

# Performance and Development Opportunities: Skill Development Sessions

YEARLY PLANNING VIEW												
	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG
IN-CLUB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prep/Information Sessions</li> <li><b><u>Skill Development Sessions</u></b></li> <li>Motivational Sessions</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Simulation Opportunities</li> <li>Feedback Sessions</li> <li>Challenge Days</li> <li>Motivational Sessions</li> <li>Performance Opportunities</li> <li>In-Club Events</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b><u>Skill Development Sessions</u></b></li> <li>Challenge Days</li> <li>Motivational Sessions</li> <li>Performance Opportunities</li> <li>Fun Events</li> <li>In-Club events</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Challenge Days</li> <li>Fun Events</li> <li>Prep/Information Sessions</li> <li><b><u>Skill Development Sessions</u></b></li> <li>Motivational Sessions</li> <li>Performance Opportunities</li> <li>In-Club Events</li> </ul>		
MULTI-CLUB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prep/Information Sessions</li> <li><b><u>Skill Development Sessions</u></b></li> <li>Motivational Sessions</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Simulation Opportunities</li> <li>Feedback Sessions</li> <li>Challenge Days</li> <li>Motivational Sessions</li> <li>Performance Opportunities</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b><u>Skill Development Sessions</u></b></li> <li>Challenge Days</li> <li>Motivational Sessions</li> <li>Performance Opportunities</li> <li>Fun Events</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fun Events</li> <li>Challenge Days</li> <li>Prep/Information Sessions</li> <li><b><u>Skill Development Sessions</u></b></li> <li>Motivational Sessions</li> <li>Performance Opportunities</li> </ul>		

## Focus:

Develop and focus in on technical fundamentals and quality skill development.

*\*Note: When skaters have been off the ice for an extended period (during the summer months or due to shutdowns from COVID-19), coaches may consider planning a series of off-ice sessions leading up to returning to the ice to support readiness for on-ice training.*

## Time of year:

Skill development should be an on-going focus throughout the skating season. However, development opportunities geared around new skills will tend to be particularly impactful after the competition season is over, in the peak training times of summer and/or fall.

## Skill Development Sessions:



## Examples:

1. Off-Ice: Jump technique, spin positions, landing positions, trampoline class, off-ice harness, flexibility training
2. On-Ice: Jump technique, spin technique, edge work, landings, dance, power/speed, on-ice harness, pole harness

# Examples: Off-Ice Skill Development Session Example #1



**Off-Ice Jump Class: Jump Height & Take Off Power - Janice Morgan**

## About Janice

Janice has been a Skate Canada professional coach for 29 years and is a National certified coach. She has experience coaching skaters from the grassroots to Olympic level athletes. She has coached at over 10 National and International competitions. She was also the team coach for the Ontario Winter Games in 2012 and 2018, and the team coach for the Canada Winter Games in 2019.

1. Determine class focus. Example: Jump positions, strength, jump height, etc. In this case, we have chosen jump height and take-off power.
2. Develop a progressive plan to improve jump height & take-off power in jumps. Include on and off ice exercises.
3. Schedule the time and date intervals for your sessions.
4. Monitor progress. Continue to adapt and modify sessions for your athletes.

“ I use these exercises as they are great tools to help with developing good basics as well as working on ankle strength which will also help for developing height on jumps. ”

- Janice Morgan



## Detailed Explanation

**Goal: To increase jump height and take off power using technical tactics and strength exercises.**

1. Schedule sessions into your off-ice training plan. Include times to check-in on skater progress.
2. Communicate plan to skaters/parents through in-person connects, email, website, and social media.
3. Begin each session with a quick overview of the focus of the session and its importance.
  - Start by letting skaters know we are going back to the basics and focussing ankle work. Ask skaters to remember to focus on the details (bending knees and ankle, rolling to the toes before each jump).
  - Ask questions to help them understand the task.
    - “Do you ever notice you jump higher off one foot or the other?”
    - “Do you ever wonder why?”
4. Engage skaters in a general warm-up.
  - Sample (using a small area where skaters can do the movement one at a time for the full length of the area):
    - Side shuffle, crossovers, grapevine (over/under)
    - Run forwards/backwards.
    - Knee hugs/heel hugs
    - Sumo-squats x10
    - Upward Dog/Downward Dog-Inchworm
    - 10 Jumping Jacks/10 Burpees/10 Tuck Jumps
  - Add in focus specific warm-up exercises:
    - Walk forwards on tippy toes/Walk backwards on heels (warming up point & flex in air position).
    - Side hops alternating legs.
    - Side hops with twist (twisting hips towards centre).
    - “h” jumps with alternating legs.
    - “h” with cross exercise
      - Take off foot to “h”, down to crossed in air position, tap, change foot back flex position.
    - “h” with cross and twist (same as above, adding hip twist in air position)
5. Begin focus specific exercises.
  - Ankle work
    - Learn to use ankles and roll to the big toe for take-off. Show skaters the movement (both feet at a time, then moving to one foot)
      - Both toes facing forward (closed position), hip width apart, bend knees over to of toes (ankles working, butt in), roll to the big toe, balance there, from there bend deeper and jump as high as you can (rolling and pushing up off big toe)
  - Calf raises
    - Try using stairs or a box for more advanced skaters. This helps achieve full range of motion.
    - Using stairs or a box, stand on axel take-off foot. Drive knee up and roll up on toe, balance. Repeat 10 times.
    - Using stairs or a box, switch to loop take off leg. Put free leg in “h” position in front (like loop), roll up to toe, bring ankles together to click in air position (ankles touch).
  - Add complexity using full range of motion of joints (add knees):
    - Stand on 2 feet, hip width apart. Bend knees and ankles. Roll to toes and balance. Jump up, flex feet in air and land back on toes. Repeat 10 times.
    - Repeat above exercise with hip twist and crossing feet in the air.





- Jumps

- Start all the following jump exercises by bending knees and ankles and rolling to the toes before jumping. (Two feet take off) Repeat each exercise 5-10 times. \*More advanced skaters can start from a 1-foot starting loop take-off position\*
    - Quarter rotations
    - ½ rotations
    - Full rotations
    - 1 ½ rotations
    - Double rotations
    - 2 ½ rotations
    - Triple rotations
  - Continue with jump specific work (Waltz/Axel): Waltz jumps to Double Axels (focus on exploding off take off foot)
    - 5-10 Waltz jumps
    - 5-10 Waltz jump hop through back spin (hopping in a backspin position while rotating)
    - 5-10 Single Axel
    - 5-10 Single Axel hop through back spin
    - 5-10 Double Axel
  - Finish class with 5-10 landing positions. Start in air position the hop to landing and hold landing count to 10.
6. Monitor progress during session. Try using videos on or off the ice to identify progress and areas that need improvement.
  7. Adapt program, as necessary. Do you need to add more strength exercises or more ankle mobility, repetition, etc.?
  8. Continue to communicate with skaters and parents regarding progress and focus.

### Modifications

- Consider adding in other jumps or picking a specific jump to focus each class.
- Add in more complex progressions. For example: Add ¼'s to your rotation sequence. This helps with rotational awareness and control.
  - You can also add some jump specific exercises using a spinner.
- Try switching it up and adding in a video conferencing session to the mix. This may help increase attendance to classes and gives the ability to offer more classes in a week.
- Consider networking with nearby clubs to offer sessions together at a centralized location.



# Examples: Off-Ice Skill Development

## Session Example #2



### Landing Position Class – Mark Batka

#### About Mark

Mark is a competitive skating coach. He is the Director of North Point Skating Academy located in Newmarket.

1. Set class focus. For this class, we have chosen landing positions.
2. Develop a progressive plan to improve landing position strength and quality. Include on and off ice exercises.
3. Schedule times to implement landing position exercises.
4. Monitor progress. Continue to adapt and modify sessions for your athletes.

“ I use these types of exercises with skaters of all levels to develop strong landing positions as it helps improve their landings on the ice. In skating, the rotational direction that the skater is most comfortable with is considered the dominant side. During the exercises, the emphasis will be on the skater’s dominant side. However, exercises should still be done on the opposite side to ensure balance in the body. By strengthening both sides, it will help prevent injuries. ”

- Mark Batka





## Detailed Explanation

**Goal: To teach and strengthen landing positions for on-ice jump exits.**

- Plan time frames to focus on landing positions during off-ice training.
  - Try adding these exercises at the end of an off-ice jump session or a stand-alone session before hitting the ice.
- If running as a stand-alone session, make sure to run a full warm-up. Include high energy exercises, including running, skipping, jumping, stairs and dynamic stretches.
- Once skaters are warmed up and ready to work, take skaters through the following exercises:

### Leg Movement #1 - Solid Position

- Hold onto something for support.
- Landing leg bent (toe forward, knee over the toe)
- Extend free leg behind the hip with a pointed foot, toe turned out.
- Hold the position for 5 seconds.
- Lift free leg up in line with the knee of the landing leg
- Hold the position for 5 seconds.
- Repeat 3-5 times per side to start. Work up to 8-10 reps per side for more advanced skaters.
  - Alternate legs (beginning with landing leg and finishing with landing leg)

Don't forget to ensure solid upper body posture (shoulders back, square position) in the exercise.



### Leg Movement #2 - Add weight

To add strength to the position, try adding weight. In this case, I have used a velcro wrap weight. Start with a small weight (1/2 lb or 1 lb).

- Hold onto something for support.
- Landing leg bent (toe forward, knee over the toe)
- Extend free leg behind the hip with a pointed foot, toe turned out.
- Hold the position for 5 seconds.
- Lift free leg up in line with the knee of the landing leg.
- Hold the position for 5 seconds.
- Repeat 3-5 times per side to start. Work up to 8-10 reps per side for more advanced skaters.
  - Alternate legs (beginning with landing leg and finishing with landing leg)





### Leg Movement #3 - Add resistance

Repeat with theraband. If you don't have theraband, try stretchy cords or tubing. You can begin with a small resistance band and then work up to a stronger resistance band.

- Hold onto something for support.
- Landing leg bent (toe forward, knee over the toe)
- Extend free leg behind the hip with a pointed foot, toe turned out.
- Hold the position for 5 seconds.
- Lift free leg up in line with the knee of the landing leg.
- Hold the position for 5 seconds.
- Repeat 3-5 times per side to start. Work up to 8-10 reps per side for more advanced skaters.
  - Alternate legs (beginning with landing leg and finishing with landing leg)



### Leg Movement #4 - Turn out position

Balance an object on the free leg to work on leg turn out position.

- Hold onto something for support.
- Landing leg bent (toe forward, knee over the toe)
- Extend free leg behind the hip with a pointed foot, toe turned out.
- Hold the position for 5 seconds.
- Lift free leg up in line with the knee of the landing leg.
- Hold the position for 5 seconds.
- Repeat 3-5 times per side to start. Work up to 8-10 reps per side for more advanced skaters.
  - Alternate legs (beginning with landing leg and finishing with landing leg)



### Arm Movement

- Place arms in correct position.
- Have student lift them up to that position. Hold.
- Lower arms.
- Repeat 3-5 times as a start. Work up to 8-10 reps for more advanced skaters
- Adding small weights can add challenge for more advanced skaters.





### Jump Exercise - Putting all the pieces together!

- Start with skaters in a tight air position (arms in and ankles crossed)
- Jump up on landing leg.
- Land in “Landing Loop Position”.
- Exit into landing position. Hold for (3) one thousand.
- Repeat 3-5 times on per side to start. Work up to 8-10 reps per side for more advanced skaters.
  - Alternate legs (beginning with landing leg and finishing with landing leg)
- End session with a quick review of positions and a cool-down.



**Tight Air Position  
(Jump)**



**Landing Loop Position  
(Exit)**



**Landing Position**

### Modifications

- Add in a video class to support landing position knowledge. Have skaters identify good landing positions. Ask questions like “How can you tell it is a good landing position?”, “Is it pleasing to the eye?”, “What is it you like about the position?”
  - Try this live by watching a higher-level skating session.
  - An alternative would be to use video conferencing (Zoom, Google meet, etc.) and have pre-recorded videos of skaters to discuss.
- Consider adding an exercise to skater’s workbooks. Have skaters draw stickmen of a “perfect” landing position. Ask them to label the important parts (bent skating leg, extended free-leg, toes pointed out, etc.) Discuss as a group.
  - Consider posting pictures at ice side to remind skaters of the points they came up with. A visible place in the arena or online could also be used.
- Add a “landing position award” to future Challenge Days. This can be used to enforce the importance of good landing positions and a great way to showcase skater’s work!
- Compliment your session with some group work. Put skaters into small groups of 3 or 4 skaters. Have groups place one of their group members into the “perfect landing position” (without tipping them over). Rotate through all of the skaters in the group. Add in a discussion about the positions or have groups present their landing positions.
  - This can be enhanced by having the group “sell” their landing position to the rest of the class (like a commercial). It will help solidify skaters learning and have fun!
    - Example: “Have you seen anything like the ‘Landing 2000’? It comes with a solid core and straight free leg for viewing pleasure. Can be used at the end of jumps, spins, and transitions.”



# Examples: On-Ice Skill Development Session Example #1



**Edge & Turn Class for STAR Level Skaters Returning to the Ice - Mark Bradshaw**

## About Mark

Mark is a Skate Canada STAR 1 to Gold coach assessor, Skate Ontario skills seminar conductor, Canada Winter Games coach, Ontario Winter Games coach, and a competitive coach to many recent medalists at the Challenge and National levels. Mark works with World, International level skaters, recent Challenge, National medalists and skaters right to Star 1 beginners. His home club is Skate Oakville where he works with all disciplines (free skate, pair, dance, synchro), specializing in stroking technique, turns, edges, choreographic movements for program transitions and step sequences.

## Edge & Turn Focus

1. Make a clear plan to return to ice (after summer break, post injury or an extended period away).
2. Set-aside ice time to allow for skaters to adjust to their skates.
3. Communicate return to ice plan to parents & skaters.
4. Run sessions and adapt skater training plans, as necessary.

“Skaters returning to the ice will need time to adjust to their skates again! Most will need new skates, and if returning with old skates they will be dried out and stiff, so either way they will be sore at the end of each session. I would highly recommend they wear gel socks (ankle gel band with extra padding) to alleviate/stop any blistering and even bone bruising.”

- Mark Bradshaw



## Detailed Explanation

**Goal: Give skaters the opportunity to adjust to their skates after being off the ice.**

### Plan

- Choose exercises to focus for return to ice.
- Date/time booked and communicated to parents/skaters.
- Run Session

### Sample session:

#### Get to know your boots and blades again (10 min):

##### Exercise 1: Boards exercise

- Have them step on the ice and hold the boards. While facing the boards, ask them to rock on their blades from their toe picks to the very end of the blade and then vice versa.

##### Exercise 2: Blade Rock

- Holding the boards: Standing with their weight on the middle of their blades rock laterally, side to side. Start with two feet then move to one foot.

##### Exercise 3: “Heel, Heel, Toe pick, Toe pick”

- Without holding on to the boards, step forward onto one heel, then two heels, switch one at a time toe pick, toe pick.
- Coaches can say “heel, heel, toe, toe” to control the speed of the exercise. Try speeding up and slowing down to add difficulty and make fun!
- Try doing at a standstill and then progressing to moving forwards.
- For the more advanced skaters have them try moving backwards.
  - Ask skaters to be gentle with their blades into the ice so there aren’t any huge divots – the rink attendant will appreciate it!

##### Exercise 4: Half pivot edge pulls (or a fun term, half-moons).

- Put 1 toe pick in the ice and then ask them to press and pull the inside edge forwards skating a quick half circle and then quickly shift to the next foot. Have them repeat it quickly down the ice (approximately 20 times).

- Staying down in the knees gives them a chance to feel the ice, gain confidence in the use of the blade.
- Repeat the exercise backwards.
- For your advanced skaters, challenge them with forward outside and back outside.

##### Exercise 5: Getting to know your boots and blades.

- Starting on a line, have skaters lift one foot balancing on the other foot. From a standstill, ask skaters to accelerate away with edge pulls (one foot skiing) without putting foot down.
- Have them execute 3 to 5 deep pulls, then come to a skid stop WITHOUT putting their foot down! (STAR 1 and 2’s may need to do this on two feet)
- Challenge the higher-level skaters by asking them to start on their outside edge.

### Coordination (15 min):

#### Exercise 1: Grape vine, forwards and backwards exercise

- Two-foot skating time! Arms are down, swing freely. All levels of skaters find this fun!
- Cross the right foot in front of the left foot and then the left foot in front of the right.
  - Make sure they use their edges while they do this.
- To turn around, swoosh into a forward reverse Ina Bauer (trailing leg bent and front leg straight) or inside spread eagle, now they are backwards.
- Do the same grape vines now backwards, cross the right foot in front then the left foot, then the left in front of the right.
- To turn around, move now into an inside spread eagle.
- Repeat many times, until they get the hang of it.
  - Challenge the higher-level skaters with doing the reverse of all of this going the other way.

#### Exercise 2: Basic edge pushes, hands behind their backs

- Ask skaters to hold their hands behind their backs (this forces the skater to balance with their core muscles and legs, some may balance by flapping their arms around!).





- One-foot pushes using the inside and outside edges.
  - Basic push with the inside edge and then the trickier push (undercut push using the outside edge). This is done straight down the ice with small crosscuts on the ends, skating in a perimeter pattern around the ice.
- Challenge the higher-level skaters, ask them to do the same thing backwards.
  - Make sure they cross the foot in-front (picking up the back foot) for the outside edge push, this forces them to skate on the outside edge and push from it (you will be amazed how even your best skaters struggle with this).

#### Exercise 3: Arm Swings

- Standing still, ask skaters to move their arms in opposite directions swinging them around. Fingertips brush past the thighs and then touch at the top above their heads.
  - Challenge the coordinated ones moving in the opposite direction.
  - When they have that, then ask them to change directions after every 2 swings!
  - Once they have that, get them to skate doing bubbles around the ice while moving their arms in this pattern.

#### Exercise 4: Final coordination exercise

- Fast small cross rolls done all on outside edges (two over and two behind).
  - Have them repeat this many times around the ice.
  - Challenge the higher-level skaters by asking them to move their arms down in front, up above their heads and out to the side. (Ballet arm movement).

#### Edge Control and Posture (10 min):

Exercise 1: Basic outside edges on an axis, on time to music!

- This forces them to understand the completion of the half circle (use a piece of music with a big beat and make them skate on each foot for 4 counts) and emphasize a good quality blade to push.
  - If you have a lot of skaters, they can pair up and do this side by side with a partner.
  - You can run this straight down the ice or down one side and back up the other side.
- Repeat, with inside edges.
- Challenge your higher-level skaters with backwards inside and outside edges.

Exercise 2: Fast cross-cuts on a large circle at the end twice around (between the blue line and boards).

- Have skaters break off the circle skating a strong outside edge on the centre circle, with their free leg extended, arms out, and strong back and head up!
  - You can make this into a circuit, and they can do the same thing going the opposite direction. They end up back where they started and the next group of skaters and go.
  - Have about 4 – 5 skaters grouped together within a similar skill level.

#### Power and Speed (10 min):

Exercise 1: This exercise is fun for power and a challenge for every level!

- Standing at the end use the hockey circle hash marks as markers to stand behind. The first skater pushes off and skates a 3 turn, side lunge, back crosscut, jump forward hopefully over the blue line. Each move 3-turn 2 counts, side lung 2 counts, crosscut 2 counts.
  - Challenge the higher-level skaters to move back behind the second hash mark (closer to the end boards).

#### Exercise 2: Speed!

- 4 pushes 2 counts each edge, and they must make it from the edge of one circle to the other at the far end.
  - This needs to be done with music. Slow beats are easy to make it and of course faster beat music makes it very challenging to make it.

#### Exercise 3: Russian Stroking to music

- Take a fast piece of music and have them sprint down one side, speed skate styles! Nice figure skating Russian stroke down the other.

#### Modifications

- If you are unable to dedicate a full session to this skillset, try breaking in up over multiple sessions through the first couple weeks back on the ice.
- Consider adding a dedicated edge & turn session to the monthly schedule.
- Add some of the fun exercises to a “Challenge Day” to emphasize their importance and highlight great work.



# Sanction Requirements

**In-Club:** No sanction required

**Multi-Club:** Sanction required

## SANCTION GUIDELINES, SANCTION APPLICATION FORM

Here are some items to consider in planning:

- ☐ Does the session promote quality sport and physical activity?
- ☐ Is the session developmentally appropriate for the participants? (including the right time of year)
- ☐ Is the session fun, welcoming and inclusive?
- ☐ Have we provided a safe environment for learning?
- ☐ Have we ensured costs are kept low (to reduce barriers to entry) to encourage maximum skater engagement?
- ☐ Do we need to pay extra SoCAN fees? (link to [SOCAN guidelines](#) from SC)
- ☐ Is there a plan for a medical emergency? (First aid representative, paramedic, etc.)
- ☐ Is there a way to involve the community?