

Slide Board Training: An Effective Tool for Hockey Conditioning

By: Anthony Donskov

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Most sports, including ice hockey, are single leg dominant (body weight rarely sustained equally on both legs during competition) and have some sort of lateral mobility and agility associated with competition. The slide board is a rare piece of equipment in the fact that it can target major muscles of the hip and lower back (hip flexors, hip extensors, adductors, abductors, lumbar spine) while sliding. No other piece of equipment that I have come across can do the same during a single repetition! Slide Board training is an excellent form of conditioning for hockey players in the Off-Season. During the regular season, slide boards can be used to train the upper extremity and focus on core strength. I do not recommend using slide boards to address biomechanical stride problems during the hockey season for fear of overuse injuries.

Proper Posture/Push Off:

Make sure the individual is in a proper hockey stance with a deep knee bend, shoulders square, back straight (slightly flexed 45 degrees), and head up. Proper technique while pushing incorporates full extension of the ankle, knee and hip complex, while extending the arms front to back to provide counter balance and to aid in acceleration. Both the hips and head should remain neutral (not up and down/bobbing) throughout the exercise. Each push should be followed by a controlled recovery where the athlete rests the lead foot against the board while the opposite foot touches the inside calf of the lead foot. Without proper technique compensations may occur that lead to potential injury, and improper/inefficient biomechanics.



Push off posture:

Full extension of the ankle, knee and hip complex while keeping hips/head in neutral position is optimal push off posture for slide board training.



Full Recovery:

Incorporates stability of lead foot against board with recovery leg drawn to lead calf prior to initiating push off.

Optimum Performance:

Each individual athlete may start at a different level of intensity and duration. I recommend starting an athlete at 10-15 seconds of work, followed by 45-50 seconds of rest for a total of 5 repetitions. This would translate into a 1:5 work to rest ratio. As training progresses, work intervals may reach a plateau of 30 seconds in length. I do not recommend training intervals for a longer period of time due to the fact that as fatigue sets in, proper posture/technique are in danger of being compensated.

The ideal work to rest ratio for a forward is 1:3 and for a defenseman 1:2. Progression may also take place by increasing the number of repetitions from 5 to a total of 10. This would now increase the duration of the workout (work and rest) to 20 minutes in length!

Closing Comments:

The slide board is an excellent tool for hockey conditioning! Working important muscles that aid in improving the biomechanics of the hockey stride, improving pelvic, core stability and taxing the anaerobic energy system, are all carryover benefits of training on this piece of equipment. The slide board, if used correctly, is an excellent tool for ice hockey conditioning.

(Note): Slide board pictured is made by Goalerone slide boards.