

STICK HANDLING II SOFT AND FAST HANDS

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Experts say, with a moderate amount of practice it takes approximately 10 years to develop superb puck handling skills. A player starting out in hockey at age five could easily develop great hands by the time the player is 14 -16 years old. A player who willingly works at their puck handling skills can reduce that amount of time in half or less.

These drills are designed to help players develop those soft hands, so many great hockey players in the NHL and Europe possess, in a shorter amount of time. Dedicating a little time (20 minutes) 3 or 4 times a week doing these drills will drastically help any player develop these skills in a shorter period of time.

EQUIPMENT NEEDED:

- Hockey Stick & Gloves
- Swedish Hockey Ball, Tennis Ball, Golf Ball or Puck
- A 4 Leg Chair
- 2 pucks or 2 small pylons
- 3 - 4 meter square area with a hard surface and no obstructions.

DO THESE DRILLS WITH GLOVES OFF THEN WITH GLOVES ON!

IMPORTANT! THE TOP END OF YOUR STICK SHOULD NEVER HAVE A HUGE TAPE BALL. GET USED TO ONLY PUTTING ON ENOUGH TAPE TO MAINTAIN A GOOD GRIP & FIT!

Diagram A



**PROPER TAPE
& TOP HAND GRIP**

Diagram B



**IMPROPER TAPE
& TOP HAND GRIP**

STICK SHOULD BE HELD WITH THE TOP HAND AS SHOWN IN DIAGRAM "A" WITH HOCKEY GLOVES ON OR OFF. THIS GRIP ALLOWS FULL MOBILITY OF THE WRIST ON THE TOP HAND. BIG TAPE KNOBS AS SHOWN IN DIAGRAM "B", WILL CAUSE A SLIGHTLY LOWER GRIP. THE PORTION OF THE STICK AND TAPE THAT PROTRUDES OUT THE BACK OF THE HAND REDUCES THE MOBILITY OF THE WRIST.

THE TOP HAND CONTROLS ALL ASPECTS OF GOOD PUCK CONTROL AND ALLOWS A PLAYER TO ROLL THEIR WRISTS AND CRADLE THE PUCK AWAY FROM THE BODY, AS WELL AS, IN TIGHT.

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DRILLS

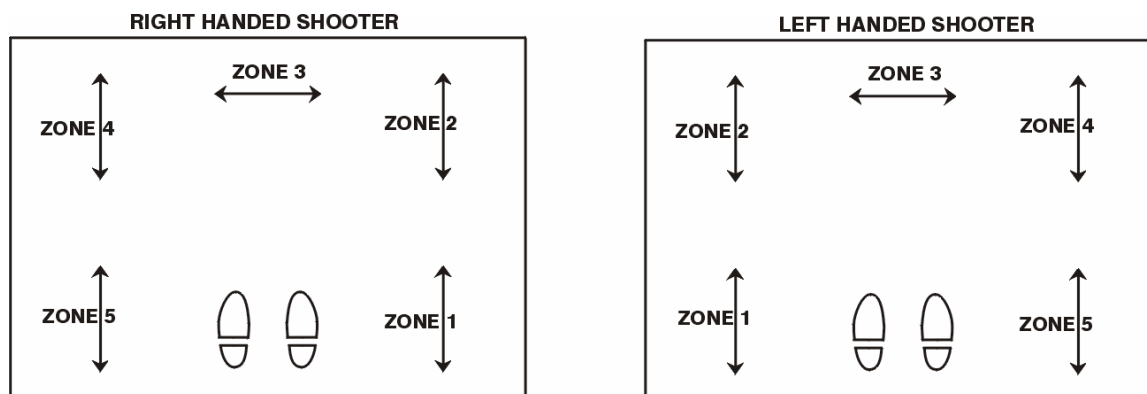
OBJECTIVE: To develop those “Soft and Fast Hands”. Work toward a competency similar to typing or playing the piano. A gradual progression towards faster speed but always maintaining control is the key.

You don’t need to look at your stick, hands or the puck, it will just all of a sudden just quickly happen.

KEY POINTS:

- Keep hands away from body.
- Top hand has a firm grip and provides the “magic” to the blade of the stick.
- Bottom hand is “soft” and slides along stick like playing the violin.
- Cradle or cup the ball or puck as you roll your wrists.

1) Working the puck handling ZONES:



Work each zone for 30 - 45 seconds and rotate to zones 1 thru 5 then 5 thru 1 mixing them up for last few minutes. Top hand should only roll and not wave back and forth!

Zone #1: Normal or forehand stick position, top hand rolling stick to cradle puck each way back and forth 15 - 20 centimeters.

Zone #2: Blade and stick move in same direction as in zone #1 but now you move your hands out away from your body 40 - 50 centimeters.

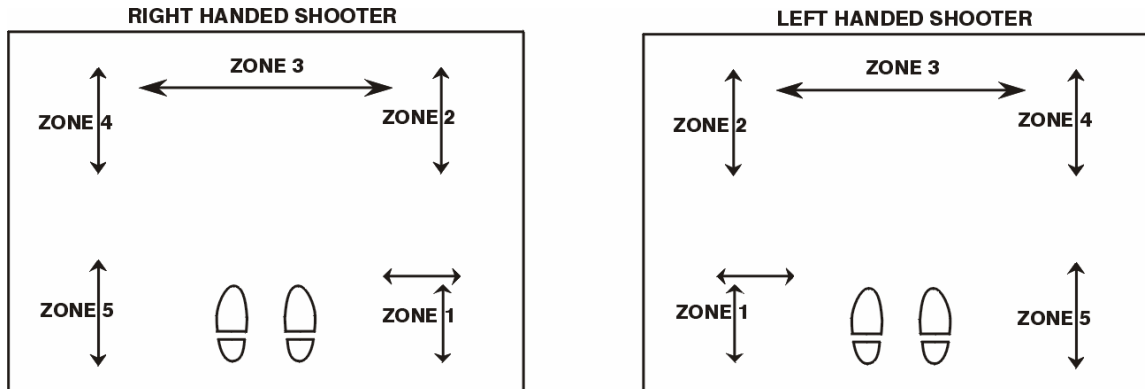
Zone #3: Stick straight out in front, top hand at belly button. Cradle puck back and forth in front of you 15 - 20 centimeters.

Zone #4: Top hand must now cross under the forearm of bottom hand, arms should form a cross out in front of body. Move puck same as done in Zone #2.

Zone #5: Same hand position as in zone #4 but now hands are tight to the body.

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2) Increase Range of Motion:



KEY POINTS:

- Keep the toes and hips straight ahead.
- Roll your wrists like you are “buttering bread”.
- Move the puck smoothly through each zone.
- Eyes open, eyes closed, switch hands / sticks and repeat.

Zone #1: Normal or forehand stick position; handle the “ball or puck” back and forth and side to side.

Zone #2: Handle the “ball or puck” back and forth.

Zone #3: Stick straight out in front. Cradle puck side to side in front of you a little wider than shoulder width apart.

Zone #4 & 5: Top hand must now cross under the forearm of bottom hand; arms should form a cross out in front of body. Move puck back and forth in a greater distance, 30 – 40 centimeters in each zone.

3) Range of Motion while moving:

Repeat drill #2 but no longer stand still. Shuffle forward and backward, as well as, side to side with quick foot movement. Try to not look at the “ball or puck”. Start slowly and over a few weeks build up speed while moving. Do not increase speed until you can maintain full control of the “ball or puck” in each zone.

4) Range, Rhythm, Deception:

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<p>DRILL #1 - Tall Figure 8</p> <p>Pucks set approx. 40cm apart</p>	<p>DRILL #2 - Flat Figure 8</p> <p>Pucks set approx. 40cm apart</p>	<p>DRILL #3 - Figure 8 with Chair</p>
<p>DRILL #4 - Short to Wide</p>	<p>DRILL #5 - Beside Body Short/Wide</p>	<p>DRILL #6 - Extra Wide, only one hand on stick on backhand side</p>
<p>DRILL #7 - Zorro</p>	<p>DRILL #8 - Body tight</p>	<p>DRILL #9 - Fake "out" then Lateral Move "In" forehand side (This diagram depicts a right hand shooter, reverse set-up for left hand shooter)</p>
<p>DRILL #10 - Puck Drag Progression (Forehand Side)</p> <p>40 - 80 centimeters</p>	<p>DRILL #11 - Pass into Feet, kick back up to stick</p>	

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DESCRIPTIONS FOR RANGE, RHYTHM & DECEPTION DRILLS:

- Drill #1:** Place 2 pucks or small pylons in line about 40 centimeters apart in front of you. Stand back far enough so without having to reach you can maneuver puck or ball in a Figure 8 pattern shown. Practice in both directions. Try to maintain contact with the floor or ice and roll wrists to control puck or ball from the middle to the tip of your stick blade around these obstacles.
- Drill #2:** Same as above but place pucks or pylons side by side and maneuver puck in both directions as shown in diagram.
- Drill #3:** Using a four legged chair maneuver puck or ball around the front legs of the chair as shown in diagram. Roll wrists and use the tip your stick to control puck or ball around the legs.
- Drill #4:** With puck or ball in front of you stick handle it side to side in a short quick fashion then stick handle it wide from side to side. Cradle, cup and control the ball or puck by rolling your wrists! Do drill with both hands on stick, then top hand only, then bottom hand only!
- Drill #5:** Control the ball or puck the same as in Drill #4. Keep feet, hips and shoulders facing forward and control the puck with upper body, arms and good wrist rolls.
- Drill #6:** Extra wide side to side control keeping feet and hips facing forward. Take ball or puck out to each side as far as possible without having to completely turn your body. Use only one hand on stick (top hand) when puck is on your backhand side. Simulates puck protection and wide control.
- Drill #7:** Maneuver ball or puck in all directions shown in pattern and mix your pattern up. Work toward controlled speed without looking at stick, ball or puck.
- Drill #8:** Maneuver ball or puck in tight around your feet using the tip of your stick. Good wrist control and proper grip on the top hand are essential in this drill. Bottom hand need to be able to move up and down the shaft of your stick as you maneuver the ball or puck in tight.
- Drill #9:** Stick handle the ball or puck out wide on your forehand side. Push the ball or puck to the outside (approx. 20 centimeters) with the back of your stick blade along with a shoulder and head fake, then quickly pick the puck up on the inside of your blade and pull it laterally across the front of your body. Work on building up speed and control with this drill.
- Drill #10** Keeping your feet straight ahead, work ball or puck back and forth at a 45 degree angle from your heel. Push the ball or puck away from you with it in the middle of your stick blade and pull it back with just the tip of your stick pointing down. Do only this portion of the drill until you can **completely control** the ball or puck with speed using the middle and tip of your stick blade as mentioned. Once you have mastered this portion of the drill and can do it with speed and without looking at the ball or puck, add the last portion of the drill progression. Move the puck back and forth as before at a 45 degree angle from your heel but now as you bring the ball or puck back with the tip of your stick, pull it across you body laterally as you bring in near your body.
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Drill #11 Work the ball or puck back and forth, side to side in different areas in front of you. Pull the ball or puck back into your feet and use your foot to kick the ball or puck back to your stick. Work both feet, as well as, kicking the ball or puck up to different zones to stick handle in.