



Instructor's Corner

Roger Rowlett & Mary Jane Walsh

USCA Level II Certified Instructors

I find that I'm nearly always wide on my out-turns and narrow on my in-turns, no matter how hard I try. I'm driving my skip crazy. What can I do?

This problem is almost always caused by not keeping the "foot behind rock" in the no-lift delivery, and will torture new and experienced curlers alike from time to time. While an instructor can help you diagnose and correct this problem, you can self-diagnose by delivering a practice stone and noticing (1) where your slide foot is in relation to the stone, and (2) where your follow-through slide takes you relative to the direction of the delivered stone.

In the no-lift, flat foot delivery, the stone, slide foot (heel of slide foot if you toe it out), trail knee, and trail foot should all be in a straight line along the line of delivery, and your slide should follow the path of the stone after release. You may find that your slide foot is significantly to the left of the stone ("under-centered").* This will cause you to slide to the left of the broom, and require you to release the stone away from your slide path to the right. The result is a wide stone on the out-turn and a narrow stone on the in-turn. In games the out-turn error will be more noticeable, because it can't be saved by sweeping. This is what is described as an "inside-out" delivery, as you slide "inside" and throw the stone "out" to the broom at a sharper angle that results in less than normal curl. The most common causes of under-centering are improper balance (slide foot not centered under the chest at the lateral center of gravity) and improper timing (pushing out of the hack before the slide foot is brought behind the rock.)

If you find that your slide foot is to the right of the stone ("overcentered"),* you will experience a drift to the right of the intended line of delivery, and will have to throw the stone back to the left "in" to the broom. Alas, this delivery will also typically result in a wide out-turn and narrow in-turn as well. A common cause for over-centering is an exaggerated "C-curve" in bringing the foot in behind the rock from the drawback position. Ideally the slide foot should move straight back on the draw-back, and move slightly to the right* behind the rock before pushing out of the hack. If you bring your slide foot behind the hack on the drawback, the slide foot must trace out a wide "C" around the hack to behind the rock on the push forward. This "C-curve" may be difficult to control, especially on the out-turn. The only way to correct these delivery flaws is to practice getting the proper "foot-behind-rock" slide position.

Consult an instructor for a detailed analysis of your delivery. However, you can practice proper technique by using plastic cups. Set up a plastic cup near the top of the house or slightly beyond. Take slides toward the target with the goal of striking the cup with your slide foot (heel if slide foot it toed out). To make this really challenging set the cup at the near hogline. To practice deliveries with a stone set up a plastic cup on the near hogline somewhere between the 4-foot lines and make a delivery toward the cup (draw or takeout). If the cup bounces away to the left or right, you are off line. If the rock taps the cup twice, you are exactly on target. This is a very difficult exercise, even for excellent curlers, but will quickly reveal line of delivery issues.

*This is for right-handers—for lefties left and right here is reversed.

*Good curling! Have a question for Instructor's Corner?
Send an email to curlingschool@uticacurlingclub.org*