

Bend the Ankle

By Susan Ellis

We know that the largest and strongest muscles used in the push are the ones around the hips and the quads, however **the ankle** is a very important and often forgotten joint. It is the last joint to extend in the push and even though the muscle groups around the ankle are smaller they are the ones to deliver the final power in a push.

In order to have power in your push you need to have **maximum pressure** in to the ice. However, to have maximum pressure you need to have the weight behind the push. This is referred to as the weight transfer in skating. The weight needs to fall **forward, down, and to the side** and you feel pressure under the back part of the ball of the foot before pushing. This movement is initiated with an **ankle bend forward**. The more you can compress the ankle, the more muscles you will be recruiting in the lower leg ankle and foot that can now be used to exert pressure into the ice. The push starts with an opening of the hip and knee and finishes with an extension of the ankle. Pressure is **maintained through the ball of the foot** until the end of the extension. The result is **more force** exerted into the ice over the entire push and an increase in the time the force is applied, resulting in faster speeds.