

Skills for superior ball control

A) Aerial dribble- LEFT hand at top of stick, right hand loosely in middle (do NOT wrap fingers around stick). Small controlled taps while looking forward for information (keep ball in front of you...). Keep your left hand belly button high so ball does not “run away”. Can you walk a straight line? Can you jog it?

Goal: to run a complete lap without dropping the ball [Vision!].

B) Around the world – Aerial dribble (in place), and rotate the stick so the ball bounces on the edge, then back, then the other edge, returning to the face of your stick. Occasionally stop the ball dead, then restart. For fun, roll the ball towards the head of your stick, then back to the middle and restart the dribble. *Bonus:* roll ball into “V” of left thumb and forefinger.

Goal: To start and stop the ball at any time [Ball control!].

C) Over the moon – After successfully stopping the ball on the face of the stick, throw the ball almost twenty feet in the air so it comes straight down to your stick, and catch it, finishing with around the world.

Goal: To catch any aerial ball thrown to your stick [Receiving!].

D) 2001 A Space Odyssey – Start without the ball. With the same motion you do Over the Moon, pretend you are tossing the ball straight up, but this time release your stick so that it follows the path of the ball, and flips over just once, so you can catch it when it comes down.



Goal: To combine Over the Moon with 2001 A Space Odyssey, toss the ball and stick in the air, catch the stick, then the ball.

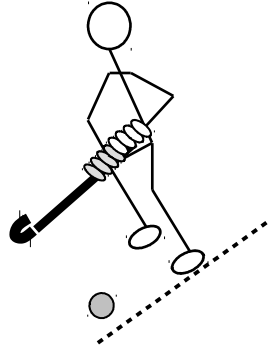
Then finish with Around the World [Impress and intimidate!].



How to Hit a Hockey Ball

Know these four words:

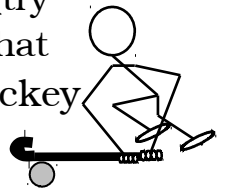
1. **Parallel**
2. **Perpendicular**
3. **“X”**
4. **Curiosity**



The **BEST** hit will be when the ball is in line w/LEFT (lead) foot. Step forward to your target for a BAD hit. Stepping *forward* adds **NOTHING** to your hit- *it will just ruin it.*

Parallel – Grip your stick as if preparing to hit. Open your hands flat so both surfaces are parallel with the face of the stick. If not, you will either slice, or pull the ball when you make contact.

Perpendicular – Your fingers **MUST** be perpendicular to the handle of your stick. This is a major difference from your ball-control grip (dribbling, stopping, pushing, etc.). If your fingers are not perpendicular, you cannot get your hands together (no space between the hands when hitting). After mastering parallel and perpendicular, you must then **NOT** bend your wrists to get the stick to the ball. Bend over at the waist (try bending your knees, a lot, without bending your wrists, to see why that does not work....). The one time you can bend at the waist in Hockey is while hitting.



“X” - On the follow through you must rotate your forearms (right hand over left), to maximize power, prevent high-sticks, and avoid injuring your wrists. Again, do **NOT** bend your wrists – roll your wrists. On the back swing, the stick should be pointing away from your target, so that the full swing traces a half circle with a curve to the left at the end. Too big (high) a back swing increases the chance of a miss hit, and wastes time allowing the defender to possibly steal the ball.

Curiosity – After choosing a destination for the ball (while taking your back-swing as early as possible), look down (bend over), swing through the ball, and **keep looking down** to make sure you did not miss the ball (the destination cannot change at this point, why look at it a second time?). Looking down (ignore the hit) prevents embarrassing whiffs.

Either stand still, or step towards the ball (perpendicular to the direction you wish to hit). **Avoid** stepping *forward* to hit best.

