

Skills Plus Hockey

Get an edge on your skills



Training your individual skills and tactics – the best way to become a leader on the ice!

Hockey Training Skills Tip #9

INDIVIDUAL TECHNICAL SKILLS
“Angling” – a defensive individual tactic used to take time and space away from the opponent carrying the puck.

Developing a correct and consistent technique to properly angle an opponent towards the boards will check the opponent off the puck, in turn, preventing goals and provoking offensive transition back up the ice.

Players should practice and understand the following fundamentals:

- You must direct the opponent carrying the puck outside towards the boards and adjust your speed to match his speed (excellent forward and backwards skating is a necessity)
- As you approach the boards and the opponent you need to prepare your body for contact by firmly holding your stick with two hands in the standard position (about 12”), body is in the hockey position (knees bent, chest out, shoulders square) and is situated just a little bit in front of opponent in a forward skating position.
- As you make contact, it’s imperative you continue to hold the stick with two hands and the inside leg (lead leg) positions itself in front of the opponents two legs and hips.
- This ideal technique and positioning will separate the puck from the opponent and prevent him from moving forward. You will be able to take the puck and skate away quickly to open ice.

- If you’re in a backwards skating position as you approach the opponent at the boards, before making contact, you will have to make a quick pivot to ensure you are skating in the same direction as the opponent.

A simple drill to practice the individual technical skill with a friend:

Angle One-on-One Drill

Partner up with another player and stand together 5 metres away from the boards (X1 and X2).

X1 & X2 – start stationary about 1m apart 5m from the boards

X1 – carry the puck up the ice towards a pylon and turn around the pylon towards the boards and go back the other direction (stay in close proximity to the boards)

X2 – follow X1 and maintain a close gap (distance between you and the opponent is 1M) turning in front of the pylon. Proceed to angle X1 towards the boards and perform the technique outlined above.

X1 & X2 – once contact happens play one-on-one and prevent X1 from scoring on the net.

X1 & X2 – after finishing the one-on-one return to the starting position and switch roles and repeat the drill

X2– you should practice this drill using both the forward and backward skating technique explained above.

Repeat the drill over and over – remember with lots of practice, you will develop a sound technique to defend, angle and separate the puck from the opposition.



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Eric played professional hockey for 14 years. Among his career highlights is winning the Memorial Cup Championship, playing with the Washington Capitals in the NHL and being the MVP for the Canadian National Junior Team at the World Junior Championships. He is an NCCP High Performance II Certified Coach with over 17 years of professional coaching experience, lectures in the Theory of Coaching at Wilfrid Laurier University and is one of the most sought after instructors in Waterloo Region!

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