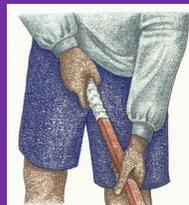


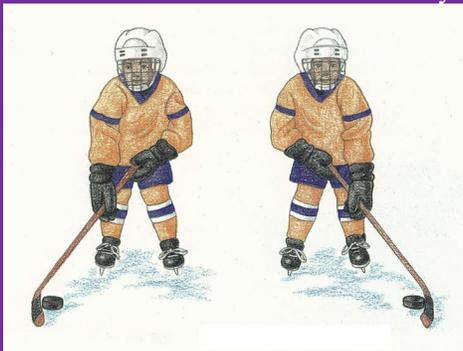
PURCHASING & SIZING A HOCKEY STICK

Sticks can be costly. Buy an inexpensive stick. A standard one piece kid's stick, made of good, old fashioned wood is perfect for beginners. Sticks come in junior, intermediate and senior sizes. A junior stick has a small blade and a narrow shaft, suitable for tiny hands. Older kids use an intermediate stick, which is slightly bigger. At 12 and 13, it's time for a senior stick. Don't buy a senior stick, intending to cut it to the proper length for your 7-year-old. The shaft will be too thick and the blade too big.

How do you determine which way a child shoots? Easy, give him or her a hockey stick for a few minutes and watch. Pretty soon, you'll see which hand is preferred on the top and which for the shaft of the stick. A child usually shoots left if the right hand is on the top of the stick and the left hand is on the shaft. Visa-versa for the right hander.



For beginners, try to find a straight bladed stick not one that has a curve blade. Curve blades are made for a harder and more accurate shot on the forehand. Its downside is, it is harder to control the puck when stick-handling, passing or taking a backhand shot. That is why we recommend a straight blade. Unfortunately, they are hard to find. Manufacturers, responding to the marketplace, make mostly curved sticks. If you can't find a straight blade get the gentlest curve you can find and make sure the curve matches the way a child shoots.



The key thing about a hockey stick, though, is not the price or the material or the way it's made. **It's the length.** A stick that's too long or too short is going to hamper the player's game. When you go to the store you may be surrounded by sticks that are all too long. Don't worry. We suggest that you go to a store like JT Sports at the Skating Pavilion or another Ice Rink; the salespeople are knowledgeable enough to grab a hacksaw and cut the stick to size for you. If you go to a store like K Mart and the salespeople don't know what they are doing, we suggest that you follow these directions.



Here's how to determine the proper length of stick.

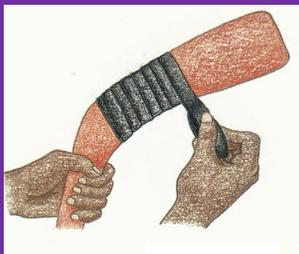
1. Get your child to put on his or her skates.
2. Then hold the stick vertically against the body.
3. With the blade toe on the ground.
4. The tip of the shaft should be measured between the child's chin and nose.
5. Cut the excess length off the top of the shaft with a hacksaw.
6. Once the stick is cut, your child should be able to move it back and forth in front of the body without getting the butt end hung up in the mid-section and with the blade flat on the ground or ice.

TIP: Sticks look alike. Print your child's name on the shaft of the stick with a marker.

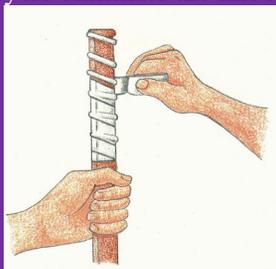
TAPING A STICK

I have always enjoyed taping a hockey stick. The idea behind taping is to improve contact between the stick and the puck. I go slowly and take a lot of pride in doing it properly. Since it will be you the parent doing it for the next year or two, you might as well start out the right way. First off, make sure you buy hockey tape. Hockey tape comes in a range of colors, although black and white are the most common. Many parents make a mistake and buy black electrical. Hockey tape is a specialized product made of cloth. Black electrical tape on the upper shaft of the stick is an invitation to ruin a hockey glove.

Taping the Blade of the hockey Stick: Generally players use black tape on the blade but you must also remember that the tape will wear fairly quickly, especially on the bottom of the blade of the stick. Therefore, inspect it regularly and redo it as needed. Begin by running a strip of tape along the bottom of the blade. Then, starting at about one (1) to two (2) inches from the heel of the blade, wrap the tape around, with each turn overlapping the previous one about half the width of the tape. Continue this process until you reach about one (1) to two (2) inches from the front of the blade. Keep the tape as smooth as possible. Once you are finished, press the tape down with your hand or a puck. Some players like to rub wax on the blade to repel snow and water in order to prolong the life of the tape.



Taping the Shaft of the hockey Stick: Begin by putting a knob on the top end of a beginner's stick. White tape is recommended. The knob is like the flared end of a baseball bat; it prevents the stick from sliding out of the player's hand and it makes a stick laying the ice easier to pick up with a glove hand. The knob is not meant to be held in the hand, so when you size the stick add about a half (1/2) inch to the stick before you cut it. Make sure the child holds the stick below the knob. You construct this knob by winding tape around the end of the shaft over and over again until you feel satisfied the skater's hand will not slip off the stick. Remember a child's hand is small so don't make it too big. Goaltenders on the other hand should make a larger knob because they usually hold the stick with one hand so there is a greater chance of losing it. You make the grip by twisting the tape so it forms a string; while twisting, wind it around the stick in a spiral pattern. Then wrap a layer of tape over it similar to taping the blade. The grip should extend down the shaft at least a few inches below the glove. What does the grip do? It improves the player's ability to grip the stick. Some players eliminate the knob but most keep a hand grip.



HOW TO CARRY A STICK OFF THE ICE

Young players should get into the habit of carrying their stick upside down when off the ice. Blade side up and shaft side down. This method is similar to using a walking stick. It eliminates tripping accidents. When they get on the ice they can turn it right side up for playing. Then before leaving the ice they should revert back into the off ice mode.