Why Length Matters when Buying a Hockey Stick

When you buy a hockey stick, one of the most important factors is the length of the hockey stick. Experienced hockey players know the exact length they like. The length of a hockey stick is mainly chosen by personal preference, however the length does affect the performance of the stick and the hockey player. It will be difficult for a hockey player to control the puck and shoot the puck if the stick is too short or too long for them. Also it seems that players who share a certain playing style or position tend to prefer a similar hockey stick length, we will discuss this later. First, let's look at how to measure the length of a hockey stick and how to choose the right length.

How to Measure the Length of a Hockey Stick

In order to properly measure the length of a hockey stick a player should be wearing hockey skates. Hockey skates add a few inches in height, so a stick that comes up to the players nose without skates, may only reach their chin while on skates. If you are buying a hockey stick, and you don't have skates with you, make sure you remember to add an inch or two in length to suit your needs while on the ice.

To measure the length, have the player stand straight up, looking forwards. Have the shaft of the stick parallel to the players body, with the toe of the blade of the stick on the ground (see picture below).

Average length of a hockey stick - If you are playing hockey for the first time a good starting point for the length of your stick is between the chin, and nose.

What classifies a long stick, and a short hockey stick? - Typically any stick that is above the nose will be classified as long, and any stick that is below the chin would be a short stick.
The image above is my personal opinion, many NHL players have sticks that are chest height. I find most players have an average stick length between the bottom of the chin to the bottom of their nose.

What Length Should Your Hockey Stick Be?

Like we mentioned earlier, the length of the hockey stick is usually chosen by personal preference, but it takes time to develop a playing style and a preference for stick length, so here is our short guide to picking the right length.

Short Hockey Stick "The Dangler" - Hockey players who are good at stick handling tend to prefer shorter sticks. Using a short stick makes it a bit easier to move the puck around because the stick will be lighter (less material) and a shorter stick is easier to move around the body.

Many players who are good at stick handling tend to bring the puck in close to their body in order to protect the puck while pulling a deke. A short stick makes it easier to perform these moves.

Average Hockey Stick "The Grinder" - Grinders like to get in the corners, dig for pucks, and cause trouble in front of the net. With an average length stick you can still easily handle the puck, and also make poke checks, intercept passes, and hammer off a slapshot.

Long Hockey Stick "The Defensemen" - It is common for defensemen to have the longest sticks on the team. A long hockey stick gives you a longer reach, which makes it easier for you to poke the puck away from attackers, intercept passes, and stop a puck before it leaves your end.

Defensemen are also known to have hard slapshots, and a longer stick (with the right technique) will provide more power on the slapshots.

**Disclaimer:** While the above points are common in hockey, that does not mean they are absolute truths. Some defensemen use short sticks, while some hockey players who are great with the puck use a longer stick. These tips should help beginner players find a length to start at, but don't be afraid to try something new!

Adjusting Stick Length

When buying a hockey stick it may be hard to find the perfect length in the store. It is normal to buy a stick that is too long, and then cut it down to suit your length preference. For younger players it is also common to put a wooden plug in the end of a stick to make it longer (if they out grow the stick).
Choosing the right Flex for your Hockey Stick

The flex of a hockey stick is very important. The right amount of flex can help improve the power and accuracy of every shot in hockey. Alternatively, too much or too little flex can negatively impact power and accuracy. This guide will help you find the right flex for your hockey stick.

Hockey Stick Flex Chart

Younger players do not have to worry as much about flex because they are still learning the fundamentals of shooting. If you are still learning how to shoot properly, as a young player, you will not be ready to utilize the flex. Here is a chart that shows the usual flex values in hockey sticks:

- Youth = 40 flex
- Junior = 50 flex
- Mid or Intermediate flex = 60-75 flex
- Regular flex = 85 flex
- Stiff flex = 100 flex
- Extra stiff = 110 flex

What is flex in hockey sticks?

Flex is a measure used in the making of hockey sticks to test how much a shaft will bend. The number used is the amount of weight needed to bend the shaft one inch. This is important to know, because in order to flex a 100 flex shaft by one inch, you will need to be able to apply 100 pounds of force.
When it comes to selecting a hockey stick, there are three options for shafts: junior, intermediate, and senior. The difference between the shaft selection is the diameter, length and flex. Junior shafts have the smallest diameter and are also the shortest, while the senior sticks have the thickest shaft (bigger diameter) and are the longest. Junior shafts are generally for young players, while intermediate shafts are made for youth and adults, and senior stick are typically used by players 14 years of age and up. The flex also varies depending on the shaft type. See our hockey stick flex chart above for more information.

Do not let your age be the only factor in determining your shaft type. Some younger players may be strong enough, and have the proper technique to use a senior shaft, while some older players who are small in stature may benefit more from an intermediate shaft. It is not as simple as some may think. To help you choose the right shaft and flex we have developed a flex guide. Read our section below for more information.

How to choose the right flex

A general rule, as a starting point, is to pick a flex that is half your body weight. If you weigh 180 pounds then start at 90 flex. From that point if you think an adjustment in flex is needed, you can use the following guidelines to calculate a better flex for you:

• +5 flex if you are strong and know how to shoot well.
• +5 flex if you take a lot of slapshots.
• - 5 flex if you are not that strong or if your form is not strong.
• - 5 flex if you like to take a lot of snap-shots and wrist-shots

Lets say you weigh 180 pounds, you are strong, and take a lot of slapshots. Your starting flex is 90, plus an adjustment of adding 10 gets you to a 100 flex stick. Remember that flex is also personal preference, but we find this formula to be quite accurate among most hockey players.

Does Cutting A Hockey Stick Affect Flex?

Yes it does, most sticks available today have a guide printed on them that will indicate how much flex your stick will have depending on how much you cut it. As a general rule every 2 inches you cut off will increase the flex by 10. An 85 flex stick cut down 2 inches will now be a 95 flex hockey stick.

If you need to cut down a senior stick quite a bit then consider using an intermediate hockey stick. This will give you the appropriate flex and stick height that you need.