

# Stopping Backward

A big part of playing defense, is being in the right place at the right time. A big part of being in the right place at the right time is having the ability to change direction quickly in order to move as the puck moves. And part of that, is the ability to stop and start quickly, while moving forward and while moving backward. The important aspects of proper backward stopping are as follows, with the end result of a backward stop being a good “forward start” position.

The middle part of the inside edges of both skates should be used for stopping.

Leaning too far forward will put too much weight over the toes of the skates causing poor balance and making the skater “fall forward”.



## Body Positioning

For any type of stopping, the player’s weight needs to be positioned over the proper part of the skate blade, for the blade to do its job. In stopping backward, a player should have significant knee bend, with the weight “over the knees” which are “over the skates”. The upper body should be leaning slightly forward in what basically is the same position as the forward start.

## Foot Positioning

Skates should be in a “V” formation with the heels together and the toes out. The ankles should be bent inward so that the inside edges of the skate blades are used. It is very important that the feet are together, under the body of the skater. A very common problem is for players to come to a stop with their feet really far apart. What they have done, in effect, is a “snowplow” while moving backward – letting their legs go apart. In this position, they are in a horrible position, with absolutely no mobility. In other words, they aren’t going anywhere very fast. Players need to be sure to bring their feet together underneath them as they begin the stop, and be careful not to spread their legs as they are stopping. By keeping their feet together underneath them with the toes pointed out to the sides, the skate blades will be positioned to do their job of “shaving the ice” to slow the backward progress.

## Weight Distribution

The middle part of the inside edges of both skates should be used for stopping. Leaning too far forward will put too much weight over the toes of the skates causing poor balance and making the skater “fall forward”. Too much shift toward the heel of the blades will have the skater losing balance “backward”. The more knee bend a player has, the better control he will have over where the weight is distributed on the skate blade, providing better balance and control during the stop.

## Pivot, Stop and Start

An excellent drill to work on pivoting, backward stopping and quick forward start is as follows. Have your players line up across the blue line as shown so that they have plenty of room to maneuver. On the whistle, they should do a good quick forward start. At the center red line they should turn backward to the blue line, where they perform a quick backward stop right on the blue line. From here they are ready to repeat the drill back the other way. This set-up can be used to teach the skills to inexperienced skaters or those who need technique training. It can also be used to develop the stopping and starting quickness of those who can perform the skills, and used as a “conditioning drill” that also emphasizes developing skating skills.

