



SKATECANADA
MANITOBA

RETURN TO SYNCHRONIZED SKATING

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FOREWORD

Skate Canada Manitoba is pleased to release the Return to Synchronized Skating guide which is a supplemental resource to be used in conjunction with the Skate Canada Manitoba Return to Play Protocols. This guide was created by our Synchronized Skating Committee to help clubs, coaches and skaters navigate the return to sport specific training during the COVID pandemic. Much thanks and appreciation go out to committee chair, Megan Maxwell, and the entire Synchro Committee for their work on this resource.

All Skate Canada Manitoba Return to Play Protocols must be followed. For the most recent version of the protocols and other resources please refer to our website at <https://mbskates.ca/covid-19-response-page/>

For questions please reach out to Skate Canada Manitoba at skate.admin@sportmanitoba.ca and we will be happy to assist you.

SYNCHRO DURING COVID-19

Ensuring the health and safety of all participants and coaches is the first priority of our organization. The second goal is to keep our skaters engaged and to continue to build on skating skills.

Under the current COVID protocols and government recommendations, skaters are to respect physical distancing of two (2) meters. Where sport specific training cannot maintain the physical distancing requirement of two (2) meters, that contact must be kept between participants (including skater to skater, coach to skater, etc....) to a maximum of fifteen cumulative minutes per session.

In alignment with the [Skate Canada Manitoba Pandemic Response Chart](#), please review the following updated rules surrounding close contact for Synchronized Skating participants:

- **GREEN:** No restrictions on close contact. Normal activities may resume.
- **YELLOW:** Close contact for a maximum of 15 cumulative minutes per session permitted. Skaters must wear masks and mittens/gloves during periods of close contact.
- **ORANGE:** No close contact between skaters unless members of the same residence.
- **RED:** Skating and in person practices temporarily cease.

Other guidelines for synchro:

- Put in place measures to limit physical contact between all on ice participants
- Outline and communicate what a minimum distance of two (2) meters looks like for skaters and coaches on the ice while
 - Receiving instruction or feedback from the coach
 - Lining up for drills
 - Executing open drills or synchro elements (not attached, no close contact)

During close contact portions for the session, skaters must wear masks and mittens/gloves.

During distanced drills and exercises, skaters may remove their masks.

ON ICE TRAINING

Examples of drill formats that permit physical distancing:

- Annie's Edges
- Four (4) Lane Highway
- Open Blocks

Synchro Components to train without a hold:

- Edges
- Knee and ankle action
- Rhythm and unison
- Power and endurance
- Turns and steps
- Matching free leg placement
- Posture
- Arm movements, body movements

The following elements can easily be trained in a no-hold while maintaining a two (2) meter distance between skaters:

- Circles
- No hold blocks
- Spins
- Step sequences

Other elements that normally require a hold should be taught and trained while distancing first:

- Lines
- Blocks
- Wheels
- Intersections
- Field moves

LESSON EXAMPLES

TWENTY (20) MINUTE LINEAR BLOCK ELEMENT LESSON EXAMPLE

3 minutes	Annie's Edge format – review and skate assigned steps individually
3 minutes	While maintaining two (2) meters distance between skaters, bring two (2) to four (4) skaters closer together and perform steps in line (open line) focusing on alignment side to side
3 minutes	In same open format, while still maintaining at least a two (2) meter or more distance between skaters, bring two (2) to four (4) lines of two (2) to four (4) skaters closer together in an open block format. Skaters do not attach for this drill. Focus on alignment side to side AND front to back
3 minutes	CLOSE CONTACT – Team connects with an attached hold and runs through the closed block together a few times
3 minutes	Release holds to resume distancing. Review corrective feedback. In which direction should foot be placed for each step/edge? Where should each skater look on each step/edge? Skaters apply feedback and perform in open lines/blocks
4 minutes	CLOSE CONTACT – Skaters re-attach again to execute element together
Teaching tools for earlier progression: Use an implement such as skate guards, fly swatters or other, to 'connect' skaters. While not solid, it will help skaters build awareness of their position beside skaters and help maintain distance and consistent skating direction.	
Total close contact:	7 minutes

FIFTEEN (15) MINUTE FIELD MOVE ELEMENT LESSON EXAMPLE (SPIRAL WITH CHANGE OF EDGE)

2 minutes	In a figure eight pattern using entire ice, skaters execute four (4) Forward Outside (FO) spirals (left foot on CCW circle and right on CW), followed by four (4) Forward Inside (FI) spirals (right on CCW and left on CW)
3 minutes	CLOSE CONTACT – Strengthen and stretch both legs at boards with partner. Supporting partner provides resistance for working skater’s spiral position. Partner reminds skater to keep both knees extended, press weight into heel of skating leg and point free leg foot. Working skater presses leg down for five (5) seconds; relax and extend leg slightly higher. Repeat three (3) times for each leg. Partners switch position between leg changes.
2 minutes	Repeat individual figure eight drill with skaters executing spirals: FO x4, FI x4
2 minutes	Starting in middle of ice on ringette line, individuals skate backwards a two-hundred seventy (270) degree circle around end of ice past goalie crease, then step on FI edge near side of the rink to hit an upright arabesque position. Step on path larger (or outside) their skating circle. Position focus: locked skating knee with heel pressed forward; open free leg hip with pointed toe. As skaters glide across middle axis of the ice, switch to FO edge. Repeat twice on each foot/edge.
3 minutes	CLOSE CONTACT - Attached in groups of three (3) to four (4) in a shoulder hold, skaters repeat above arabesque drill. When stepping forward, each skater’s free leg is placed behind the following skater. Leading skater steps outside the circle on FI step. Following skaters’ step slightly inside the circle of the leading skater so energy is linear, going through the leading skater (as opposed to pivoting outside around the leader)
3 minutes	CLOSE CONTACT – Same drill but now in spiral position. During change of edge, lift free hip up and over to help shift balance from inside to outside edge. As line changes edge, use back arm/shoulder to press following skater back and help energy stay linear (helps avoid a pivoting action)
Total Close Contact:	9 minutes

FIFTEEN (15) MINUTE TRAVELLING CIRCLE LESSON EXAMPLE

3 minutes	While spaced out in a circle two (2) meters or more apart, practice maintaining the circle shape and spacing between skaters. Focus on lean, low ankles and knees with shoulders and arms facing the inside of the circle. Focus on slow, controlled speed. Each skater should have a skater/spot opposite them to maintain alignment
3 minutes	Same drill in opposite rotational direction
2 minutes	Review basics of travelling a circle – when to skate outside the circle, when to skate into the circle and when to skate along the circle. (Examples: clock analogy, Big C – Little c)
2 minutes	While maintaining physical distancing, skaters begin rotating slowly then on designated count begin to travel the circle
1 minute	Provide constructive feedback
2 minutes	Repeat travel; constructive feedback; repeat travel
Total Close Contact	0 minutes

OTHER IDEAS FOR THE SEASON

- Set individual goals for endurance, flexibility, speed, etc....
- Increase the quality and height of everyone's spirals
- Train a new field move
- Train matching jumps or hops good for highlighting accents in the music or incorporating into a creative element
- Create a program with no holds (or fewer holds)
- Create a short program with only a few elements
- Perfect elements for which no hold is required
- Train and develop quality turns and steps with clear entry and exit edges
- Attempt a challenging turn for the team/skater
- Perfect matching cross-cuts with soft rhythmic knee and ankle action and matching extensions of pushes and undercuts