

# Developing Shooting Technique

Everyone loves to shoot the puck. Consequently, it is one of the skills that gets worked on most by players, which is great. As coaches, we need to make sure that they are using proper technique and are developing the coordination and rhythm required to shoot the puck hard and accurately.

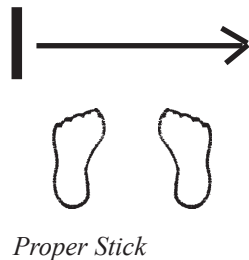
All shots, wrist shot, snap shot, and slap shot rely on many of the same principles although they differ slightly in technique. Players should first learn and refine these principles while concentrating on the wrist shot before progressing to the snap shot and slap shot.



## WRIST SHOT

### Body positioning

As always, players should start from a good ready position with knees bent and feet about shoulder width apart for good balance and stability. They should be standing perpendicular with the target with their front shoulder pointing in the direction of the shot. In other words if they are standing directly in front of the net, they should be facing the sideboards, not the net. This is important in getting the legs involved, pushing off the back foot and transferring the body weight onto the front foot on the follow-through.



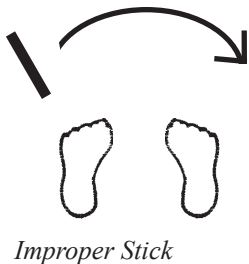
Proper Stick

### Puck positioning

The puck needs to start on the heel of the blade of the stick. The stick starts back behind the back foot and the blade of the stick should be “square” with the target. As the puck is swept across in front of the body through to the release point, it should spin from the heel to be released closer to the toe. This causes the puck to spin during the shot keeping it flat and giving the shooter better control.

### Arm movement

To get the blade square with the target, players need to get their arms “away from their bodies”. Typically, inexperienced players keep their hands in front of their bodies and their stick blade moves in an arc pattern as opposed to a straight line from the starting point through to the release point. When doing this, they are using mostly their bottom hand for power, with the top hand virtually doing nothing. In essence, they should be moving both hands and arms across the body together until the top hand is out in front of the body (the puck would be directly in front of the body at this point). At this point, the player continues to push through with the bottom hand while pulling back on the top hand, getting the wrists involved as well.



Improper Stick

### Leg movement

Players should start with the weight on the back skate as they draw the puck back into a position to shoot. As they begin to move the puck forward with their arms, they push off of the inside edge of the back skate transferring the weight onto the front foot to follow through toward the net. As the weight is shifted, the front foot needs to be pointed toward the target as well, so the player can follow through in the direction of the target. It is important that the shooter “stay down” on the puck – keeping the legs bent – the front leg should be at about 90 degrees on the follow through.

### Rhythm

The upper body and lower body need to work together to get the most out of the shot in terms of power and accuracy. It takes plenty of practice to develop the rhythm necessary to push off with the legs while moving the arms, transferring the weight and pulling back on the top hand, then following through toward the target.

### Follow-through

At the end of the shot, the feet, the head and the stick blade should end up pointing in the direction of the target with the player following through, moving toward the target.

### Shooting accuracy

As the puck carrier prepares to shoot, he should get his head up and make the decision on where to shoot the puck high, the shooter should “open up” the blade of the stick during this phase.

*Watch for tips on backhands, snap shots and slap shots in future issues.*

## TEACHING TIPS

- Teach players proper technique through stationary shooting focusing on proper puck positioning, using the legs and following through toward the target
- Concentrate on proper technique and the speed and accuracy of the shot – younger players love to try to shoot the puck high by flipping it up in the air – once they get the proper technique down – they can concentrate on “opening up” the blade of the stick during the release to get the puck up in the air on the shot – with the same power and accuracy they had while shooting the puck low.
- Reinforce the knee bend and staying down on the puck during the follow through for maximum power on the shot
- Shooting while moving requires much of the same technique – with the coordination to be able to draw the puck into position with the weight on the back foot, transferring the weight and following through in the direction of the target. It should be worked on while moving laterally (across the front of the net) and while moving toward the net.