



TECHNICAL

Skating



REVISED 2/19

OBJECTIVES

- To identify the important characteristics of executing each of the skating skills used in ice hockey
- To introduce skating skills in correct sequence
- To identify key elements of each skating skill
- To identify common errors young ice hockey players make when executing each of the skills of skating
- To learn to effectively use unique drills and activities in teaching specific skating skills

INTRODUCTION

Ice hockey is a fast moving, physically demanding sport. The success or failure of a player is dependent on the ability to properly execute the skating skills included in this chapter.

Skating is the primary skill of ice hockey. The better a person can skate, the better that person will play the game.

In this chapter, we will build onto and refine the basic skating movements. Greater skating efficiency and more confidence will be gained by the players as they enter into competitive levels.

The following is a list of skills that the players should be exposed to:

1. proper fit of skates
2. edges
3. ready position
4. balance
5. agility
6. the T-push
7. gliding on 2 skates
8. gliding on 1 skate
9. edge control
10. scooting
11. glide turns
12. one o'clock stop
13. eleven o'clock stop
14. striding forward
15. moving sideways
16. backward stance
17. backward walking

18. backward C-cuts
19. backward V-stop
20. backward striding
21. agility and balance
22. two-foot inside edges stop
23. forward crossover pump
24. front one-foot inside edge stop
25. reversing direction
26. backward one-foot stop/T-push
27. backward push and glide
28. backward gliding on one-foot
29. pivot backward to forwards
30. pivot forward to backwards
31. tight turns
32. one-foot back outside edge stop

Good skating begins with good instruction. A good coach should know technique and be able to break down each skill into parts.

TEACHING SKATING

1. The right way of skating is always the right way, no matter whether the skater grows from 5 feet to 6 feet or gains weight from 75 pounds to 175 pounds. Kids like to take shortcuts in their growing years.
2. Practice does not make perfect, only perfect practice does. You play the way you practice. If you practice poorly, the skill will not be learned properly.
3. Many skaters do not fulfill their destiny to become good skaters because of complacency.

4. “We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act but a habit.” — Aristotle
5. “The best teacher is repetition, day after day, throughout the season. It must be recognition and instant reaction.” — John Wooden, *They Call Me Coach*
6. After developing a skill competency, you must do the skill with quality execution—fast, faster, then the fastest you can do it.
7. Speed is the test of great competency. Speed will disintegrate an inefficient skill.
8. If the skill is being done inefficiently, re-teach, re-demonstrate, use a different learning drill, or have a different coach teach until the skill is executed properly.

READY POSITION

Good skating starts from the ready position. Go to any practice or skating session and take a quick look around. In a glance, you will be able to pick out the good skaters. Skaters look like skaters, hockey players look like hockey players. They all have one thing in common—good posture.

Key Elements

- skates are shoulder width apart
- weight is on the inside edges of the skates
- knees are pushed out as far as possible over the toes
- back is straight, and the head, eyes, and chest are up
- shoulders are level and aligned over the knees
- hands are close together on the stick about eight inches apart
- stick is on the ice in front of the body, “Let the ice carry the stick.”
- stick moves to the bent, balancing knee when moving, so the stick moves in “ready position” with the body

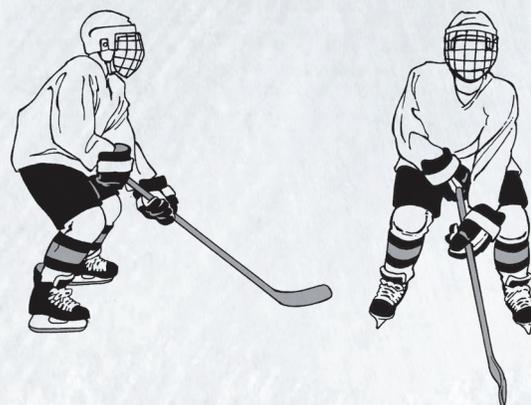


Figure 12-1. *The ready position.*

Common Errors

- positioning the skates more than shoulder width apart (this limits the ability to move quickly)
- too much bend at the waist (this straightens the knees and reduces stability)
- positioning the skates less than shoulder width apart (this reduces stability and limits the ability to move quickly)

The “ready position” is the first ingredient of a great skater.

The closer a skater is to the ice, the more power, balance, and agility the skater will have. **The deeply bent knees are key factors.**

To move out of the “stationary ready position” into a “moving ready position,” the player must shift all his or her weight onto an edge, balance, pushdown/pushout to a full extension with the other leg, and then recover. Most inefficiencies are caused by a poor “ready position” or improper weight shift.

If an inefficient skating style is practiced and not corrected, it will become engraved in that player’s individual skating style. It will take a willing student many hours, many repetitions, and a patient coach to change.

Suggestions for Coaching

You should be able to press down on the outstretched hands of your players in a ready position, and they should be able to hold much of your weight. A good position will allow them to hold your weight and be able to skate and push you backwards. In a poor position, players will fall forward.

EDGE CONTROL

As illustrated in Figure 12-2, each side of the blade has an edge. The edges on the outside of the blade closest to the little toe are called outside edges, and those on the inside of the blade closest to the big toe are called inside edges. All of the skills of skating are controlled by using these edges in a precise way that results from familiarity and practice. **The ankles control the edges. Therefore, every player must develop skill in using ankle positioning in both stationary and moving situations.**

Key Elements

- ankles control the edges
- knee of glide leg is bent
- weight is on the correct edge (inside or outside)
- distribution of weight from the ball of the foot back to just in front of the heel



Figure 12-2. Inside and outside edges.

Common Errors

- failure to roll the ankle
- transferring the weight and gliding on the edge
- insufficient knee bend

Suggestions for Coaching

Drills are an excellent tool for becoming familiar with both the inside and outside edges. Generally, players should progress from stationary to moving and from inside to outside edges as they practice their edge control.

FORWARD STRIDE

The forward stride begins with a thrust off the inside edge of the skate. **A full leg extension is necessary to obtain full power.** The length of the stride is determined by the amount of knee bend in the gliding leg.

At full extension, there should be an outward snap of the ankle which brings the blade off the ice to begin the recover phase. The head and eyes should be directed forward and the shoulders should be level. At full extension, the back is in a straight line with the extended leg.

To help speed recovery, the skates must be kept low (next to the ice). As one skate returns to the gliding position with the knee bent, the opposite leg is initiating the thrust off the inside edge.



Figure 12-3. The forward stride.

Key Elements

- For power, push down on inside edge and out to the side to full extension.
- To help speed recovery, the skate must be kept low and recover back under the hip with emphasis on full recovery.
- The knee is kept bent and weight over the glide foot.
- Keep a straight alignment of the trunk and thrust leg.



Figure 12-4. *The forward stride sequence.*

Common Errors

- failing to place weight onto the glide leg
- not bending the knees sufficiently (this results in a short skating stride, i.e., “short stroker”)
- thrusting backward off the toe instead of outward to the side (“walker”)
- high kick on the recovery phase of the stride (“high kicker”)
- straightening the glide leg after each stride (the skater must replace one bent gliding knee with another, i.e., “bobber”)

Suggestions for Coaching

You should begin the teaching process with stationary exercises that will enhance technique and then progress to drills that may be done at 1/2 to 3/4 speed. Remember, it is the quality of the technique that is most important to the ultimate success of your players.

FORWARD START

The forward start begins from the ready position. It is most commonly used when already facing straight ahead. Turn the toes of the skate out at approximately a 45-degree angle and the heels in. Thrust off the inside edge of one skate and strive to attain maximum extension with the leg. The knee of the thrusting leg must be bent with the body weight on that leg. This enables you to have more power available for thrust.



Figure 12-5. *The forward start.*

As you thrust forward, your upper body or trunk will be in a straight line with your extended leg. The knee of the glide leg is bent out over the toe. **There should be no bending at the waist.**



Figure 12-6. *The thrusting leg extension.*

The thrusting leg should be extended fully and returned quickly to its original position; then continue by thrusting off the inside edge of the opposite skate, once again striving for full extension.

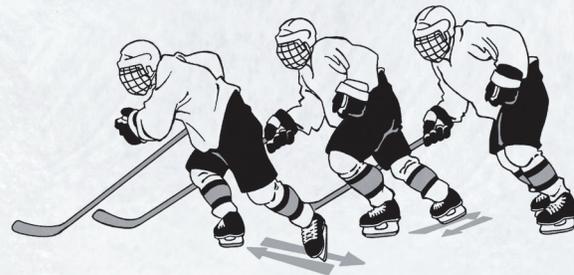


Figure 12-7. *Rapid leg recovery.*

Rapid leg recovery is vital to fast starts. Remember that each rapid, running stride should take you further than the preceding one. Spring forward. Be careful not to move in an upward direction; your height off the ice should be minimal. The first several strides tend to appear short because there is minimal glide. Long gliding strides minimize power and

thrust. **Quick starts result from strong thrust, full extension, and rapid leg recovery.**

Key Elements

- Start on one skate with inside edge.
- Rotate chest and hips in intended direction of travel.
- Place skates in a heel-to-heel position.
- Thrust off the inside edge of the back skate while stepping forward with the front skate.
- Use full extension of the thrusting leg.
- Rapid, low leg recovery is essential.

Common Errors

- Failing to turn the toes out at a 45-degree angle.
- Failing to bend the knee of the thrusting leg.
- Failing to transfer weight to the glide leg.

FORWARD START

Right/Left

In order to properly execute the forward start to the right, the skater must rotate the chest and hips to the right, placing the skates in a heel-to-heel position and then thrusting off the inside edge of the left skate while pointing the right skate in the intended direction. The thrusting leg should be extended fully.

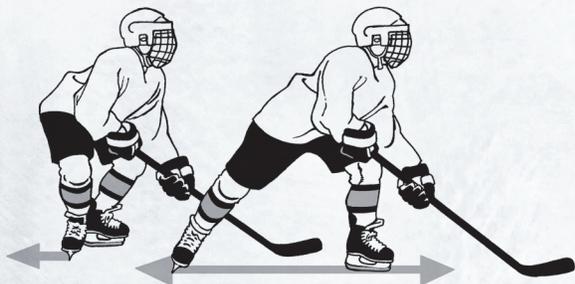


Figure 12-8. *The forward start left.*



Figure 12-9. *Execute the forward start to the left.*

As in the forward start, the ankles are turned in with the weight on the inside edges.

For a forward start to the left, reverse the process. Rotate the chest and hips to the left, bringing the skates to a heel-to-heel position pointing the left skate in your intended direction and thrusting off the inside edge of the right skate, extending the leg fully.

Once again, the key to proper execution is full extension and rapid leg recovery.

Key Elements

- Rotate the chest and hips in your intended direction.
- Place your skates in a heel-to-heel position.
- Thrust off the inside edge of the back skate while pointing the front skate in your intended direction.
- The thrusting leg should be fully extended.

Common Errors

- Failure to rotate chest and hips properly.
- Failing to point the front skate in your intended direction.
- Not extending the thrusting leg fully.

THE CONTROL STOP

Stop in Ready Position

The primary objective of the control stop is to come to a complete stop in the ready position. This allows free and easy movement in any direction without a transfer of weight or change in the basic body position.



Figure 12-10. *The control stop.*

When stopping, both skates are on the inside edges – the front or lead skate pushing against the inside edge and the back or trailing skate pulling with the inside edge. Set the edges of both skates at the same time.

An effective way to teach this technique is to break it into three phases.

Phase 1

In two separate movements, pushing against the inside edge of the lead skate and pulling with the inside edge of the trailing skate.

Phase 2

In a single movement, both legs are shuffled simultaneously using the inside edges of both skates in the same manner as in Phase 1.

Phase 3

Practice this technique by taking one stride in either direction and stopping on both inside edges.



Figure 12-11. *Breakdown of the control stop.*

Key Elements

- Stop on inside edge, both skates
 - front (lead) skate, pushing down on inside edge
 - back (trailing) skate, pulling with inside edge
- bend the knees
- skates shoulder width for stability
- majority of weight on front foot

Common Errors

- Stopping with skates too far apart allows for stability but very little mobility.
- Stopping with skates too close together allows for mobility but little stability.

TWO-SKATE “POWER” STOP

Change Direction Stop

Hockey is a game that often demands quick stops and sudden changes in direction. The two-skate power stop is often used to accomplish this.

In order to properly execute this maneuver, the player must turn his or her body 90 degrees to his line of travel by rotating his shoulders and hips.



Figure 12-12. Two-skate power stop (front view).

The knees must be flexed with a slight body lean backwards, with weight on the inside edge of the lead skate and the outside edge of the trailing skate. Your skates should be shoulder width apart.



Figure 12-13. Two-skate power stop (side view).

From the stop you should be prepared to move quickly in the opposite direction by utilizing the crossover start.

Players should practice this stop to both the right and left.



Figure 12-14. Forward one-foot stop.

Key Elements

- Stop on right skate.
- Rotate hips to left.
- Bend knee of right leg.
- Plant inside edge of right skate firmly in ice.
- Pick up left skate and go “heel-to-heel” at right angle, to right skate.

Common Errors

- insufficient knee bend
- skates either too close together or too far apart

CONTROL TURNS

The primary objective of this maneuver is to change direction quickly by executing a tight turn.

Learning this turn may require assistance from the coach by supporting the ankles of a tentative skater. This will help him gain confidence in his edges.



Figure 12-15. Angle movement.

The control turn requires the skater to use the outside edge of one skate and the inside edge of the other at the same time. The skater must learn to transfer weight to the outside edge of the lead skate and thrust off the inside edge of the trailing skate. Thrust with the entire length of the blade.



Figure 12-16. Control turn thrust.

The skates are shoulder-width apart and the knee of the lead skate is bent out over the toe with the weight transferred to the outside edge. Thrust out with the inside edge of the opposite (trailing) skate and extend the leg fully. The stronger both edges cut into the ice, the tighter and quicker the turn will be. The skater's hips should rotate in the direction of the turn with the shoulders level and the back straight.



Figure 12-17. The control turn.

Key Elements

- direction changed quickly by doing a tight turn
- skates at least shoulder width apart
- lead skate has weight transferred to the outer edge
- knee of lead skate bent over skate
- trailing skate thrusts out with inside edge
- hips rotated in direction of turn
- Upper body is erect; no leaning in direction of turn
- crossunder push of lead skate behind trail skate coming out of turn to accelerate

Common Errors

- weight back on the heels of the skates
- bending forward at the waist
- failure to keep the shoulders level

FORWARD CROSSOVER

The forward crossover is a two-step maneuver. First, a crossover with the front leg is done with the inside edge. Second, is the back leg pushes under with the outside edge.

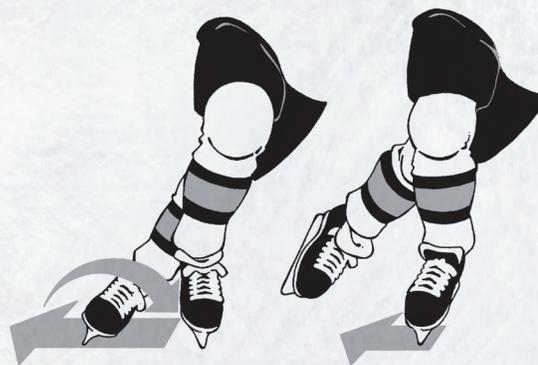


Figure 12-18. Forward crossover.

This thrust should be out to the side rather than back and to full extension. Cross the left leg under and behind the right leg rolling the ankle under and pushing to full extension.



Figure 12-19. *Crossover extension.*

Once again the thrust should be against the entire length of the outside edge of the blade. Be careful to push the blade through rather than back.

Immediately after thrusting to full extension with the left leg, return the left skate back to its original position parallel to the right skate. Keep the left skate close to the ice as it returns.

Less skilled players may need to walk through the crossing steps to build confidence and feel in both inside and outside edges.

Key Elements

- Stress the importance of the skate driving underneath (crossunder).
- Using the outside skate, push off inside edge, then pick up skate and cross knee-over-knee with inside skate.
- Using the inside skate, push under with outside edge as outside skate crosses over.
- Bend knee of gliding leg.

Common Errors

- failure to roll the ankle and thrust off the entire length of the outside edge
- insufficient bend in the knee of the glide leg
- leaning into the turn by dipping the inside shoulder

BACKWARD STRIDE

The ability to skate backwards with speed and mobility is an attribute that is important for all players to possess, not just defensemen. As in the forward stride, it is important to emphasize power that is achieved by effectively using your edges, legs, and body weight.

From a stationary (ready) position, push and extend one leg while bending the knee of the opposite leg. The thrusting skate must be centered under your body. The weight is transferred to the leg of the bent knee (glide leg).

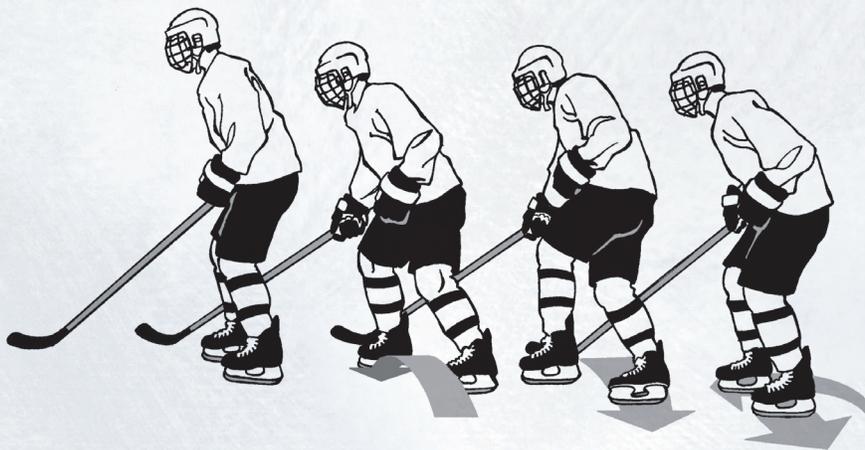


Figure 12-20. *Forward crossover sequence.*

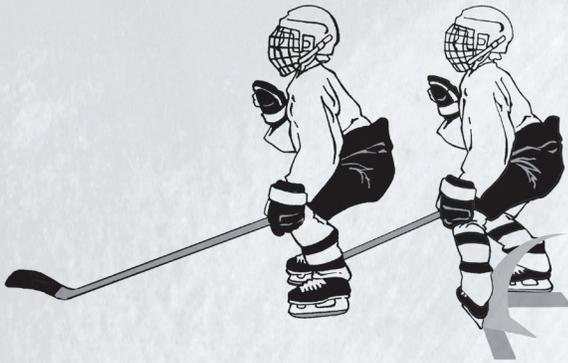


Figure 12-21. Backward ready position and weight transfer.

Point the heel of the thrusting skate out and the toe in, pushing off the inside edge of that skate. Try to make a half-circle (“C”) as you dig in and push with the inside edge of the extending leg. Cut the “C” with the front half of the blade of the thrusting skate. The final thrust should come from the toe of the blade.

Extend the pushing leg to its maximum, then return it to its original position by pivoting the heel inward. When the return is complete, your skates should be side-by-side and parallel to one another. The opposite leg, which has been gliding straight backward, now becomes the pushing leg and thrusts out in a semi-circular maneuver (“C”). Keep the skates on the ice, head up and stationary, hips square and facing straight ahead, and arm movement to a minimum.

Key Elements

- Ready position:
 - bottom hand off stick
 - skates shoulder width apart
 - lower buttocks, head/shoulders erect
- inside edge thrusts with the one skate in a heel out, toe in arc
- full extension of the thrust leg
- bent knee of the glide foot
- recovers thrust skate to under hip

Common Errors

- wiggling too much from the hips (this limits the thrust power of your legs)
- bending forward too much at the waist (throws the weight forward reduces the knee bend and limits thrust)
- skates too close together (limits stability)
- skates too far apart (causes a loss in maneuverability and power)

BACKWARD STOP

This stop is used to stop quickly and efficiently when skating backward. It leaves the player in a position to move easily in any direction.

From the ready position, fan the toes of both feet outward. This turns the heels to the inside. Dig in with the inside edges of both skates by exerting pressure on the balls of your feet, and lean forward slightly.



Figure 12-22. Backward skating sequence.



Figure 12-23. *Backward stop.*

Key Elements

- both knees bent
- toes out, heels in
- weight on inside edges
- slight forward body lean
- hips, chest, shoulders facing straight ahead

Common Errors

- inadequate knee bend
- not turning the toes out and the heels in
- placing insufficient weight on the inside edges
- leaning the body too far forward
- rotation of the hips, chest or shoulders

BACKWARD CROSSOVER

For illustrative purposes, we will begin by traveling backwards in a clockwise direction.

The initial thrust must come from the inside edge of the outside (right) skate. This is accomplished by pivoting your right heel outward and the toe inward and pushing off the inside edge to full extension. This thrust is identical to the “C” movement used in the backward skating stride.



Figure 12-24. *Backward crossover.*

As you thrust with the right skate, weight must be transferred onto the left leg. **The knee of the left leg is bent out over the toe and the skate is gliding backward.**

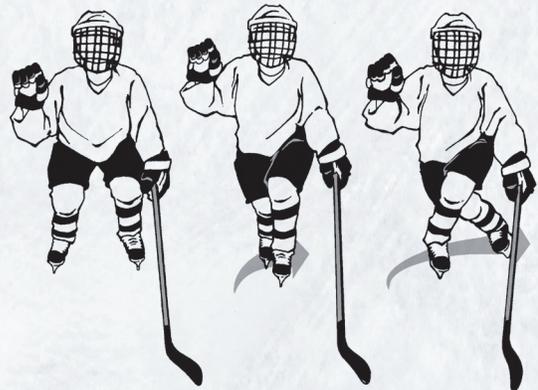


Figure 12-25. *Backward crossover sequence.*

Bring the heel of the right skate across in front of the toe of the left skate and roll the ankle of the left skate underneath, thrusting off the outside edge to full extension. You must be careful to utilize the entire length of the outside edge.

To complete the crossover, reach back to the inside with the left skate.

To crossover in a counter-clockwise direction, simply mirror the procedure.

Key Elements

- good knee bend
- shoulders level
- strong thrust from both the inside and outside edges

Common Errors

- excessive leaning places your weight forward on your toes and puts you out of balance
- too much bend at the waist reduces your knee bend
- excessive swinging of arms from side to side

BACKWARD POWER START

The fastest way to go backwards is to execute a series of backward crossovers.

Backward crossovers are very practical to a defenseman when he begins backing out of the offensive zone. He must accelerate quickly while avoiding turning his back on the play.

Rotate your hips and lower body 90 degrees or one-quarter turn to the right. Thrust off the inside edge of your right skate to full extension.

Cross your left skate under and behind your right skate, thrusting off the outside edge to full extension.

Return the left skate to its original position.

Players should practice their backward power start to both the left and the right. Many players will find that they get more power from this start than the straight backward start. However, in a game you may find one to be more advantageous than the other, depending upon the situation.

For example, a backward power start immediately commits you to moving to one side or the other, thus opening a hole for the opponent to break through. Also, backward starts do not build up speed as quickly as the forward or lateral (side) start, which may mean that, in certain situations, when the opposing forward is approaching the defender rapidly, that it might be more useful to utilize a front start and then turn around backward.

Key Elements

- Rotate hips and lower body 90 degrees.
- Thrust off inside edge to full extension.
- Properly execute crossover.



Figure 12-26. Backward power start progression.

Common Errors

- improper body rotation
- not thrusting off the inside edge to full extension

BACKWARD ONE-FOOT STOP

The backward one-foot stop is similar to the backward stop discussed previously, except that only one foot is utilized to execute the stop.

For illustrative purposes, we will discuss this stop to the left. While gliding straight backwards, rotate the hips about one-quarter turn to the left which turns your left toe outward and the heel inward.

The knee of the stopping leg (left) must be bent out over the toe with the inside edge of the left skate firmly planted against the ice. Utilize the ball of the foot to exert pressure into the ice.

This maneuver is most frequently used in non-contact situations where you have a predetermined knowledge of your next move. This stop leaves you in an excellent position for a quick forward start because the stopping foot is already in the lateral start position, with weight on the stopping leg and your skates in a heel-to-heel position. All that must be done is to thrust off the inside edge of the back (or stopping) leg, pointing the toe of the front skate in your intended direction.



Figure 12-27. Backward one-foot stop.



Figure 12-28. Backward left one-foot stop (back view).

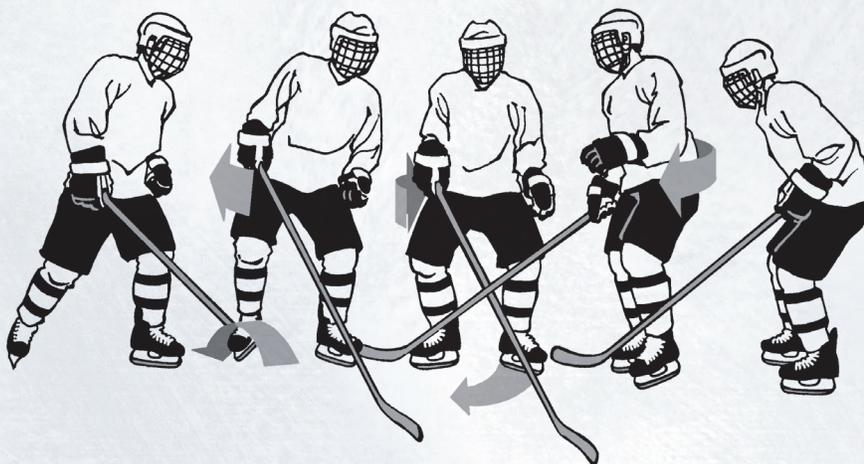


Figure 12-29. Forward-to-backward turn sequence.

Key Elements

- hip rotation one-quarter turn
- knee bent on the stopping leg
- inside edge of the stopping leg firmly planted

Common Errors

- hip rotation more than one-quarter turn
- knee of the stopping leg straightens
- skates too far apart

FORWARD-TO-BACKWARD TURN

The forward-to-backward turn is most commonly used by defensemen, but a necessary skill for all players to master.

Begin by gliding forward on your left skate. Your right skate has just completed its thrust and is off the ice behind your body. Rotate the hips and chest to the right (or in the direction of your turn) placing the weight directly over the left skate.

Continue the turn by turning the right skate 180 degrees, so the toe is facing opposite the intended line of travel. Your skates are thus in heel-to-heel position.

Complete the turn by continuing to rotate your hips and chest a complete 180 degrees to face your back fully backward. Now place your right skate on the ice and continue skating backwards. You have completed the turn. It also can be done the other way.

Key Elements

- Rotate the hips and chest 180 degrees.
- Turn the thrusting skate 180 degrees so the toe is facing the opposite direction of the intended line of travel.

Common Errors

- over- or under-rotating the hips and chest
- skates too far apart

BACKWARD-TO-FORWARD STEP OUT TURN

During a game, players frequently turn from backward-to-forward. This is particularly true when defensemen turn from backward-to-forward to cut off an opponent along the boards.

The player is gliding backward in the ready position and wants to turn to his or her right.

The player begins by rotating the hips, shoulders, and chest in the direction of the turn with knees bent. This places the weight on the inside edge of the glide leg.

The free skate is turned 180 degrees so that the toe is facing forward in the intended line of travel parallel to the glide skate.

As you step onto your right skate, thrust off the inside edge of your left skate and extend the leg fully to accelerate out of the backward-to-forward turn.

Key Elements

- Rotate the hips, shoulders, and chest 180 degrees.
- Turn the thrusting skate 180 degrees so the toe is facing forward in the intended line of travel.
- Bend the knees.

Common Errors

- over- or under-rotating the hips, shoulders, and chest
- skates too far apart
- knees not bent

BACKWARD-TO-FORWARD TURN

This maneuver is very similar to the backward-to-forward step out turn, but this turn also incorporates a backward crossunder.

Begin the turn gliding backward in the ready position. Start rotating the hips and chest and do a backward crossunder, thrusting your left skate behind and under the right using the outside edge.

Return the left skate close to its original position, except turned to point forward with the toe facing the intended line of travel. Your skates are now in a heel-to-heel position with weight on the glide leg.

Continue rotating the hips and chest 180 degrees to face fully forward. Thrust off the inside edge of the right skate to full extension and step out with the left skate in the direction of the turn.

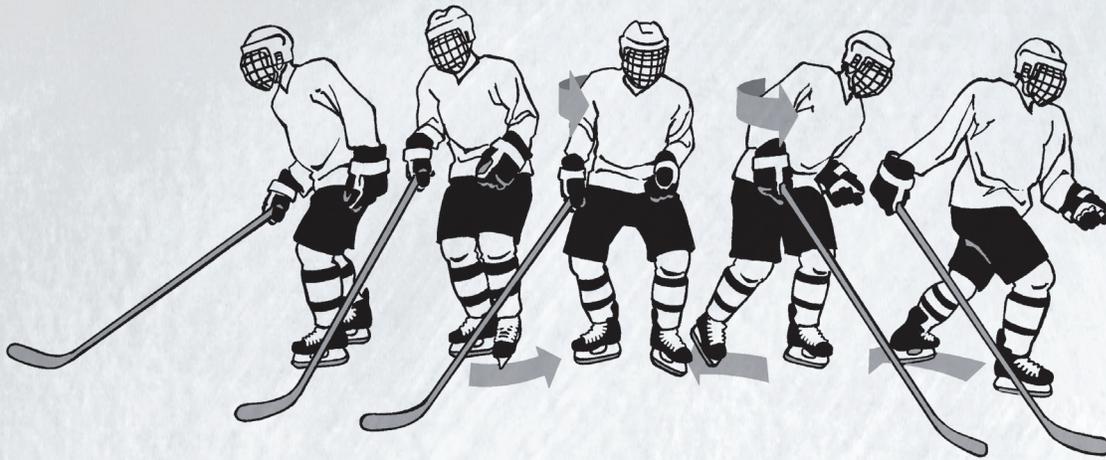


Figure 12-30. Backward-to-forward step out turn sequence.

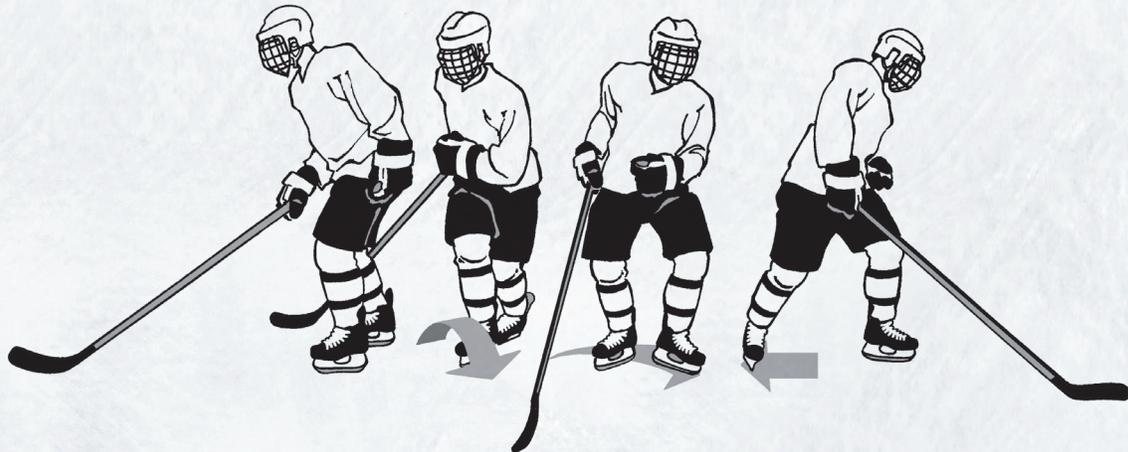


Figure 12-31. Backward-to-forward turn sequence.

Key Elements

- Rotate the hips and chest 180 degrees.
- Perform crossunder.
- Thrust off the glide leg.

Common Errors

- lack of knee bend on the glide leg
- skates too close or too far apart
- poor weight distribution

LEARN MORE

Click on the following link(s) for more information on the topics covered in this chapter. (*Internet access is required*).

www.usahockey.com/page/show/893678-usa-hockey-mobile-coach-