

## The Straightaway Shuffle

By Susan Ellis

The straightaway shuffle is when you exit the corner, cross over with the right skate, plant the left, and without picking up the right skate as in a normal recovery stroke you push your weight back across on to the right skate as seen in this [video](#). A well executed shuffle can be just as fast as a normal two stroke straight.

The shuffle can serve many purposes. It is a good way to conserve energy in longer races, it can be used when going at high speeds and you run out of room for two complete strides, it can be used as a blocking tool, it can be used to adjust your track pattern to set up properly for the corner entry. Learning how to shuffle properly also teaches you how to create pressure against the outside edges and not just ride on top of the edges.

For elite and intermediate level skaters the first two laps of a 500 are normally done in the normal two stroke pattern. Often by the second lap though they have built so much speed that the exit point is very far down the straight and does not leave enough time for two straightaway strokes so they shift to a straightaway shuffle to ensure they enter the corner in the correct spot to still have maximum speed. Notice how Meng Wang has changed from the two stroke of the previous video to a shuffle in this [video](#).

By changing to a shuffle Wang ensures she gets good pressure coming from her left straightaway push to bring her weight over on to her right skate which allows her to set up her corner entry.

In the shuffle both the inside AND the outside edges are used to apply pressure in to the ice.



Fig 1

Fig 2

Fig 3

Fig 4

Fig 1 – Press down on right, pushing hip across while bringing left through.

Fig 2 – Left knee continues to come through up under chest with knee pointing straight ahead. Continue press on the right while extending.

Fig 3 – Finish extension on right. Left knee lands outside of left skate so weight is on the outside edge. Press down on left with knee outside of skate to create pressure on the outside of the blade. Keeping the knee outside but still pointing straight ahead as long as possible is critical to outside pressure.

Fig 4 – Keep pressing down on the left to maintain pressure as the weight starts to shift toward the right and pressure moves to inside edge. Right skate starts to pull in under body by turning the toe in towards the left skate.



Fig 5

Fig 6

Fig 7

Fig 8

Fig 5 – Right continues to pull in under body while pushing with the left.

Fig 6 – Finish the push on the left to put all the weight to the outside right edge with the right knee outside of the skate and pointing straight ahead.

Fig 7 – Keep the right knee outside the skate to keep outside pressure as long as possible.

Fig 8 – Lay in back to inside edge for corner entry.

[Watch the video of the above sequence.](#) In this instance the skater is using the shuffle as a means of conserving energy. Notice that at no time in this sequence did he rotate his shoulders or hips and that his chest stayed down in the same position the whole time.

You will see the same sequence of motion in the videos below.

[Video 1](#) Two laps to go in 1000m. Lee is maintaining good speed with shuffle while skaters behind are working harder with two stroke straight.

[Video 2](#) Side view of shuffle.

[Video 3](#) Front skater uses shuffle to block path of the skater behind.

In this [video](#) the skaters in position 3 and 4 are using a double shuffle to conserve energy. Rather than taking their last crossover they simply do two right leg pushes. Watch them bring the right skate back under the body, feet coming together, and then push the right back out again. This saves energy by not having to lift the right over the left as in a normal cross over.

When you want to accelerate hard, pick up speed, or change gears, you will need to put in the two full straightway strides. Skaters need to practice both the two stroke and the shuffle to be able to understand both and know when to use them. Some coaches will not allow their skaters to shuffle, perhaps because of a lack of understanding of the benefits of shuffling, a lack of knowledge on how to effectively teach it, or because the skaters are using improper shuffle technique so they simply tell them not to shuffle. One of the biggest benefits I found in having the athletes learn a shuffle is that they understand better how to use their outside edge in creating pressure, especially on the corner lay in.

One way to learn to create outside pressure to have an effective shuffle is by having the athletes do 'bubbles'. It starts with the feet apart and on the inside edges. The skater then points the toes in slightly and pulls in to draw the feet together. When the feet come together move the knees outside of both skates so they are on the outside of the skates. Keep the blades pointing straight ahead and start pushing the skates out but keep the knees outside as long as possible with the pressure on the outside edges. The tendency will be to start pushing the feet apart with pressure on the inside edges so make sure it is on the outside to start and as the feet separate the pressure will move to the inside. Finish the extension on both legs at the same time and then bring the skates back in together. [Bubbles video](#)

Although little kids probably don't need to shuffle in races they can start to learn it by doing bubbles to learn about outside pressure on the blade.