Focus: Fundamentals of Individual Possession
Players should all work towards being able to move the ball in any direction and at appropriate speeds, while still maintaining close control. The ability to change direction and speed must be practiced until automatic, since hockey is a 360° game, both in moving with the ball and receiving it. Gripping and moving the stick correctly is essential to be able to execute all skills. Balanced footwork and good vision will also help to apply the skills in the game situation.

Grip and footwork
The left hand holds the top of the stick with the thumb and forefinger forming a V down the back of the stick. The right hand holds the stick just above halfway. With this grip, the flat side of the head of the stick is placed against the ball, which should be slightly in front and to the right of the feet. You will have to lean forward at the waist and BEND YOUR KNEES to execute this strong position. This body and stick position in relation to the ball allows the player to move forward with the ball, while keeping it under control and in close contact with the stick. Players must learn to move forward, sideways, and backwards with good footwork and ball control. Short, quick steps work best when making lots of changes in direction.

Indian Dribble
This skill involves moving the ball in all directions using the reverse and open stick techniques. The ball is dragged or tapped to the left with the forehand stick and dragged or tapped back to the right with the reverse stick. The left wrist constantly rotates the stick over the ball between forehand and reverse stick positions, while the right hand provides support and allows the stick to turn in it. A good tip for correct grip by the left hand is that you should be able to see the time on your watch if worn on left wrist. For the right hand grip, you should always be able to see your right thumb, even when rotating the stick with the left hand to the reverse (toe pointing towards the ground) position. The right hand does not turn with the stick.
Station#1 Individual Dribble Relay
Forehand/Open Stick & Indian Dribble Technique
X1 dribbles the ball to the opposite line and places the ball on X2’s stick who does the same to X3. Relay continues until everyone is back to original start position. Practice keeping the ball in contact with the stick (pushing/carrying the ball on the toe of the stick, not hitting the ball forward). Increase speed to jog and then to full running, then intermittent jog, sprint, jog, sprint, etc. To increase difficulty, demonstrate and use Indian Dribble.
Station#2 Ski Slalom
Forehand/Open Stick, Indian Dribble, Reverse Stick Dodge Technique

Players weave in and out of cones placed at different angles and distances apart. To move to the right of the cone, use reverse stick dodge. 1st half of course is Forehand/Open Stick dribble, 2nd half of course is Indian Dribble (cones replaced with noodles).

Another way to instruct the girls is to move the ball towards the cone, check the ball (short stop to slow the ball down), reverse the stick (left hand turns the stick so that the toe is facing the ground) and drag the ball from their left foot over to the right foot, turn the stick so that it is now in the “open/forehand” position and carry the ball to the next cone.

To increase difficulty, have lines start from opposite sides at the same time, and see which line finishes first. They will be going in opposing directions, so they need to keep their heads up as not to “bump” into the other person.
Station#3 Tackling Techniques
Jab, Forehand (open) Stick Tackle

Trying to actually take the ball away from the attacker is the obvious aim of tackling. Sometimes it is necessary to tackle with the objective of breaking up an attack by knocking the ball out of play which allows the defense time to reorganize. All players should practice the different tackling techniques.

Key Points:
1. Concentrate on the ball and not the stick and body movements
2. Do not slash at the ball or dive-in by committing too early
3. Use the appropriate tackle and correct timing
4. Keep mobile by using short fast steps and do not commit weight onto front foot
5. Channel the ball carrier while preparing to tackle

JAB TACKLE
When a player is dribbling the ball toward you, lining up correctly is important. You must take up a position with your right shoulder on same line as your opponent’s right shoulder. The grip by the left hand at the top of the stick is altered to allow an easier tackle.

The V between the thumb and forefingers now goes down the front or flat side of the stick when jabbing at the ball, but adjusts back to normal when the stick is returned to both hands. Having one leg forward provides the power for recovery should the tackle be unsuccessful.

In pairs, player on ball moves it left and right along a line. Defender tries to jab ball away. Change positions.

Tackle and Steal
All players have a ball except two players. The players without the ball must try to legally gain possession from another player. If they “steal the ball” away, the person who lost the ball now must try to regain a ball from someone else.
Instruction: As the ball approaches, the body should assume a side-on stance (left shoulder facing the direction of the pass), leaning forward and knees bent, legs as wide as your shoulders.

The hands on the stick are apart using the same grip as dribbling. This low crouched body position can be achieved if your left hand holding the top of the stick is level with your knees.

Use the right hand to cushion or absorb the impact of the ball on the stick. By getting low, the stick head and flat side of the stick are held close to the field and presents a larger surface area to the ball.

Watch the ball right onto the stick, placing the flat side "on the line" of the pass as it travels towards you. Angle the top of the stick slightly forward toward the ball so that you can "trap" it between the stick and the field and not allow it to deflect up or away.

Try to make contact with the ball midway between your feet and at a comfortable distance in front of your body. By using this "side-on" and low body position, when you make the trap you are already in a position to make your next move.

Use this trap for soft, slow passes and smooth field conditions

Skill: In partners, use push passes and trap the ball. Push Pass back to partner. To increase difficulty, increase the speed of the pass and return to partner along with the distance between partners.
Instruction: When controlling a pass that is hit hard, is bouncing or if playing on bumpy surface, a more upright technique is used where the stick is more vertical.

The key to controlling the ball successfully using this technique is to move the body into the line of the oncoming ball, so that your head is over the ball at the point of contact. Some players like to point the head of the stick towards the ball, helping to pick up the line better and use the right hand to pull the stick back and cushion the ball as the trap is made.

If the ball is bouncing, the flat face of the stick above the stick head can be used (with the stick head on the ground).

Note that the left-hand pushes the top of the stick forward slightly to create that angle between the stick head and ground which helps to trap the ball.

Use vertical trap for hard hit or bouncing passes or rutted field conditions.

Skill: In partners, use slap passes and hard hits and trap the ball. Hit back to partner.
To increase difficulty, increase the speed of the pass and return to partner along with the distance between partners.
Station#5 “Grid Challenge”

Player X1 with ball tries to dribble (forehand/open stick) around first grid to cross finish line before X2 without the ball sprints around 6 cone-grid to same finish line. You may need to adjust distances to suit skill levels. Alternate lines. Increase difficulty by introducing Indian Dribble.
**Station #6 Vision**

**5 Minutes - Partner Signals**
Dribble towards partner while looking for signals (# of fingers held up) and respond vocally as quickly as possible to the signal. Change partner roles. Increase intensity by starting and stopping when the fingers are held up. Introduce/demonstrate Indian Dribble for increased difficulty.

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**5 Minutes – Dribble on Demand**
Coach gives signals to the group, each signal means dribbling in a different direction and type of dribble.

- Stick pointing left or right – straight line dribbling in that direction
- Stick straight up in the air – Indian dribble forward
- Stick touching the ground – Indian dribble backwards (really sideways with right shoulder leading and reverse stick moving the ball, feet moving in grapevine backwards)
Station #7 Cats & Mice

One line of cats and one line of mice. 5 yards apart. If coach calls “mice”, all the mice dribble ball over nearest line AB while all “cats” leave their ball and try to catch the mice and put their body between the ball and the line before the mice cross the line. After each call, everyone returns to starting position and another cat or mice call is made.

Mice wear Pinnies
Station#8 Passing – Push Pass

This is the method of passing most frequently used in the game. It is easy to introduce to beginners because the grip on the stick is the same as for moving with the ball.

With your feet slightly more than shoulder width apart, knees bent and left shoulder facing in the direction you want the ball to go, place the stick head behind the ball.

Keep your right hand low on the stick (in a comfortable dribbling position). With the ball level with your back foot (right), follow through so as to transfer your weight from the back leg to your front leg and push the ball forward.

For maximum strength and accuracy, try to get your stick and body weight to follow through in the direction of your target.

There is NO BACKSWING! The toe of the stick is in constant contact with the ball at all times.

Skill - In pairs, stationary passing one ball between pairs. To increase difficulty, spread pairs further apart. Have pairs stand facing each other (through pass) and to the side of each other (flat pass), and diagonally to each other (diagonal pass)