Today’s hockey is, more than ever, a sport of blazing speed; a sport that requires players to be masters of balance, agility, and maneuverability (BAM), all while moving $FAST$ on a platform as thin as a knife blade. Hockey is an intricate and difficult sport, comprised of numerous complex skills (stick-handling, passing, shooting, team systems, etc) that must mesh together. This process takes years of learning, practice, and lots of hard work.

When skating and playing hockey, do you know where your weight is?
- Is it over the outside skate?
- Is it over the inside skate?
- Is it over both skates?

In order to perform complex skating maneuvers effectively, it’s imperative for players to place their body weight properly. This is critical for great ($or$ not so great) balance, stability, speed, and strength on one’s skates.

Skating is basically a one-legged activity. Except in certain circumstances, such as coasting on two feet, standing on two feet with legs wide apart - ie - for balance and stability (i.e, to withstand an upcoming check), or in preparation for making a lateral move or fake, skaters have their weight totally on one skate/leg or the other.

Skating - or pushing, or checking - without having the body weight properly distributed over the “active” skate, is ineffective and often causes balance problems.

In this internet tip we will discuss weight distribution as it applies to the forward stride, backward stride, and crossovers. In a future internet tip we will discuss weight distribution for explosive starts, tight turns, shooting, and checking.

**Forward and Backward Stride:**

1. When pushing, all the weight is on the pushing (outside) skate. During the push, all of the weight (100%) is transferred onto the gliding (inside) skate and remains there as the gliding skate becomes the new pushing skate.
2. When the gliding skate becomes the new pushing skate, all of the body weight must still be above this skate in order for the next push to be powerful and effective.
Forward and Backward Crossovers:

Proper weight application and weight shift also applies to crossovers.
Since there are two steps for every crossover, there must also be two pushes for every crossover. The first push is done with the outside skate/leg, and the second push is done with the inside skate/leg.

When executing forward or backward crossovers, players must recognize that the skates actually replace each other on the ice. The performing skate is always placed under the outside hip. Because the skates replace each other (and always are positioned under the outside hip) the body weight must necessarily also be over the outside skate.

“Leaning in” to perform crossovers is wrong. Many players, as well as some coaches, do not know this. When performing crossovers, the lower body (skates, knees and hips) must lean inward in order to be on the edges and in order for the skates to create a curve. However, if the entire body leans inward, too much weight will be leaning toward the center of the circle. With nothing to counter-act this lean the skater will be off balance, and at speed, might fall. In order to balance properly on deep edges (especially at high speeds), the upper body must lean outward while the skates, knees and hips lean inward. I call this outward lean of the upper body “counter-lean”

Pavel Datsyuk counter-leaning (proper body position) – during forward crossovers

Counter-lean and weight distribution on Forward Crossovers
I encourage all hockey players to put skating technique high on their list of essential hockey skills. The benefits will be long-term.

For a detailed explanation of how to execute each hockey skating maneuver correctly and powerfully, refer to **LAURA STAMM’S POWER SKATING, fourth edition.**

Also, look for an upcoming Laura Stamm Power Skating Clinic in your area.

**SKATE GREAT HOCKEY!**

Laura Stamm  
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