

How to Teach Hockey Stops (Skiing)

We've been working the last, few weeks in the Level 1 training group we do on Wednesday nights to put together a good hockey stop progression. The reason we're working on this is because one way an Examiner would be able to kill 2 birds with one stone is to have someone teach hockey stops to the group. They could then see their teaching and evaluate everyone's hockey stops, which is a skill/task in the PSIA Level 1 Alpine exam (all the skills are up for grabs, too!).

I found the [hockey stop progression that PSIA put together](#), but I decided to put it more into plain English here.

Introduction

"Hi, again. I'm Tony and your name is John. We met inside at Ski School earlier. You paid for a 20 minute lesson where you want to learn how to do hockey stops since you've never been taught. That's great. You already know how to do a wedge stop and you're good at making turns in a wedge as well."

That's my intro. I set the parameters of what will happen during my teaching in the exam. I doubt anyone would pay for a 20 minute lesson ever, but this is the exam, so that's the scenario. Saying this gives the Examiner a chance to redirect me if I'm heading off in the wrong direction. It also lets me state what other things are important – like, that they know how to do a wedge stop and turn already (so I don't have to teach that).

Static

"As we're standing here at the top of this medium-pitched slope where it's flat, let's pop out of our skis and work in our boots. Get into a nice athletic stance bending at your ankles, knees, hips and rounding out your back with your arms in front and with your head up, looking forward. Looks good.

Let's try something called bow ties. Watch my foot. What I'm doing is pretending there's like a peg through the center of my foot and I'm pivoting around it. My toes and heel are moving out, but the center of the foot stays still. Try that.

Good. Now try it with the other foot, like this.

Looks good. I'm seeing your toes and heel move out. If we move our feet, we can see some bow ties in the snow.

We're rotating our feet, basically. This is a part of hockey stops.

Next, let's pop back into our skis.

Traverses in a Fan

Let's do an uphill turn across the hill using this motion to turn the skis. The skis will stay fairly flat and they'll skid. Watch me and go when it's clear."

We then do a fan progression, aiming more and more down the fall line. I'll emphasize tightening the turn with more leg rotation as we go. We'll do what the PSIA lesson says: "Slowly increase the rate and intensity of leg rotation and decrease the time and distance that the rotation takes to occur."

Side Slipping

"Now that we know how to do the skiddy part, let's start going straight, then into the skid. Let's keep the zipper of our jacket facing more downhill instead of toward the sides of the hill – like this. Give it a try once it's clear and safe to go.

There, you're getting it. I like your skidding and I'm seeing your upper body, facing downhill some more.

Next, let's bring our skis up onto their edges, which makes the skis stop skidding and come to a stop. Make sure your weight is in the center of your skis – like how we did those bow ties. Watch me and go once it's clear.

Yes, and let's try to pivot faster and stay in as much of a straight line as possible. Again, keeping the pressure or weight in the middle of the ski will help us make that pivot. I'm also putting more pressure on the outside ski as I do this.

I'll give you a demo, then go when it's clear.

Do it again with a quicker stop. Watch me and go when it's clear.

Nice!

Let's try the other way.

We're doing hockey stops!"

Wrap Up

"John, at the beginning, we were in our boots and what did we do? Yes, we made those bow ties. We put our skis on and made some skiddy turns after that. We then kind of put those things together as we... what? Yes, we skidded in a straight line with the pivot. That's a good word for it. We then added in a quicker stop with edging and tried it both ways.

Was that fun? Did this help you?

Great. You can continue doing these on this run again and practice them some more. In our next lesson, we'll find something else you want to learn or agree on something to learn, which should be fun. Do you have any questions? No. Good. Well, come back and let's work on more. I'll see you then! Thanks for coming out!"

That's it!

Which fundamentals did we use?

- Control pressure from ski to ski and direct pressure toward the outside ski
- Control the skis rotation (turning, pivoting, steering) with leg rotation, separate from the upper body

We also kind of used this one:

- Control edge angles through a combination of inclination and angulation
-

Shorter Version

1. Start by skiing at a comfortable speed on a gentle slope. You don't want to be going too fast when you're learning how to do a hockey stop.
2. Once you're skiing, shift your weight onto your downhill ski by bending that knee slightly and pushing your hip towards that ski. This will cause your ski to start turning across the slope.
3. Once you've initiated the turn, lift the ski on the uphill side (the ski opposite the direction you're turning) off the snow slightly. This will help you to carve your turn more effectively.
4. As you're turning across the slope, gradually increase the pressure on the edge of your downhill ski. This will cause your ski to dig into the snow and slow you down.
5. When you're ready to come to a complete stop, quickly shift your weight onto your uphill ski (the one you lifted earlier) and press down hard on its edge. This will cause your ski to dig into the snow and create a hockey stop.
6. As you come to a stop, keep your weight forward and balanced over your skis to prevent yourself from falling backwards.
7. Practice this technique on both sides, turning both left and right, until you feel comfortable and confident with the movement.

Remember, like any skill, learning how to do a hockey stop takes practice and patience. Take your time, start slow, and gradually work your way up to faster speeds and steeper slopes. Happy skiing!