

## Power Skating

By Robby Glantz

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As the Power Skating Coach for the Los Angeles Kings, I have worked with numerous players on the team on both Overspeed and Technique. It is a great credit to these players, many of them NHL stars, that they have worked so hard with me to improve a part of their game that the average fan might think is already second nature to them.



Robby Glantz is the Power Skating coach for the Los Angeles Kings & the Atlanta Thrashers

### Speed Training

Naturally, all of the players with whom I have worked want to stay in game shape, first and foremost. And playing pickup hockey, while fun, will simply not get the job done. The first half of our hour-long training sessions have been spent on speed training, with drills used to simulate game conditions. We concentrate on short explosive exercises (13-to-17 seconds each) with much emphasis placed on coming out of the turns at top speeds—even if that means falling down. I then give the players a recovery period of about 35-50 seconds before they repeat the same drill at top speed.

I have players repeat the same exercise with the exact recovery time two more times, but going the other direction. Note that as you become more advanced and begin to recover your wind sooner, you should then add puck carrying to make the drills more challenging.

Always attempt to make your drills as innovative as possible. As a rule of thumb, I like to put at least two turns or stops into every exercise. Also, I prefer to have the players skating their long sprints close to the boards because it gives them an idea just how low they are skating. If their head, for example, is way above the top of the boards then they know they need to bend their knees more. This is perhaps the most vital element of speed training, that you bend your knees much deeper than what is normal to you, which is referred to as coming out of your “comfort zone.”

### Strength and Technique Training

The second half of the session is spent on resistance drills and training devices in order to really build the muscles in the lower half of the body, and also so that the players have to slow down and think more about their skating techniques. Tocchet thoroughly enjoyed this aspect of the training because it helped him to feel specifically where he needed to improve his own skating. He called it “muscle memory,” which is an excellent way of putting it and one of the main reasons I use training devices in my schools. It helps strengthen the muscles, and helps our students remember and feel both the positives and negatives in their skating.

### Tools of the trade

One of the training devices I use is made by Greater Performance Inc., and is simply a stomach pad that goes around the top of your pants with two leashes hooked to your hips so that a player behind you drags, giving you resistance while you skate. I then use the same technique drills while using the stomach pad that I use when the player is not getting any resistance at all. That is one of the aspects that makes this simple device, which I use at all of my schools, very effective; you can skate as you would in a games (even with the puck) while still getting the technique training that is so vital. They are also a lot of fun!

Another of the training aides I use is the Leg Harness made by Improve Human Performance. It is especially effective on pro, adult and elite players (over the age of 14). Quite simply, the Leg Harness, which is designed for on-ice, in-line and slide board training, is a series of bungee cords running down the inside and outside of your legs, which force you to bend your knees to the optimal position while strengthening the groups of muscles needed for skating efficiency. This device has been quite popular with many players, as it

not only gives them an unbelievable workout (perhaps the equivalent of an hour workout in just twenty minutes time), it also accentuates the mistakes made in skating, thus improving on their technique.