

Choosing a Hockey Stick

With so many different types of hockey sticks available today, choosing a hockey stick can be daunting, especially when you have no idea what you are looking for. The following is a guide, however you are usually safe in taking advice from a retailer that specifically sells hockey equipment, their staff are typically qualified hockey people who also undergo ongoing training. The alternative is a generic sports store where you may be getting a good deal, but the after-sale support will be relatively non-existent. There are various factors to consider when selecting a stick. Retailers in our club catchment area are:

Just Hockey and Cricket Express: (Mt Eden) <https://www.justhockey.co.nz/>

Player Sports: (Newmarket) <https://www.playerssports.co.nz/>

Length

Stick lengths vary and typically come in the following “old fashioned” inch sizes 24, 26, 28, 30, 32, 34, 36, 37, 38.

Having a stick that is the correct size will help you to better execute your skills. Ideally your stick should come up to the top of your hipbone or belly button but depends on personal preference. A slightly longer stick will improve your reach while a shorter stick will improve stick handling skills.

Weight

Field hockey sticks range from about 535g to about 560g in weight. This typically depends on personal preference. Historically lighter weight sticks were typically designed for attacking players which allowed for a quicker backswing and stick skills.

Heavier weight sticks were typically designed for defensive players and could help to add power and distance in your hits for clearing balls and passing over distance. Parents of new players try not to be led by your child’s “playing position” as this may change over the course of the season.

Composition

Carbon: Adds stiffness to the stick. The higher the carbon percentage the more powerful your hits will be. A stick with less carbon will improve control and make trapping easier. Sticks with higher levels of carbon tend to be more expensive.

Aramid: Adds durability to the stick and absorbs vibrations sent through the stick when striking and receiving balls.

Fibreglass: Many field hockey sticks still contain some level of fibreglass. It adds strength, durability and feel to a stick. These are less rigid than carbon-heavy sticks making them more forgiving. Fibreglass is similar to carbon but more economical.

Wood: Some players still prefer to use wooden sticks. Wooden sticks improve control when dribbling and receiving and are more affordable therefore ideal for young beginners.

It is suggested that beginners start with lower or no level of carbon and work their way up as they progress.

Bow

The bow of a stick is the slight bend that you can see from the handle to the toe. This typically ranges from 20mm-25mm which is the maximum. Bow choice will depend on preference, age and skill level.

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The more bend the stick has the easier it will be to use lifted shots, aerals and drag-flicks. Having less bend will improve control and you are less likely to accidentally lift the ball. Less bend is recommended for beginners.

The three main types of bow are:

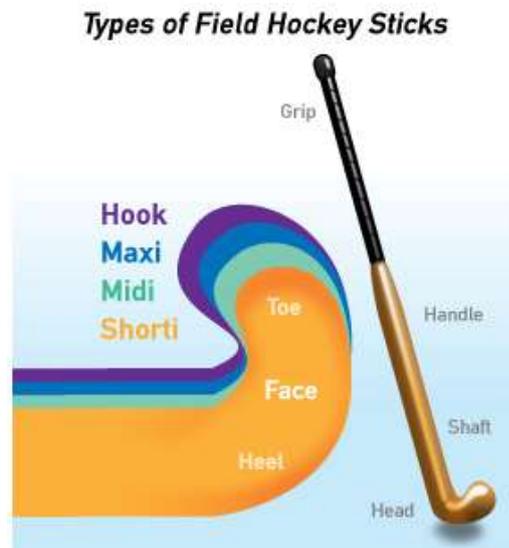
Regular / standard bow (20mm): The highest point of the bow falls in the middle part of the stick, which is ideal for every aspect of the game from ball control to advanced manoeuvres.

Mega bow (24.75mm): The middle of the bend is closer to the toe of the stick and provides extra power when lifting the ball and also drag-flicking. This is ideal for more advanced players.

Low bow (25mm): This bend is closest to the head of the stick and helps with controlling and lifting the ball, aerals and drag-flicking. Ideal for elite level players.

Toe shape

The toe of the stick is the level of curve and can affect how players strike the ball and handle the stick. Smaller toes provide more agility but limit power while larger toes provide a larger surface area to strike and receive the ball but reduce movement.



Shorti: A classic shape that is ideal for high speed, close control and stick skills. It has a smaller hitting area and is not as popular as they used to be. Ideal for strikers.

Midi: Most used toe shape for beginners. Improve technique and offers close control. Great sweet spot when hitting. Ideal for midfielders or players that like to move the ball quickly when dribbling.

Maxi: Larger surface area and hitting power. Great for drag-flicks, injectors and reverse stick control. This toe shape is ideal for defensive players.

Hook: J shaped toe which provides the largest surface area for increased ball control, better drag-flicks and using reverse skills. Ideal for players with an upright style and is good on grass surfaces.

Budget \$\$\$

Obviously, the final factor to consider is of course your budget. There is a broad range of pricing with high carbon sticks being more expensive. It's important to note that expensive sticks are not necessarily best for you as it depends on your level and ability.

My advice is to test out different sticks in your price range before buying and make your final choice based on how it feels for you. Remember to think about the position you play and if you want more power, more control or a balance. For new junior players remember you will more likely grow out of your stick before you wear it out. The club is always looking to re-gift sticks within the club and local schools. If you have one please drop it to one our committee members.