



www.totalfemalehockey.com

total female HOCKEY

By Kim McCullough MSc, YCS

The #1 Resource for Total Female Hockey Player Development

#1 Mistake Girls Hockey Players Make

Learn How To Avoid The Critical Mistake Almost All Girls Hockey Players Make...

By Kim McCullough, MSc, YCS

Director and Founder of Total Female Hockey (www.totalfemalehockeyclub.com)

Creator of the Total Female Hockey Complete Training System (www.totalfemalehockey.com)

I've spent the last decade coaching and training young hockey players and I see the same mistakes being made time and time again. **Not only are players not using what they do off the ice to get better on the ice, these mistakes are actually making them worse!**

I was one of those players. Once I caught the 'hockey bug' at the age of 13, I spent every minute of every day desperately searching for ways to get better. I spent a tremendous amount of time and energy - only to end up tired, injured and frustrated. I thought (and was told) that I was doing all of the right things, but I know now that everything I was doing back then was completely WRONG!

I made every single mistake in the book and my health (and hockey career) suffered for it. I spent so much of my time and energy focusing on things that weren't specific to my needs as a young female hockey player

You don't have to make the same mistakes that I made - and that the majority of young female players make.

So what is the #1 mistake girls hockey players make in the off-season (and during the season too)?

They don't strength train!

In fact, if I could magically change one thing about female players that would make the biggest difference in their performance - I would make them stronger.

Both players and parents have concerns about getting involved in strength training.

There is a lot of misinformation floating around about the negative effects of strength training on young female athletes.

So I am going to set the record straight on strength training for female hockey players.

In this report, I will:

- Debunk the most common myths & misconceptions about strength training
- Explain why 'training like a pro' isn't necessarily a bad idea
- Explain why developing strength alone is not enough
- Explain the 5 most critical areas that all players must develop in order to excel

Top 4 Myths & Truths about Strength Training & Girls Hockey Players

Myth #1: *Strength training at a young age leads to injury.*

Truth #1: Strength training decreases the likelihood of injury in young athletes.

First off, it is important to clarify that when I say 'strength training', I am NOT talking about lifting weights. Young athletes who get injured while strength training are typically trying to lift too much weight or are using poor lifting technique.

Players who are just starting to strength train should not be using weights at all. In fact, the safest and most effective way for young players to train is by using their own *body-weight only*.

All players must be able to move their own body-weight with confidence and control before they should ever think about adding an external load. Body-weight only strength training builds a solid foundation of strength that will allow players to benefit even more from training with weights later in their career.

The #1 Mistake Girls Hockey Players Make

Myth #2: *Strength training will cause young players to become 'muscle bound'.*

Truth #2: It is virtually impossible for young players to become 'muscle bound'.

Gaining a large amount of lean muscle mass requires very specific strength training and nutritional programs. These programs are NOT effective on young athletes due to their lack of physiological readiness for this type of training and their lack of strength training experience overall.

Young female players also do not have to worry about becoming 'muscle bound' or ending up 'looking like a man' from strength training. In general, females have fewer muscle fibres and less testosterone than males, which makes their chances of putting on a lot of muscle mass very low. The most elite and experienced female players in the world strength train (with weights and body-weight) all the time, and none of them would be considered 'muscle bound'.

Myth #3: *Strength training programs require a lot of equipment, time, travel and money.*

Truth #3: Highly effective strength training can be done at home, at the rink or at the cottage, with no equipment.

Hockey players and parents already devote a tremendous amount of time and money to the sport they love. And although you recognize the important role strength training plays in a player's development, you don't want to spend more time driving to fancy training facilities with expensive programs.

You want a strength training program that is:

- **Safe:** The primary goal of any proper strength training program is to prevent injury. Although some of the newest hockey-specific training facilities seem to be at the cutting edge of fitness, with their fancy equipment and 'quick fix' programs, the reality is that using these programs are potentially dangerous. The safest and most effective way for young athletes to train is using a program that has been designed with their specific age- and sport-specific needs in mind - and starts with body-weight only.
- **Efficient:** A properly designed strength program for young hockey players can be completed in just 30 minutes - the time that it normally takes for players to get to the rink (unless you live right around the corner).
- **Accessible:** A hockey-specific body-weight strength training program can be done anywhere (at home, at the rink, outside) with no equipment or travel required.

The #1 Mistake Girls Hockey Players Make

- **Cost-effective:** A professional-designed, hockey-specific and female-specific strength training program will require a small initial investment but will give you a program that you can use time and time again and will yield amazing results for years to come.

Myth #4: *Strength training isn't necessary for players who play without full body checking.*

Truth #4: Every player will dramatically improve their performance by strength training, irrespective of their age, position or ability level.

This is a misconception that is mostly seen in the female hockey world. Anyone who has ever seen a female hockey game knows that 'no checking' doesn't mean 'no contact'. Young female players don't have to worry about being able to take a big hit, but they've got to be able to dominate battles on the boards and win races to the puck.

Young female hockey players must use a professionally-designed strength training program that fills all their specific needs without requiring more time, more travel and more money.

Should Girls Hockey Players Train like the Pros?

A few years ago, my first instinct was to say 'No'. It seemed like a bad idea to have young developing players doing the same workouts as older elite players.

But...when talking about proper strength development, my answer is always **'Yes'**.

Let me share with you an experience I had working with both young and professional players years ago that started to change my views (and I have never looked back).

The day after my university graduation, I drove down to Boston to start an internship with a world-renowned strength and conditioning guru. He had worked with hundreds of elite hockey players from the NHL and Women's Olympic teams, as well as thousands of young players who aspired to reach these same levels of success. I was excited to have the opportunity to learn from his vast expertise and experience.

Every morning, this coach worked closely with a small group of elite players and we, the interns, got to watch and help. I was very excited to both see and learn the advanced training techniques that helped these athletes reach the highest levels of success in their sport. Some of these players had been training with this same coach for over 10 years, so I expected that they would be doing complex exercises and drills that I had never seen before.

You could imagine my surprise, on that first morning, when these professional players began doing the *EXACT SAME BODY-WEIGHT WORKOUT* that all of the young developing players would be doing later that afternoon!

Sure, the speed and execution of the exercises by the pros was a little more 'crisp', but the exercises they were doing were exactly the same!

I was amazed. These players had been working with this coach for over a decade, and yet they were doing some of the most basic strength and stability exercises around.

So...why were all the players doing the same exercises, irrespective of age and ability?
They were building and reinforcing a solid foundation of strength and stability!

There were no fancy machines involved and no huge weights. All hockey players must use similar muscles and movements to play the game and will therefore have very similar needs in terms of strength and stability.

These pros had been building and reinforcing a solid foundation of strength and stability from an early age through body-weight strength training.

Maybe 'training like the pros' isn't such a bad idea after all.

Why Developing Strength ALONE is NOT Enough

While it is true that all hockey players must be strong to excel, the development of strength alone will not guarantee better on-ice performance. In order to use their strength effectively, players must also develop *increased stability*.

Imagine for a second what would happen if you tried to shoot a cannon out of a canoe. Cannons are extremely strong and powerful, while canoes are unstable and unsteady. If the cannon were able to fire a shot from the canoe, it would be highly inaccurate and would more than likely damage the structure of the boat.

The strength of the cannon, while impressive, may actually sink the ship. In order to utilize the cannon to its full capacity, the canoe would need to be reinforced and stabilized.

Trying to develop strength without stability is like trying to shoot a cannon from a canoe.

Unfortunately, many hockey players end up like ‘cannons in canoes’. They realize the importance of developing strength to increase on-ice performance and use programs that focus solely on the player becoming as strong as possible.

But building the strength in the muscles is useless if the players’ bodies can’t adequately support this increase. Without properly developing the smaller muscles that stabilize the body in every single hockey movement, players will be unable to adequately harness the strength and power they have developed.

It is like a player trying to take a slap-shot while standing only on their back leg. Normally, a player’s slap-shot would be their most powerful weapon. By beginning from a strong base of support and transferring their weight effectively from the back to the front foot, the player should be able to deliver an accurate and powerful shot every time. However, if the player attempts to take a slap-shot off their back leg - without the strong base of support or weight transfer- their shot will be weak and inaccurate. Taking a one-footed slap-shot is like trying to shoot a cannon from a canoe.

Developing muscular strength without having a stable foundation can render a player’s new-found strength ineffective, compromise their performance on the ice and predispose them to injury.

All hockey players must focus on building strength and stability simultaneously.

The 5 Critical Needs of ALL Hockey Players

In order to build a foundation of strength and stability, a player must first be able to engage the right muscles at the right times. Young hockey players must develop the neuromuscular control needed to activate the muscles that support and power hockey-specific movement patterns. By developing the proper muscle activation patterns, a player can address their most critical strength and stability needs.

The 5 most critical strength and stability needs of hockey players are:

- Core Stability
- Core Strength
- Shoulder Stability
- Single-leg Stability
- Single-leg Strength

Core Stability

Having a stable core allows players to maintain maximum body control all over the ice - whether they are making a tight turn or fighting off a check in the corner. Players who neglect to train their core stability will be at a higher risk for injury - especially to their lower back, hips and groin. By strengthening the muscles that support the spine, the players become more stable and can better develop, transfer and control the power that they generate through their upper and lower body.

Core Strength

In addition to improving core stability, core strength must also be addressed with hockey players. Increased core strength allows a player to produce more explosive movements when taking a slap-shot or playing the body.

Shoulder Stability

Shoulder injuries are some of the most common injuries in hockey. These injuries can occur from the impact of taking a hit or falling, as well as from having poor posture that results from spending a lot of time in a forward skating posture. By increasing shoulder stability, players will decrease the incidence of both acute and chronic injuries and will also be better able to fight off checks and deliver more power to their passes and shots.

Single-leg Strength and Stability

Hockey is a single-leg sport. There are very few times during the course of play that a player on the ice will have their weight equally distributed over both legs. Each skating stride starts and finishes predominantly on one leg and each shot requires the transfer of weight from the back leg to the front. Even goalies must transition out of their two-legged stance in order to track the puck and make saves. Almost every aspect of the game requires players to generate, transfer and control force from a single leg. Having excellent single-leg strength and stability is critical for every player looking to reach the next level of performance.

All players must have superior single leg strength and stability in order to maintain balance and generate power on the ice. Without adequate strength and stability in their legs, players are predisposed to overuse injuries to both the knees and lower back. Players must ensure that both legs are equally strong and stable through their hips, knees and ankles.

As a on-ice and off-ice coach of young female players and former girls hockey player looking for the right way to train, I know what your daughter needs to take her game to the next level.

The Total Female Hockey Complete Training System

isn't going to make you the best player on the ice overnight, but it is going to build your foundation for hockey success. Increasing your strength will allow you to play more and perform your best throughout the season. And that's how you will take your game to the next level and become the best.

Finally, Aspiring Players Can Use The Secret Program that I Uncovered as a Scholarship Athlete to Develop Battle-Winning Strength, Corner-Dominating Agility and Game-Breaking Speed TODAY!

The Total Female Hockey Complete Training System is guaranteed to help players get faster, quicker and stronger with exercises they can do all year long in the living room and backyard without the need for bulky weights or expensive gyms.

To Get Started On Taking Your Game To The Next Level Today,
visit: <http://www.totalfemalehockey.com/cts.shtml>