



# HOCKEY EQUIPMENT 101

# WELCOME TO THE TEAM. LET'S GEAR UP!

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Whether you're brand new to the sport of hockey or you're a returning player, new equipment is always going to feel stiff and uncomfortable. New hockey players often feel awkward and uncomfortable the first few times they wear their equipment and think the equipment is too tight or not properly fit.

Most of the time, the player just needs more time to adjust.

To help each skater (and their parent/guardian) feel confident for the first day of Learn to Play Hockey, we've created an equipment guide with each piece of required equipment explained.

# The Base Layer

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- A long shirt and pants that are breathable and typically a moisture wicking material works best.
- The base layer should fit tight and feel comfortable.
- This layer improves the fit of the pads and helps control body temperature. It also provides a barrier between the skin and any bacteria that may grow on the pads.
- Some base layers have a cup/pelvic protection built in and Velcro strips for hockey socks. This would replace the need for jock shorts/cup or jill pelvic protection.



# Lower Body Gear

**SHIN GUARDS** protect the lower leg and knee from contact with pucks, sticks, and other players.

The shin guard has adjustable Velcro straps that allow the player to tighten or loosen the straps to a comfortable fit.

Make sure the straps are tight enough to keep the pad in place – it should not shift around or move.

The bottom of the shin guard should fit comfortably under the skate tongue without shifting or moving around.

Shin guards are worn under hockey socks on both the right and left shin.

**SOCKS** match the team's colors and are worn during practice and games.

- A player's socks are pulled over and cover the shin guards.
- They can be held in place with a garter, Velcro tabs on jock/jill shorts, or Velcro from base layer. Some players like to use tape on the outside of the socks (wrapped around the outside of the leg).
- Socks should feel comfortable, but not too loose or they'll inhibit a player's skating.



**PANTS** protect the butt, spine, hips, waist, kidneys, and thighs from falls, hits, and pucks.

- The pants should not rotate or slip down when tightened.
- If the pants are too loose or slip down, suspenders can be purchased to hold in place
- The bottom of the pants should touch the top of the player's shin guards.

**SKATES** are important to a player's performance.

- The skate should fit very snug, tighter than a shoe, for proper support and to enable a good push-off without any movement.
- Wear skates around the house (with skate guards on!) to get used to the feel.
- Adjust the laces to alleviate any pressure and spread support evenly over the foot.
- Remember, it takes a few wears to break in a new pair of skates!



# Upper Body Gear

**SHOULDER PADS** protect the collarbone, upper chest, back, upper arms, and shoulders.



- Shoulder pads should fit like a comfy t-shirt.
- When putting on the shoulder pads, the player should bend over and move their torso from side to side to make sure their movements are not inhibited.
- The shoulder pads are worn under the jersey

**ELBOW PADS** protect the arm from the bicep extension of the shoulder pads to the cuff of the gloves.



- The elbow pads have adjustable Velcro straps that allow the player to secure the pads to their own comfort.
- Do not put the pads on too loosely because they will move around during practice/games. If you tighten them too tight, they will restrict the player's mobility.
- Elbow pads are worn under the jersey on both the right and left elbow.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Most hockey players put their gear on in a specific order: Shin Guards, Socks, Pants, Skates, Shoulder Pads, Elbow Pads, Neck Guard, Jersey, Mouth Guard, Helmet

**JERSEY** is worn over the elbow pads and shoulder pads.

- Generally, the sleeves will rest just below the wrists on the top of the hand and the length will cover the torso and touch the thighs.
- A jersey helps identify a team and player.



**HELMET (WITH FACEMASK)** protects the face, jaw, and head from falls, hits, and pucks.

- Make sure the helmet sits flat on the skater's head. It should fit snug and not slide around or squeeze too tight.
- Adjust the chin strap so that it fits firmly under the chin.
- There are tool-free clips (on each side of the helmet) that allow for easy adjustments.
- For girls, wearing a low pony tail or pulling your hair back with a headband may help with comfort.



**GLOVES** protect the hands, fingers, and wrists.

- For the most part, gloves are all about a player's preference. Some like them loose, some like them tight.
- Practice gripping/holding a hockey stick with the gloves on. The glove should feel comfortable but not too loose or the player's grip will be inhibited.
- The player should have good finger and hand mobility when wearing the gloves.



# ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT



**MOUTH GUARD:** The mouth guard protects the teeth, jaw, and brain. USA Hockey requires mouth guards for all youth hockey players



**NECK GUARD:** The neck guard is a piece of protective equipment worn around the neck area. It is designed to prevent injury to the neck by pucks, hockey sticks, and skate blades.



**WATER BOTTLE:** We suggest filling a water bottle to bring to practice/games. Any water bottle works, but keep in mind that unscrewing a lid or dealing with any sort of caps may be difficult for kids if they have their gloves on. Use a Sharpie to write the skater's name in a visible spot on the water bottle.



**JOCK SHORTS/CUP OR JILL PELVIC PROTECTION:** Essential protective equipment.

**HOCKEY TAPE:** We do not require hockey tape, but many skaters may wish to tape their sticks to help with grip and distinguish their stick from another skater's. The coaches will provide a piece of tape to go on the front of each participant's helmet to write the player's name on it for easy identification.



**STICK** beginning with a wood stick will give the player a better feel for the puck and make it easier for them to pass.

- For new players, the basic wood stick is a great start.
- At the early stage of learning to play hockey, it's important for the player to get comfortable holding a stick and using it while skating. A righty or lefty stick is not as important at this level of play.
- The length should extend from the ice to the player's chin (with skates on).
- Many players like to use hockey tape on the blade of the stick and the top of the shaft. A coach or equipment expert can help with taping.

**Player bag** is used to carry all the items listed above. There are different sizes available. Also, there are wheeled hockey bags and non-wheeled hockey bags.



# HOW TO CARE FOR EQUIPMENT:

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After every practice and game, leave all of the pads, jersey and socks out to dry. You can put every piece of equipment in the wash except for your skates and helmet

The pads can be sprayed with OdoBan odor disinfectant to help combat odor and bacteria growth.

Take extra care with your hockey skates. Always dry off the blades of the hockey skates with a dry cloth before putting skate guards on to transport in your hockey bag to prevent them from rusting. At home, remove the skate guards, and store skates upside down (blade up) in a dry, cool place (in the summer, do not store them in the basement to prevent the humidity from causing them to rust).

## **Sharpening the Skates**

Skates need to be sharpened regularly. The first time should be as soon as you buy them - new or used. If the blade of the skate starts to get uneven, has picked up dings, or dents get them re-sharpened. The edges should be even and without divots or gouges as you gently rub a finger across the edges. There should be a little bit of drag against your finger. Once that feeling is gone, the skates need another sharpening. One sign of a lost edge is that the player is slipping and falling on turns or when trying to push off. Usually, skates need to be sharpened between every six and eight hours of skating. Skates dull faster on outdoor ice. They will also dull more quickly if they are not kept covered by skate guards off the ice. If they rust, they will also lose their edge, so keep a small towel in the hockey bag to wipe the blades off after all skating.

# Thank You!!



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