

Hockey Stops

Another classic drill that most people, I think would describe as an intermediate exercise. However, it is a very hard drill to execute correctly. Just ask any level 4 candidate! If performed incorrectly then you reinforce bad movement patterns instead of creating new, correct ones (a good example of this is hip rotation).

Skills that you can emphasize in the Hockey Stop are turning with the lower body to create separation, creating angulation and grip, maintaining alignment, and coordinating movements together. The most common use I have for a Hockey Stop however is simply pole plant timing.

There are 3 types of Hockey Stop

Strict or 'L' Hockey Stop: No deflection. Skis are turned across the hill then edging is applied quickly with a pole plant.

'J' Hockey stop: skis run fall fine then are steered quickly to a stop creating a 'J'. Finish with pole plant. Blends pivoting and edging skills. (This is the style of Hockey Stop required for the Level 4 exam!)

'?' Hockey Stop: skis run fall line then edges roll to one side before steering skis back the other way. Longer steering effort and slower timing. Feels closer to finishing a round turn

Hockey Pops: Perform HS and add a small jump at the end. Should be balanced in the middle of the skis in and athletic stance to do this.

Hockey Tap: Perform HS and tap uphill ski. Either whole ski or tail of ski to bring balance forwards.

Hockey Clap: Perform hockey stop and finish with a clap down the hill. Helps create separation and give the correct timing of the pole plant. Simply replace the clap with the pole plant.

Javelin Hockey Stop:

Easy mode: Lift one ski but keep the tail in contact with the snow. Foot is placed slightly in front. The ski on the snow is turned underneath the tip of the other ski to a Hockey Stop.

Hard Mode: Lift the whole ski off the snow and steer the other ski underneath to a Hockey Stop.

Ninja Smoke Bomb / Wizards Entrance / Ghosting: Ski fast down the hill and spray as much snow as possible to create a big snow cloud. *(great way to introduce the idea to kids. Just don't let them spray each other or you!)*

Fall Line Hockey Stops: A Hockey Stop with the tips of the skis pointed down the hill. Spray snow at the trees at the side of the run. Gets the skis gripping in the fall line and hopefully carving a bit. To get the student to move back across the hill more effectively, have them apply the pressure more slowly.

Hockey Stops on a bump: Helps time pole plants and coordinate the absorption of bumps. More effective when bumps are spaced out so you can steer skis better.

Ski pole Variations:

Timing: If students are pole planting late change their thinking by asking them to pole plant not at the start of the turn but at the end of the turn. Hockey stops are a great way to teach this timing. The pole plant times the release of pressure on the edges so the pole is planted before the skis begin to flatten.

Double: Finish the Hockey Stop with a double pole plant to emphasize separation and balance on the downhill ski. Make sure the student is good at stopping so they don't trip over the poles in the snow.

Balance poles: Balance poles on the back of the wrist to help keep the upper body quiet to emphasize turning the legs. Can also balance one pole on wrists while doing a normal pole plant with the other.

Hands on Knee: As the student performs the hockey Stop have them slowly move both hands towards the downhill knee. Helps maintain alignment through the end of the turn and times the movement correctly.

Slow / Fast hockey Stop: Play with timing to emphasize precision or increase skillfulness.

Linked Hockey Stops: Have the student pole plant but not quite stop. Helps create rhythm and timing. Add a line to pole plant on to increase precision.

Hockey Stop + Frog Hop: Move pole out of the way or perform without poles. Normal Hockey Stop then Frog Hop down the hill. Helps student manage knee / ankle angulation and they have to maintain alignment in an athletic stance.

Hands on hips: Makes student aware of how well they are creating separation at the hip. Helps them create and manage separation here.