. Maintain movement or motion.
3. Don't reach back for a pass unless you are sure there is no opposition player in front of you.

To prepare to receive a check:

1. Maintain a wide stance by bending the knees and leaning in the direction from which the check is coming.
2. Initiate movement towards the checked just prior to impact and ensure low contact.
3. Wear the appropriate protective equipment.
4. When falling down or colliding with the boards, absorb the shock with the largest available portion of the body.
5. Avoid falling on extended body parts.
6. During off-ice sessions, enhance your strength and flexibility.