

STRETCH AND SKATE

Injuries are a part of life for a hockey player. Hockey is a high-impact sport, and on skates, hockey players move faster than most athletes, so it's no surprise that injuries are too often a part of the sport.

The following stretches and tips compiled are by chiropractors aimed at helping players prevent injuries before they step on the ice.

STARTING OUT

Invest in equipment, sticks and skates that suit your height and size.

- Be 'head smart' – wear your helmet with the cage, shield or visor properly secured.
- For better performance, sharpen your skates regularly.
- Repair or replace damaged or broken equipment.

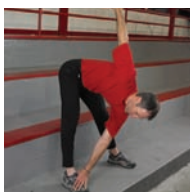


PRE-GAME STRETCHES

#1 HAMSTRING STRETCH

Lie on your back and bend one knee towards the ceiling. Hold the back of the thigh with both hands and straighten the knee as much as you can by raising your foot towards the ceiling. Hold the stretch

for one second, then bend the knee and straighten again. Repeat 20 times on each leg.



#2 GROIN STRETCH

Stand with your feet slightly wider apart than your shoulders. Bend your knees. Shift your weight to the right leg. Reach down and across your body with your left hand to touch your right foot. Point your right hand up to the ceiling. Keep your

back parallel to the ground. Shift your weight to the left leg. Repeat 10 times on each side.



#3 HIP FLEXOR STRETCH

Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart. Step forward with your right foot into a lunge position. Your right knee should be directly over the toes of your right foot. Keep your left leg and your back straight. Extend your arms straight

in front of you and bring your palms together. Turn your upper torso to the right keeping pelvis and hips stationary. Hold for one second and repeat 10 times on each side.

SAFETY CHECK

If you are injured during practice or a game, don't try to play through it. Put ice on the injured area for periods of 15-20 minutes. If you hit your head, be aware of signs of concussion such as:

- Dizziness
- Blurred vision
- Problems with your co-ordination or balance
- Difficulty remembering team mates' names or the plays
- Any loss of consciousness – even briefly

If you think you suffered a concussion, have neck or back pain, or experience tingling or numbness, get examined by a health care professional immediately



POST-GAME STRETCHES

#1 QUAD STRETCH

Stand with your back to a wall or the rink boards. Using a pad for cushioning, kneel onto your right knee with your right foot flat against a wall. Your left knee should be bent in front of you at a 90 degree angle

for support. Place your hand on your left knee for balance and lean back slightly to stretch your right quad muscle. Hold the stretch for ten seconds. Switch legs and do three stretches on each side.



#2 GLUTE STRETCH

Sit on the ground with one leg slightly bent behind you and one leg slightly bent in front of you. Lower your chest toward your knee keeping your back straight and holding your chin up. Hold the stretch for 10 seconds. Switch legs and repeat three

times on each side.



#3 HIP STRETCH

Lie on your back with your knees bent and feet flat apart on the floor slightly more than shoulder width apart. Lower your right knee to the floor and place your left ankle on top of it pushing the knee towards the ground. Keep your hips on

the floor. Hold the stretch for 10 seconds. Switch sides and do three stretches on each side.

REMEMBER

- Never stretch a cold muscle. Always warm-up before pre-game stretches.
- Don't overstretch – be comfortable.
- Don't bounce when stretching.
- If you experience pain that lasts longer than your usual post-game soreness, ice the area and consult a chiropractor.

Doctors of Chiropractic are specifically trained in the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of muscle and joint injuries associated with sport and recreational activities, and are often embedded with professional hockey teams.

To find a chiropractor near you visit www.chiropractic.on.ca