

Beginner Skills & Drills

Very basic beginner skills

Grip

The first thing you need to teach is how to hold the stick correctly! This is difficult if the player is left handed (hockey is only played right handed) it may take a lot longer for a left handed person to understand it! The left hand is at the top of the stick and the right hand is lower as shown in picture. The left hand is held tightly, where the grip on the right hand is loose so that when you go to turn your stick over it turns in your right hand. Your left hand holds the stick and the right hand is there for support.



Common errors:

- Hands wrong way around
- Hands too close together

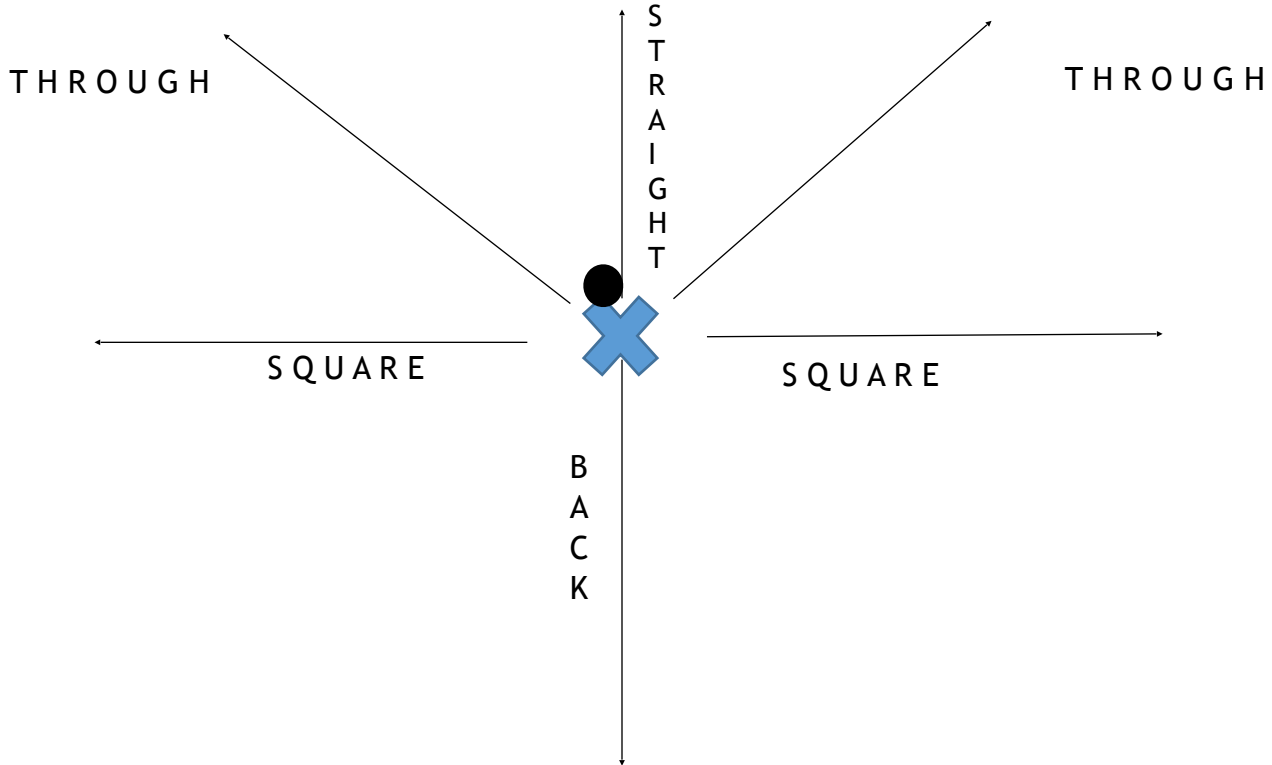
There are different grips used for different things, the hands stay the same with left at the top and right at the bottom they just change in the placement on the stick:

Pushing/dribbling/slap hit- is the same grip as in the pictures above with the left hand near the top and the right hand right at the bottom of the grip.

Hitting/sweeping- the right hand comes up closer to the left giving a longer lever.

Types of passes

First of all it's good for coaches to know what each passing angle is called so players know what to call when they want the ball. They can't just yell 'yup' or 'here' because the person with the ball has no clue where that is.



Push- The push is the most effective of the passes as your hands are in the same position as you use to dribble so you can be dribbling along and pass it to someone without having to change your grip. It is also the most controlled pass and often not utilised enough in hockey these days.



1. Start with the ball in line with your back foot (right)

2. Step forward with your left foot and follow through with your arms, transferring your weight from your right to left foot as you release the ball.
3. Release the ball in the direction you want it to go and on your follow through your stick should end up pointing where you want the ball to go. This is the best pass for beginners to learn!

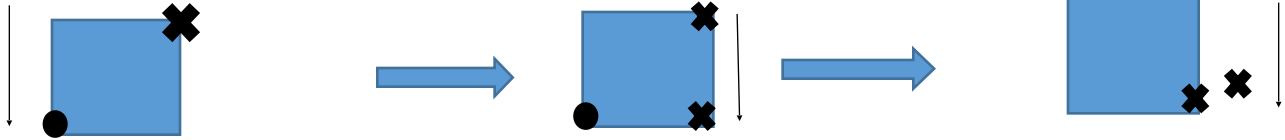
Hit- Is one of the strongest ways to pass and shoot the ball although if the technique isn't right the accuracy and speed of the ball will be affected!

1. Bring the right hand up to the left so both of the hands are together near the top of the stick.
2. Step into the ball while swinging back and into the ball to release, the swing is not a golf swing it is around your body rather than straight up.
3. The follow through should be in the direction that you want the ball to go.

Watch the ball the entire time so that your stick connects with the ball and continue to watch it in your follow through. The player will usually 'duff' the ball or lift it when they don't have their 'eye on it'.



Foot work for Hit:



Draw an imaginary square. Player starts in the back left corner with the ball in the front right

As the player winds up their back foot (right foot) stays on the back left corner and their front foot (left foot) steps through to the front left corner.

As they follow through their back foot should almost cross behind the front foot.

Sweep- (Sometimes called a slap hit) has the same footwork as a hit except the ball is further from the body allowing your body to get a lot lower. You step into the sweep with a lunge and your stick is so low to the ground that your knuckles should rub along the turf. In the follow through your stick almost wraps right around you, don't just stop once you have hit the ball a follow through is very important.



Forehand Trap

The easiest way to teach beginners how to trap the ball is on their forehand with a flat stick like in the photo below:



As they start to get better and the balls start travelling harder and faster and are often bouncier it becomes much easier to trap in a more upright position.



The key is to have soft hands and guide the ball into your stick because if you have a tight grip on both hands and a static stick the ball will bounce off it when it hits it.

Dribbling

The way you carry the ball in a dribble is very important, too close and you won't be able to see who is around you to pass to (your head will be down looking at the ball). Too far away and you will lose control. This picture shows the best position to have the ball when carrying it.



Also try not to have the ball too close to your feet or you will probably step on it or kick it! It is good to get in a good habit of the basics of carrying the ball in a good position because then it becomes natural and as you get better more difficult skills can be added to it with ease.

Hand-eye-stick co-ordination

For beginners it's good to get them used to using a stick and getting the feel of having the ball on the stick. The best way to do this is by 'juggling'. This is done by holding your stick in the normal grip and knocking the ball on your stick like so in the photo. There are many different tricks that can be done with juggling which can make it a fun challenge.



Forehand tackling

There are many different ways to steal the ball of the opposition the most effective is to intercept the ball. But when having to confront the ball carrier the best form of tackle is on your forehand as it is your strong side. Tips for teaching beginners is get low, have one foot in front of the other like a lunge and be on your toes.

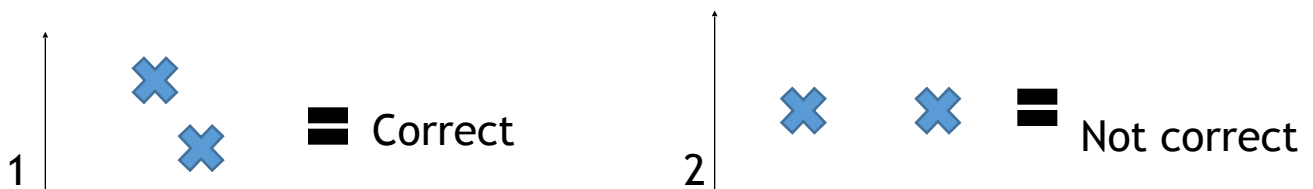


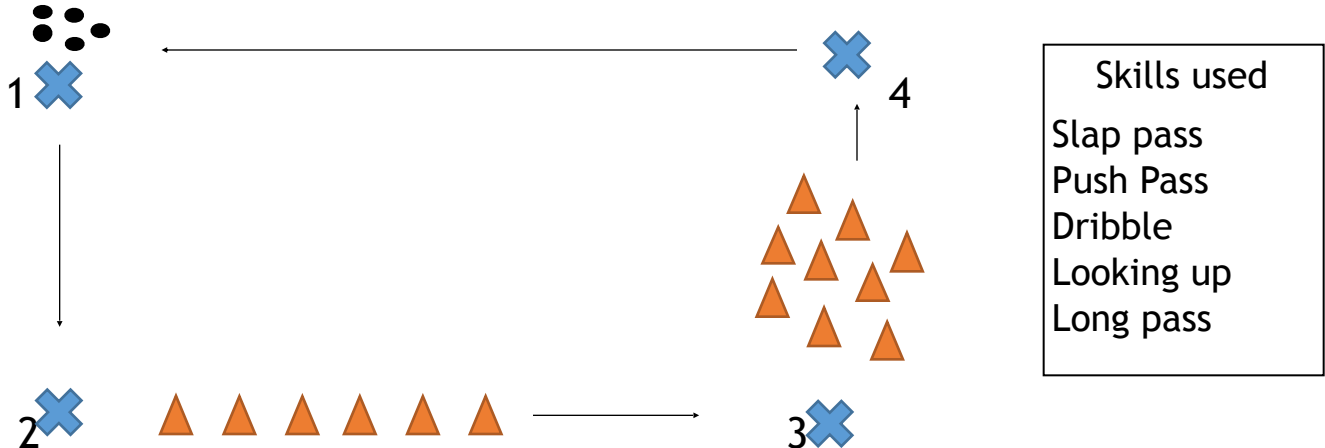
Diagram 1 shows the feet (X) in a lunge position and diagram 2 shows the feet in a flat footed position. The flat footed position isn't a good habit to get into because once you start adding different tackling techniques to your game the flat footed habit becomes hard to get out of. Another reason is that both feet are open targets for the ball carrier to put the ball on and get a free hit. The last reason is that if the

player happens to get past you are stuck in that position but if you had your feet like in diagram 1 it is a lot easier to turn and stay in the game.



Drills

Beginners only need really basic drills to practice the basic skills. A good one is setting up an obstacle course with some of the skills in it. This will make the skill more interesting to learn and also set a challenge. Here is an example:



1. Player starts with the ball and makes a slap pass to player 2
2. Dribbles around cones (can do Indian dribble by rotating stick in hand or could go around by getting their feet around and staying on forehand) then push passes to player 3
3. Makes their way through a mine field made of cones trying not to hit them and having to look up fast at end to make a short pass to player 4
4. Player 4 makes a long pass to player 1 and they go in a rotation.

You could make an obstacle course out of anything use your imagination.

Four Corners

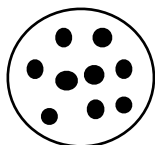


Very simple drill but it gets the player with the ball having to look before they pass, and the players without the balling having to move.

Player that has the ball needs to have two options for passing. And can only give straight or square passed (no diagonal). So the players off the ball need to move to ensure that the ball carrier has these passes available.

To make it harder you can add a defender in the middle who can't tackle but can intercept the ball.

Rob the Nest

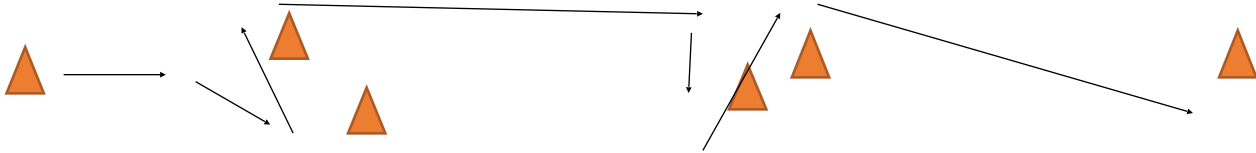


This game is really fun for kids, it gives them a bit of competition as well as having to think about the task at hand.

The balls all start in the middle and a player on each cone. The players have a time limit and have to gather as many balls into their area as possible collecting with their stick and dribbling one at a time back to their cone. Once all the balls are gone from the middle they can steal from each other. So they have to defend their own collection as well as try and attack the others.

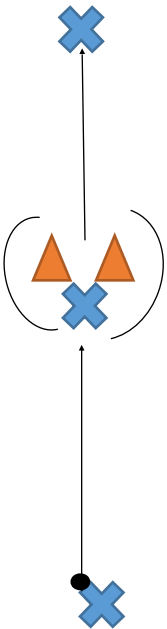
Dodge and change of speed drill

Players need to learn how to get around the defenders the best way at this level is a dodge. This is where you pretend to go one way and then change in direction and go the other.



Very simple, start from cone on left dribble through doing a dummy to the right then drag left and through to next drag going opposite way. They should practice going both ways. Get players walking through it first then once they get good get them running it. They should change their speed coming out of the drag and sprinting off so the defender you just dragged can't come back into tackle you (you have eliminated them).

Receiving drill

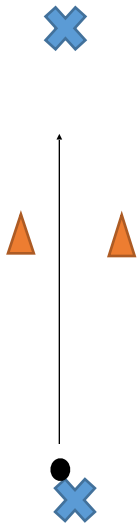


In groups of 3. Player on outside starts with the ball and passes to the player in the middle they receive the ball and roll either left or right (make sure they try both ways throughout the drill). Then pass to the player on the opposite side. They then receive the ball back roll around and give it back to the player who started with the ball. Go through a few times then switch so someone else gets a go in the middle.

Make sure the player in the middle receives rolls then looks up to pass and looks up to receive.

Accuracy

It's a good idea to get some accuracy in passes, set up targets for players to aim for. Normally in the warmup once players get their sticks out they get in pairs and have passes, alter this and set up targets eg:

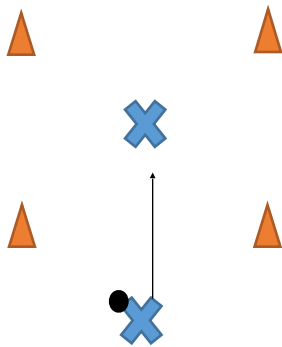


Start with pushes and slowly have players move further and further apart so then they will have to start hitting and sweeping. Players aiming to get the ball through the cones and to the other player.

You can also do this when aiming for the goal. Once they can hit the goal fine then get players aiming for the corners. If you don't have a goalie put cones in the middle section of the goal where the goalie would be.

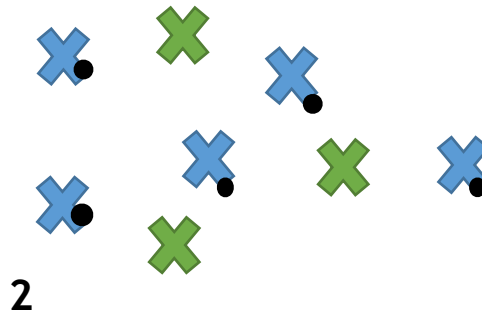
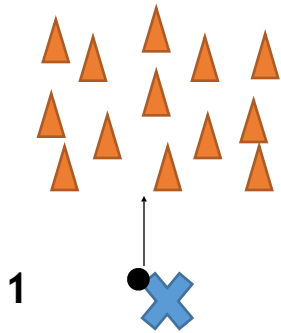
Tackle Boxes

Great way to practice tackling, make sure everyone gets a go at being the tackler as everyone on the field needs to know how to do this not just the defenders.



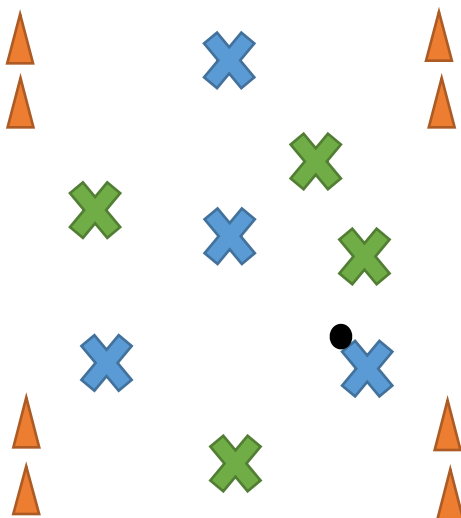
Depending how many players you have you could set up a few of these at one time. Have a few different attackers going through each box. Focus on the defender (tackler) and give them tips when needed even pull them out of the box and show them what they need to work on.

Mine Field



1. Have player practice their dribbling through a 'mine field' trying not to hit the 'mines' (cones) and get to the other side safely.
2. You can also do this in a small area where most of the players have balls and some without. The ones without are trying to steal the balls off the players with balls. This helps to make players aware of what's going on around them while dribbling.

Passing Game



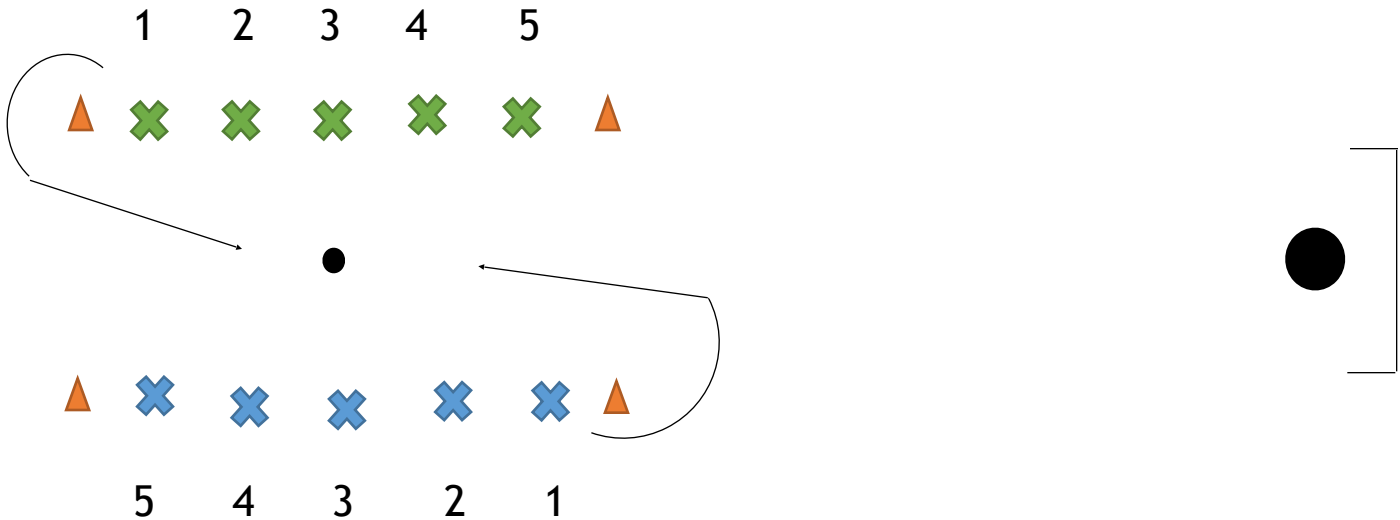
Each team must make three passes before they can score a goal.

In this diagram blue is going \uparrow and green is going \cdot . Each team has a nominated player in their 'end zone' and they are the only players aloud in that area. To score a goal the players of one team must pass it three times amongst their team then successfully pass it to their player in the end zone.

Adjust game rules and area size to team's demands.

Fruit Salad

This game has many different names, it is a fun way to play a small game and get everyone involved. Alter to age group and abilities. Also includes goalie if you have one!



Set up two even teams, you can set it up so there is a goal at either end or you can make one team defence and one team attack. Number players like so in diagram (opposite directions) and have a cone for each team to run around, they must run around the cone before entering the field of play. In the diagram above number 1 has been called by the coach so number 1 from each team makes their way around the cone and races to the ball, then game on. You can call more than one number so players need to be awake and listen out for their number. When you call fruit salad the entire team from both sides are in running around the cones and into play.