



Field Hockey Canada Coach Resource: Physical literacy and fundamental movement and sport skills

An athlete who can perform the ABCS (agility, balance, coordination, speed) of physical literacy and various skills (such as running, jumping, catching, kicking, throwing, and hitting something with a stick, bat or racquet) can learn to play many sports with ease. Skills fundamental to specific sports are often natural progressions from fundamental movement skills. Here are some examples:

Throwing

Throwing is a fundamental movement skill, and an athlete learning this skill will learn to throw:

- lots of different-sized balls with 1 hand or with both hands
- the ball at different speeds, sometimes for accuracy using a lot of different targets and sometimes for distance

While throwing is not directly translated into field hockey, elements such as weight transfer, core rotation and follow-through motions can be transferred to sport-specific distribution skills.

Hitting

When learning to hit or strike as a fundamental movement skill, the athlete learns such elements as weight transfer, core rotation, impact point and follow-through motions. In field hockey, when an athlete learns to hit or push a field hockey ball, they use all these elements. They have now moved from learning a fundamental movement skill to learning a fundamental sport skill.

Lunging and squatting

Athletes learn how to move and manipulate their bodies using lunging and squatting. They might learn to lower their body position while protecting their backs and knees, keeping their eyes up and adjusting their movements side to side or up and down, working on agility and balance.

From these movement skills, they learn fundamental sport skills by passing and receiving a moving ball. When using a sweep pass technique, the lunging position is important to get the proper body position (body low through a deep knee bend, but with chest and eyes up). In receiving in small spaces or under pressure, athletes need to be able to get their body, hands and stick close to the ground while keeping their chest and eyes up to see the incoming ball.



Catching

As a fundamental movement skill, athletes learn to catch:

- with both hands together in a 2-handed catch
- then with 1 hand

They learn to watch the ball go into their hand and to cushion the catch to slow the speed of the ball. They catch a wide variety of balls of different sizes and weights and learn to catch the ball when standing still and when moving toward the ball. These are skills that can be transferred to any sport they later take up.

Athletes then learn how to receive a field hockey ball using their stick. The athlete first learns to receive the ball when it is moving slowly and toward their stick. As the skill progresses, the athlete learns to receive the ball from greater distances and at a higher velocity, and with the ball moving not only toward the stick, but to all areas of the body, in front, behind, forehand and reverse.

In all cases, the athlete will learn to receive the ball to the stick and control the first touch so they can transition to the next skill (either pass or carry).

For athletes to have success in sport, either as a health-related recreational activity or in competition, they must develop in 3 stages:

1. They master **fundamental movement skills**
2. Then they learn **fundamental sport skills**
3. Then they use both these sets of skills to learn **specific techniques** relevant to their sport