

## CHAPTER 2

### THE ART OF POWER SKATING



*These are the basic skating skills that must be mastered to be the best in hockey*

## THE ART OF POWER SKATING

Skating is a necessary skill for hockey as well as a fun pass time for anyone not interested in competition. It is not intended to be a source of frustration and disappointment. However, hockey can be frustrating if the participant has not taken the time to learn the basic skating skills and practice them until they can execute them well. Parents and unqualified instructors can also make the learning of a sport frustrating. Parents are starting their children in organized hockey before they are physically and mentally capable. It may be cute to watch but it is detrimental to the development process. “Timbit’s” hockey was a good idea for getting children involved but can inhibit their development in skating and hockey. You can go to a Tyke game and see four and five year olds trying to please their parents thinking that it’s supposed to be fun. You will see them fall, run into each other, trip over sticks, slide into the boards, and make feeble attempts to shoot the puck. You may even hear angry parents that are upset their child isn’t living up to their expectations. This is not what hockey is supposed to be.



These children, who have not yet mastered the basic skills of skating, are expected to execute the more demanding skills of hockey under the all too critical eyes of their parents. The result, not surprisingly, is a child with tears in their eyes who is too upset to look at their mom or dad, who leaves the arena both frustrated and bitterly disappointed. Unqualified instructors can also make the learning of a sport a frustrating and disappointing experience. My qualified instructors have the training and expertise necessary to assess each student’s ability and to adjust their program to compensate for individual differences in height, weight, strength and co-ordination. They can also recognize when fear prevents a student from executing a particular skill and can help this student overcome their fears. Parents should enroll their children in programs conducted



only by qualified instructors and they should let the instructor and their children determine the rate of advancement and the level of participation in the sport. For example, to push a young child into figure skating or hockey before the power skating instructor feels the child is ready for this change in direction or before the child is ready to undertake the study of these more demanding and specialized skills could have detrimental and damaging psychological and physical effects.

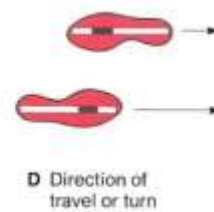
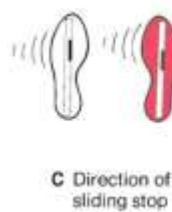
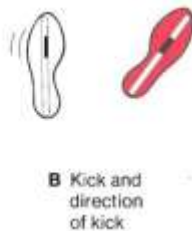
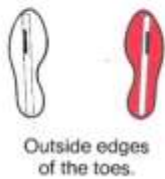
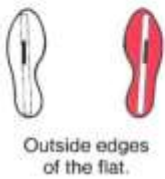
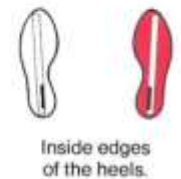
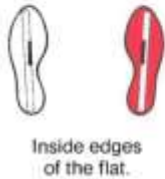
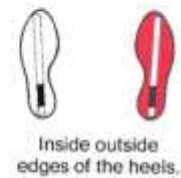
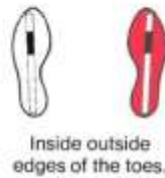
In order to succeed in skating and hockey, the basic skills must be learned from one of my knowledgeable and qualified power skating instructors. Figure skating, hockey, and speed skating all require highly developed basic skills in addition to the specialized skills demanded by each art form. These specialized skills, however, cannot be learned until the basic power skating skills have been mastered. Always keep in mind that not everyone, only a small percentage, has the physical talent, the mental toughness, and the dedication to become a champion figure skater, speed skater or to play professional hockey. But reaching the top should be neither the immediate goal nor the justification for enrolling in these programs. These programs have much to offer children in terms of physical and social growth and development. Continued enjoyment should be the immediate goal and interest should be the justification for maintaining a child that has demonstrated both the desire and the necessary characteristics to reach the top should be given the opportunity and the encouragement to do so. But decisions of this nature only come after the basic skills of power skating have been mastered.





## RIGHT & LEFT SKATE WEIGHT DISTRIBUTION GUIDE

RIGHT SKATE (RED) LEFT SKATE (WHITE)  
SOLID BLACK ON BLADE INDICATES ICE CONTACT AREA



**A** Full stop without sliding. One solid arc beside a skate print indicates a jump stop. On landing both skates cut into the ice, stopping with absolutely no sliding.

**B** Kick and direction of kick. Two arcs beside a skate indicate the kicking leg and direction of push.

**C** Direction of sliding stop. The four arcs indicate direction of skater's sliding stop. If both skates are used for a hockey stop the four arcs will be shown on both skate prints.

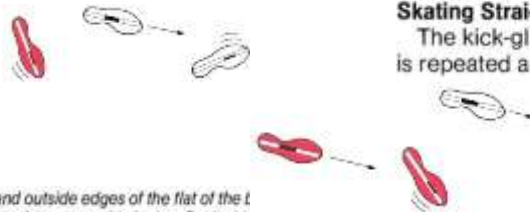
**D** Direction of travel or turn. An arrow will indicate the direction of forward or backward motion and turns or movements.

**E** Colour guide for right and left skate. For easier identification throughout this book, the right skate is always shown in red and the left skate is always shown in white.

## BASIC SKATING SKILLS

### Starting Forward

Place your left skate on the flat with both the inside and outside edge of the blade in contact with the ice. Point the toe of this skate in the direction in which you wish to move. Point the toe of the right skate slightly to the side placing the inside edge of the flat on the ice. Now kick with the right skate to the side and to the back. This will cause the left skate to glide forward. As your right leg extends behind your body, your weight will transfer automatically to the toe of the right skate. The inside edge is still in contact with the ice. When you are finished kicking, raise the right skate off the ice and place it down on the ice with the toe pointing in the direction you are travelling and both edges of the flat in contact with the ice. Now point the toe of the left skate slightly outward and kick out to the left and back off the inside edge of the flat of the left blade as you had previously done with the right skate.



*NOTE: The inside and outside edges of the flat of the l of the gliding skate are in contact with the ice. On the kicking skate it is only the inside edge of the flat, then the toe, of the blade that is in contact with the ice.*

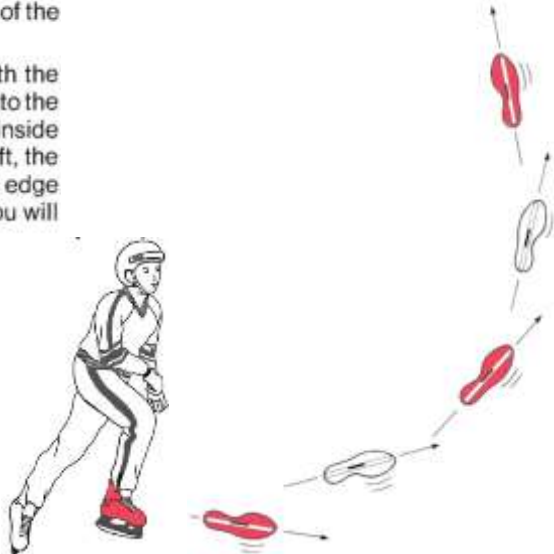
### Skating Straight Forward

The kick-glide motion outlined in STARTING FORWARD is repeated as long as you intend to skate straight forward. (See illustration.)

### Turns During Forward Skating or Forward Crossovers

To turn or to skate other than straight forward, one must use the inside edge of one skate and the outside edge of the other skate. (See illustration.)

To turn to the left, step in front of the left skate with the right skate. This action will cause the left skate to go onto the left outside edge. Place the right skate on the right inside edge and kick off. As long as you are turning to the left, the left skate will land on and kick off with the left outside edge and each time you step in front with the right skate you will kick off the right inside edge.



To go to the right, just reverse the same motion and step with the left skate in front of the right one. But this time step and kick with the left skate's inside edge and step and kick with the right's outside edge.

## Skating Backwards

One of the most difficult skills to learn is the skill of backward skating. There are two main reasons for this. The first is that moving backwards is not a natural movement, and the second is fear. The legs, both in structural and muscular development, are designed for forward motion and it is this skill that a child learns first. We can, however, force our legs into walking backwards and even into effecting a backwards running motion, but it both looks and feels awkward and we certainly don't continue this backwards motion very long. There is also fear to contend with whenever we attempt to move backwards. We like to see where we are going, and when we can't, we become afraid. Try walking forward wearing a blindfold. You automatically become extremely apprehensive and your movements are slow and awkward. It is natural, then, without the benefit of eyes in the back of our heads that walking or running backwards produces a certain amount of fear, and this fear will be compounded when attempting to learn how to skate backwards because we have more confidence in our ability to maintain balance on feet than on skates. In order to skate backwards, we have to develop muscles that will permit us to skate smoothly backwards in the way that we developed muscles which permit effective forward skating, and we have to overcome our natural fear of moving backwards. Practice is the key to doing both. We are, in effect, learning a new skill and developing new muscle group strength at the same time. With practice, we gradually become more proficient at skating backwards as our muscles develop and our fear lessens.

## Starting Straight Backwards

Place your left skate with the inside and outside edges of flat of the blade in contact with the ice. Point your right toe in toward the toe of your left skate with the inside edge of the flat of the blade in contact with the ice. (See illustration.) Kick out to the right and to the front of your body. This will cause the left skate to glide backward. As your leg extends out in front of your body, your weight transfer will move toward the heel of the skate. At the completion of the kick, place the inside and outside edges of the flat of the blade on the right skate on the ice as you had done previously with the left skate. Now point the toe of your left skate in toward the toe of your right skate, and with only the inside edge of the flat of the blade of your left skate in contact with the ice, kick out to the side and to the front of your body. The right skate will now glide backward.

As when skating forward the kick glide procedure is repeated over and over. To move almost perfectly straight backward takes years of practice. You will probably find that you are moving to the side a fair amount initially. Do not be discouraged. As you become more proficient at skating backward this problem will correct itself. Remember when skating straight backward as when skating straight forward that the glide skate is on the flat of the blade and the kicking skate is *always* on the inside edge of the flat of the blade only.



Starting with right skate.



Starting with left skate.

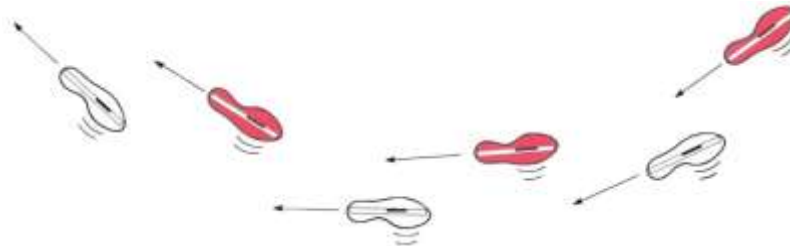


*NOTE: When skating backward, the pressure from the kick moves toward the heel of the skate rather than to the toe as when skating forward.*



### Turns During Backward Skating or Backward Crossovers

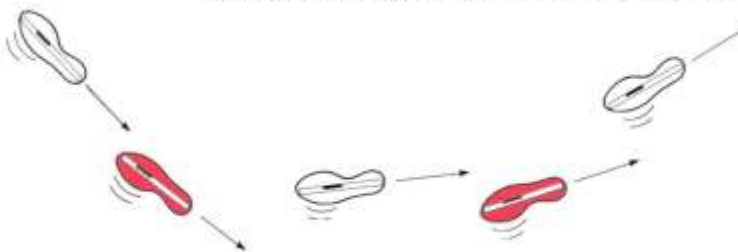
Backward turns while skating are very similar to forward turns while skating. When turning to the left, step in front of your left skate with your right skate placed exactly the same way you did for forward crossovers. Because you are skating backwards, your body weight will be transferred to the heel part of the skates as you kick to the side and forward. The same two edges will be used as in forward crossovers, which are the left outside edge and the right inside edge.



To skate backwards and turn to the right, you would step with the left skate in front of the right, using the right outside edge and the left inside edge. *NOTE: Always remember that for a smooth flow from each kick you must kick equally from the inside edge of the skate and from the outside edge. If you feel as if you are limping, then you are probably not using your outside edge. (See illustration)*



The backward crossover is an extremely difficult manoeuvre. It should be practised very slowly using the flat inside, outside edge of both skates. As confidence grows, increase your speed. This will automatically cause you to lean in the direction you are turning and you will be on the outside edge of the inside skate and on the inside edge of the outside skate. Now all you have to do is learn how to kick to the side and forward at the same time. Any of these skills can be practised without skates by just walking around backwards in a circle stepping in front of your own feet as you would when you are walking forward in a circle. Note how you have to transfer your entire weight from one foot to the other as you step. Do this exercise slowly holding your full weight on each foot for a couple of seconds each time you step. This is the same type of balancing you will have to do on the ice except that it has to be done on a narrow steel blade.

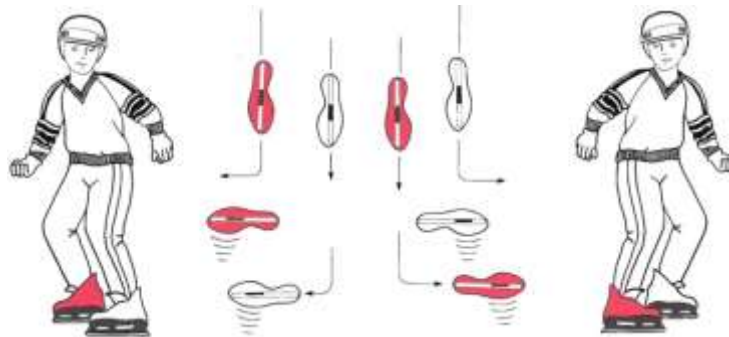




### The Side Stop or Hockey Stop

As soon as one can skate fast, this stop is a must, because it is the fastest way to stop. Remember that the faster you are moving, the faster you will have to be able to stop.

To stop with maximum speed, as much edge as possible must come in contact with the ice. This is done by turning sideways  $\frac{1}{4}$  turn and placing both skates sideways in the direction you are travelling.



To stop to the left, throw your hip  $\frac{1}{4}$  turn to the left and pivot on both skates. Make sure that both skates stay parallel to each other and at the same time lean back in the direction you were coming from. When stopping to the left, the left outside edge and the right inside edge will be in contact with the ice.

When stopping to the right, the right outside edge and left inside edge will be in contact with the ice.

*NOTE: The following stops should not be attempted until the side stop to the left and to the right have been mastered.*

### One Outside Edge

To stop with one outside edge to the left, a skater pivots on his left skate  $90^\circ$  or  $\frac{1}{4}$  turn, as illustrated, raising the right skate off the ice and placing it down only after the stop is completed.

To do this stop to the right, just turn to the right  $90^\circ$  or  $\frac{1}{4}$  turn and raise the left skate off the ice and place it down after the stop has been completed.

### One Inside Edge Stop

With the one inside edge stop, rather than raising the outside skate off the ice, you raise the inner skate. To stop with the right inside edge, pivot on the right skate  $\frac{1}{4}$  turn and raise the left skate off the ice. Set the left skate on the ice only after you have come to a complete stop.

To stop with the right inside edge, pivot on the left skate  $\frac{1}{4}$  turn and raise the left skate off the ice and set the left skate on the ice only after you have come to a complete stop.

To stop with left inside edge, pivot on the left skate, turn and raise the right skate off the ice and set the right skate on the ice only after you have come to a complete stop.



*NOTE: If the skates are very sharp, you can prevent toppling over by stopping on the toe. There is less blade contact with the ice surface so that you can come to a sliding stop. The skates must also be in good condition and must be firm in the side walls to prevent injury to the ankles. Keep in mind that when you are stopping with one skate all your weight plus your speed places a tremendous strain on one ankle.*

### The "T" Stop

The "T" stop is one stop that figure skaters use more than any other stop. Hockey players use the "T" stop mainly on leaving the ice at a slow, leisurely speed. This stop is relatively hard to do, but it is better that a youngster practice this stop than the snow plow stop.

*(see illustration)*

To stop with the right skate, place the left skate on the flat of the blade pointing in the direction in which you are moving. Now with the right skate placed at 90° forming a "T" behind the left skate, lean back gradually placing the outside edge of the right skate on the ice and applying the amount of pressure or body weight to stop you at the speed at which you want to stop. If you happen to catch the inside edge of the right skate, this will spin you around rather than stopping you.

To stop with the "T" stop, place the right skate on the flat of the blade with the inside and outside edge in contact with the ice, and put the left skate behind at a right angle or at 90° to the right skate. By transferring the weight from the right skate to the outside edge of the left skate gradually, you can control the speed with which you will stop. Note that you must lean back in the direction that you are coming from. This will prevent you from catching the inside edge and you will be able to keep your balance as you stop.

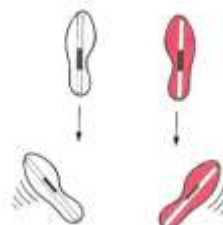


### Stopping Backward

To stop backward, a reverse snow plow is used. Many variations and methods have been developed by hockey players, but they are all just snow plow stops.

*(see illustration)*

As you skate backward, place both skates on the ice at the same time with heels together and toes pointing out and lean forward or in the direction you are coming from. At the same time kick outward causing the inside edge of both skates to dig into the ice. The harder you kick out, the faster you will stop. If you are moving backward very fast, then you must compensate for speed by leaning forward the correct amount; otherwise you will end up falling.



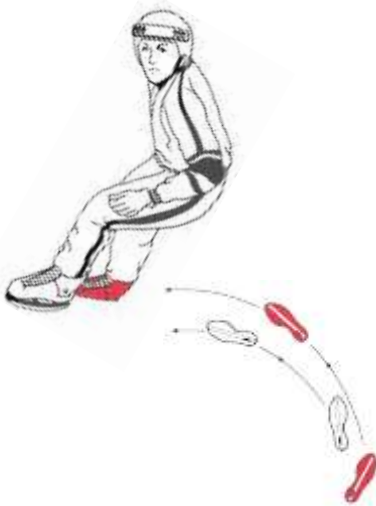
## Heel Turns

The heel turn is a manoeuvre that is used by all professional hockey players. This is a manoeuvre that was developed by hockey players because they needed to be able to come out of a corner away from the boards at high speeds or just to change directions very quickly.

*NOTE: Goalies cannot do a heel turn with their skates; neither can figure skaters nor speed skaters.*

The heel turn, as the name states, is done on the heel of the skates. If you want to make a sharp turn to the left, place both skates on the flat of the blade with the left toe forward of the right toe.

Now lean to the left and backward in the direction you are coming from. This will transfer your weight to the left outside edge of the left heel and the right inside edge of the right heel. At slow speeds this can be done smoothly without chopping great amounts of ice from the arena surface. But at high speeds, I have seen a skater cut a groove  $\frac{3}{4}$ " deep into the ice, leaving a very dangerous rut.



To do a heel turn to the right, start with both skates on the flat of the blade, placing the right toe out in front. Lean back and to the right, transferring your weight onto the heel of the skates. The right skate on the outside edge at the heel will dig in and the left inside edge of the heel will dig into the ice causing you to end up going in the direction you had come from. Always practice these manoeuvres slowly and as confidence increases, increase your speed.

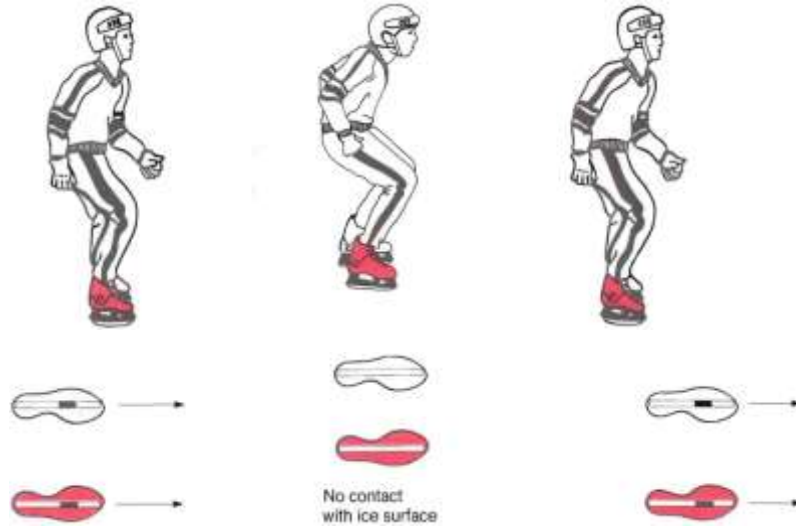
*NOTE 1: Removing some of the material off the heel of your skate blade will enable you to turn much sharper or in a smaller circle and still have full control of your skates.*



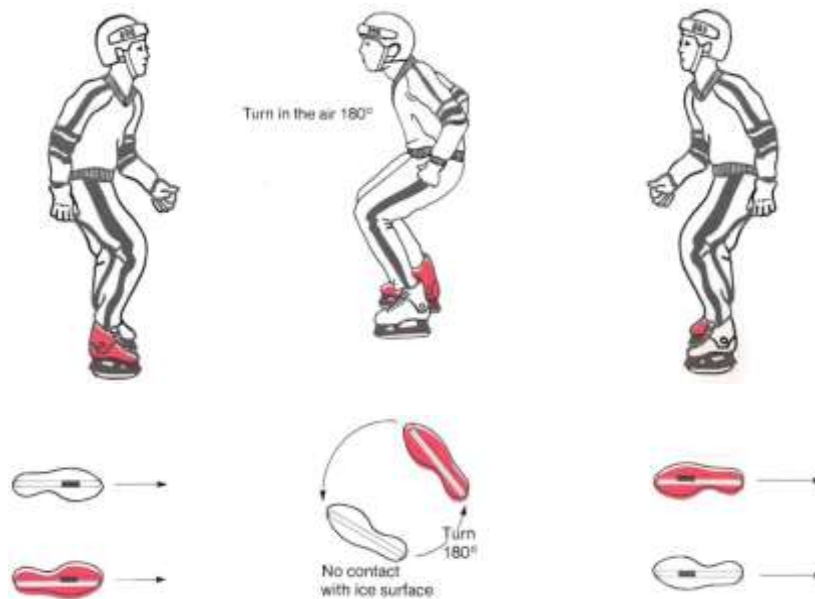
*NOTE 2: Some power skating instructors may disagree with this method of executing heel turns, but it is a proven and effective method regardless of other opinions of this technique.*

### Jumps with both feet together

When you are learning to jump while skating, always keep in mind that you do not lean forward or backward. Jump straight up, at first just enough to clear the ice, then a little higher until you can clear the ice by about 10" to 12".

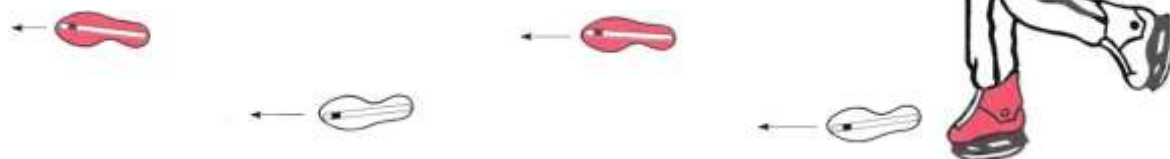


To jump and turn backward is done by jumping and turning in the air 180° and landing on both skates at the same time, noting that you must not lean forward or backward.



### Step Jump

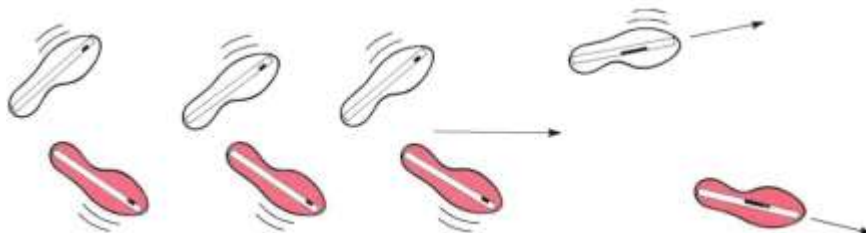
The step jump can be compared to stepping over logs on the ground. You can use sticks or pylons as an obstacle course to practice this manoeuvre. Take big running steps, and as you step jump over an obstacle, land on the toes of your skates to prevent them from sliding.



### Running Start

A running start on skates is very similar to running. Normally, the skates are kept close to the ice, which makes it much harder to be knocked off them. But for a running start, lean forward and raise up on the toes of your blades and use the forward part of the toe on the inside edges, pointing the toes out slightly. Dig the toe into the ice by stepping down hard onto the ice. By kicking hard to the side and back, you literally end up running on ice for a few steps or until you have reached a speed that is equal to the speed that you can run. At this point it is pointless to run any longer since you can skate much faster than you can run. The purpose of the running start is to enable a skater to start moving and to reach top speed as fast as possible.

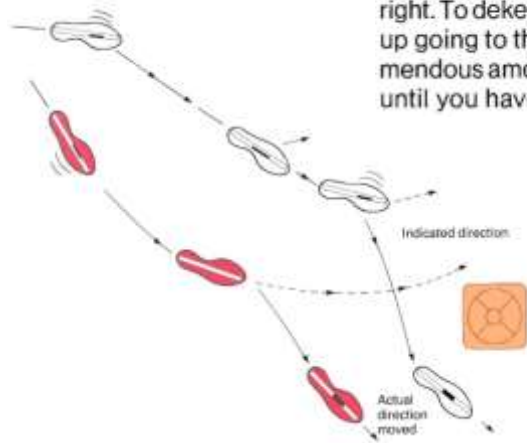
*NOTE: You will have to be in excellent physical condition to do this manoeuvre effectively.*





### Side Step (Deke)

To do a side step, skate straight forward directly at the pylon at full speed. About ten feet from the pylon, shift your weight onto the left skate indicating that this is the way you are going to move. Without setting the right skate down on the ice, kick as hard as you can toward the right with the left inside edge and set the right skate down about three feet to the right of the pylon. Then skate around the pylon to the right. To deke to the right just do everything in reverse and end up going to the left of the pylon. Remember this takes a tremendous amount of strength. Do not attempt this manoeuvre until you have built up your stamina.



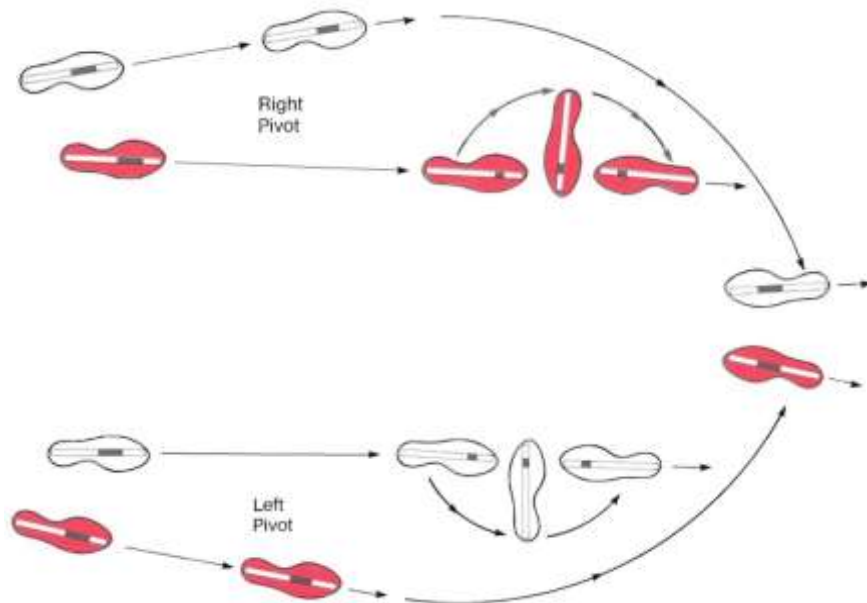
### Turning from Forward to Backward

(See illustration)

Make sure that you are on the flat of both skates pointing directly in the direction you are going. To turn to the right, raise up onto the toe of the right skate. At the same time throw your hip to the right enough to make a 180° turn. The left skate is raised just enough off the ice to prevent catching an edge and is placed down along side of the right skate as illustrated.

To make a turn to the left from forwards to backwards, throw your hip to the left 180°, pivoting on the toe of the left skate.

*NOTE: You must be on the inside/outside flat of the toe to make this manoeuvre, otherwise you will catch an edge which will either cause you to fall or bring you to an abrupt stop.*

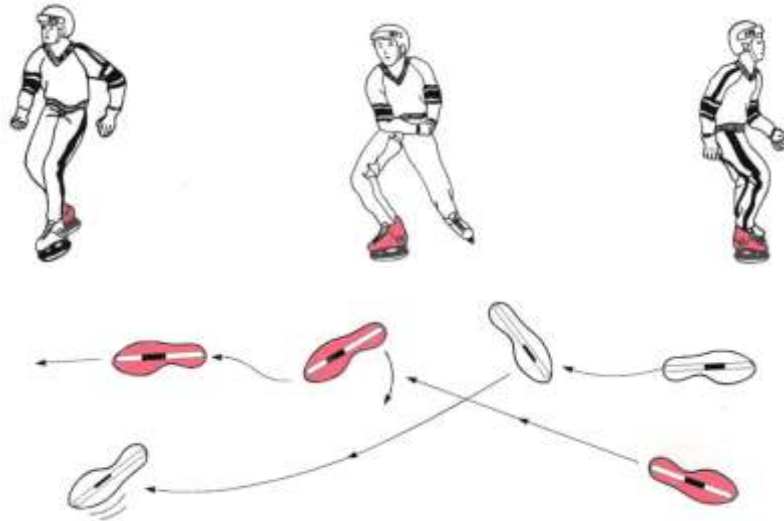


**Turns from backward to forward pivoting on left skate**

To turn from backward to forward, both skates must again be on the flat of the blade.

To turn to the right with the left skate on the flat of the blade, raise the right skate off the ice. With the toe pointing outward, step back and to the right and at the same time

pivot on the left skate to the right. As the right skate touches the ice, raise the left skate and turn, pointing the left toe out, stepping to the left and at the same time pivoting on the flat of the blade of the right skate.



**Turns from backward to forward pivoting on right skate**

To turn to the left, raise the left skate off the ice, pointing the right toe out, stepping to the left and at the same time pivot on the flat of the blade of the right skate. First kick to move forward is with the right skate.

*NOTE: You do not raise up onto the toe when turning from backward to forward. All manoeuvres should be tried only at a very slow speed, and as your confidence increases with practice, then and only then should you start to increase your speed. With speed, the execution of this manoeuvre will become very smooth, and you will surprise yourself at how easy turning actually is.*

