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**INSIDER'S SPECIAL REPORT**



**How hockey conditioning can cut  
down on penalties.**

Maria L. Mountain, MSc, CSCS

## Two hockey conditioning exercises to help reduce penalties.

Think about the last time you drew a hooking penalty. Why did that penalty occur? Was it because you were lazy or was it a missing link in your hockey conditioning. I firmly believe that you are not one of the lazy players because if you were lazy you would not be reading this article looking for ways to improve your hockey conditioning.

Are you wondering exactly how hockey training can help you cut down on penalties? You never get a hooking penalty when you are winning the race right? You always get the penalty when you are trying to catch up or losing a foot race. Either you do not have enough speed or your hockey conditioning is not quite up to par and you are getting tired. Which category do you fall into? If you are only getting hooking penalties toward the end of the game, then you are likely getting tired. If you get them regardless of your time on the ice, then you may need more speed.

Training can help with both. If you build more leg power, you can improve your first step quickness and stay up in the play rather than get half a stride behind right off the hop. When you are more powerful, you can use less energy by playing more efficiently because you are not constantly trying to catch up to the play.

Here are two drills you can add to your hockey conditioning. They are technically simple and require no equipment at all while helping improve your power.

Exercise #1 – Repeated Broad Jump. The repeated broad jump is a basic exercise and I chose it because standing long jump distance is directly related to skating speed. Those who are the fastest skaters, also typically have the longest standing broad jump. Before attempting this exercise make sure you have

approximately five meters of space with good footing and you must wear proper athletic foot attire.

- Stand with your feet hip width apart
- You will perform a countermovement by rapidly bending at your hips, knees and ankles before driving forward, jumping off both legs trying to travel as far as you can
- Upon landing, try to immediately absorb and reload for another jump
- Your landing should not be heavy – absorb with your legs and immediately explode forward again
- Try to link three jumps in a row
- Slowly walk back to the starting point
- Repeat 5-6 times.
- Monitor the distance you cover in your three jumps to give you a measure of progress.
- Try adding this exercise to your hockey conditioning once or twice per week.

Exercise #2 – Zig Zag Jumps. This exercise does not require any equipment either, but it adds a component of lateral power.

- Stand with your feet hip width apart and begin with a standing broad jump as described above.
- Upon landing from your standing long jump, immediately absorb and reload, but this time instead of jumping forward again, you will jump to your right as far as you can.
- Upon landing from this lateral jump, then you will jump straight forward again followed by a lateral jump to your left. Continue this 'zig zag' pattern until you have travelled approximately five meters.
- Complete 5 repetitions and add this exercise to your hockey conditioning once or twice per week.

When you take a penalty you give your opponents a chance to win. If you believe that improving your leg power will reduce the likelihood of getting put in the box for hooking, then add these two exercises to your hockey conditioning.

## ABOUT THE COACH...



Maria Mountain, MSc is the owner of Revolution Sport Conditioning located in London, Ontario, Canada. Since starting out as a fitness coach in 1994, Maria has developed a reputation for helping athletes perform at the highest level in their chosen sport.

She has shared her expertise with collegiate athletes as the head strength coach to both men's and women's hockey, basketball, volleyball and track

and field teams. You have seen some of Maria's clients competing at the Olympics, in the NHL, MLB, AHL and CFL. Her career highlights include watching her client Andy McDonald hoist the Stanley Cup for the Anaheim Ducks and seeing Jeff Francis pitch for the Colorado Rockies in the World Series final.

Her goal is to help athletes perform and win at the very highest level by designing effective training systems that will also reduce the athlete's risk of injury leading to a long and productive career.

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