

Instructor's Corner

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My takeouts are always light. What can I do to increase my takeout weight?

There are several things you can do to improve your takeout weight. Some these are listed below:

- Improve your equipment. If you a new curler and are still sliding on the 1/16" step-on sliders, or if you have shoes with thin beginner sliders, then you will have more difficulty throwing heavy weight shots. These sliders are just too slow. Consider upgrading to a shoe with a thicker slider, 3/16" or (better) 1/4". Thicker sliders are faster.
- Put toe coating on your hack shoe. You might be surprised by how much drag an uncoated shoe or a pull-on gripper on your hack foot generates. Toe coat will significantly increase the length and speed of your slide, and help you generate more weight.
- Practice getting into the balanced position quickly after push-out from the hack. A USCA
 certified instructor can help you with this. If you are wobbling coming out of the hack, you
 are scrubbing speed off your slide. A good goal is to be in the balanced position before the
 tee line.
- Get your body behind the stone. The stone, the heel of your slide foot, trail knee and toe should be in a straight line along the line of delivery to the broom. If your body and stone aren't moving along the same line of delivery, you are not transferring all of your energy into the stone. (Think vector diagrams from math class.)
- Release the stone earlier. Once you push out of the hack, you can only slow down after that.
 The longer you wait to release the stone, the slower you will be moving. While it is
 preferable to have the same release point for all your shots, releasing the stone as soon as
 you have achieved a balanced position will help with those heavier weight shots. (Thanks to
 Hugh Murphy of HotShots for this tip.)
- If you are still not generating enough speed on takeouts, consider stepping directly over the hack with your slide foot instead of keeping it flat on the ice during the push-out of your delivery for takeouts. This takes a considerable amount of practice to get right, but can significantly increase your maximum takeout weight.

Things you should **not** do to increase your takeout weight include:

- Bringing your slide leg way behind the hack. This will make it more, and not less difficult to
 generate takeout weight. Slide speed comes from the push out of the hack, not from
 swinging your slide leg. Indeed, swinging all that dead weight from behind the hack will
 make it more difficult to properly center your foot behind the rock during the delivery. You
 need not bring your slide foot back more than a foot length from the starting position in the
 no-lift delivery, just like for any shot.
- Pushing the stone. This will pretty much guarantee sending the stone off-line. Sure, some
 marquee players on TV that use the no-lift delivery push every heavy weight takeout, but
 they've been doing that for decades and have developed compensation mechanisms to get
 it right most of the time. They also play on 25-second ice every day. And they sometimes

push off line, too. It is not necessary to push the stone on good club ice, even for peels, if you have good technique.

The bottom line is to practice, practice, practice. Don't forget the fundamentals of a sound delivery: slide foot centered under your chest, and foot directly behind the rock, not to one side. When your slide is not centered behind the rock, you are wasting energy and you will not develop maximum takeout weight. If you are practicing takeouts at the club, get a partner to hold the broom and catch rocks.

A final thought: you don't need to throw heavy weight to make takeouts. Throw the weight(s) that you are both comfortable and accurate with. Sure, those high hard ones are fun to throw, and it's fun to watch the granite fly, but this is not the right shot for every takeout situation. Most of the time, it is desirable to control the curl of takeouts with sweeping, and keep the shooter in play after the hit. A bumper weight takeout is a good takeout weight for that purpose. If you can throw this weight consistently and accurately, you will make a lot of great takeout shots.

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