

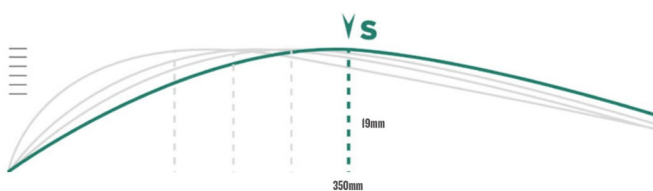
Whether you just picked up a stick for the first time or have been playing for years, figuring out what equipment you actually need and what equipment is best for you may be confusing. This guide is designed to help you navigate the equipment purchasing process by breaking down terminology and explaining what is truly mandatory and what gear may just be beneficial.

## Sticks

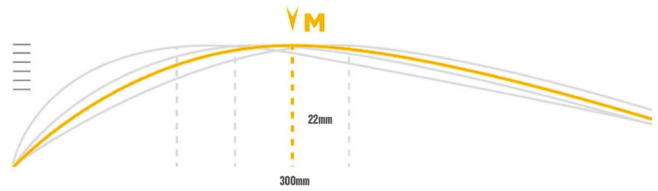
As players develop, they will understand what kind of stick works best for them as stick length, style and weight is based on individual preference. Many of our sponsors differentiate their sticks through categories such as beginning, intermediate, advanced and elite based on the age and experience of the athlete. Almost every stick retailer has their own stick guide, but this serves as a one stop shop that consolidates the information from them all and explains the differing terminology from the different stick retailers. If convenient, it is advised that the player try out sticks to get a feel for what they enjoy. Many companies have stores that you are able to try out a stick at and many of our sponsors have tents at our events with sticks to try.

*Disclaimer: If you choose to play indoor field hockey the following terminology applies, just make sure that you purchase an indoor stick.*

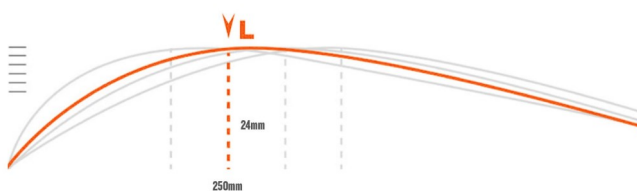
**Bending/Bow/Blade Profile:** If you place a stick flat side down and measure from the ground to the highest point of arch on the stick you will get the bending/bow/blade profile. These measurements typically vary from 19 mm – 25 mm. Lower numbers can assist with stick control and preventing the ball from being unintentionally lifted off the ground. If you are newer to the sport and know that you have a tendency to accidentally lift the ball then a bow of about 19 mm – 22 mm might be the best for you. On the flip side, higher numbers can help with developing 3-D skills, aerals, sweeping, and drag flicking. Because of this, sticks with a bow above 22 mm might be best for attack minded players or players that use the skills above.



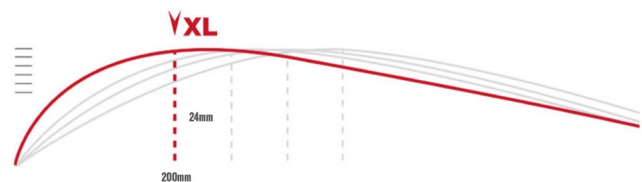
19-21 mm bend



22-24 mm bend



24 mm bend



24 mm bend

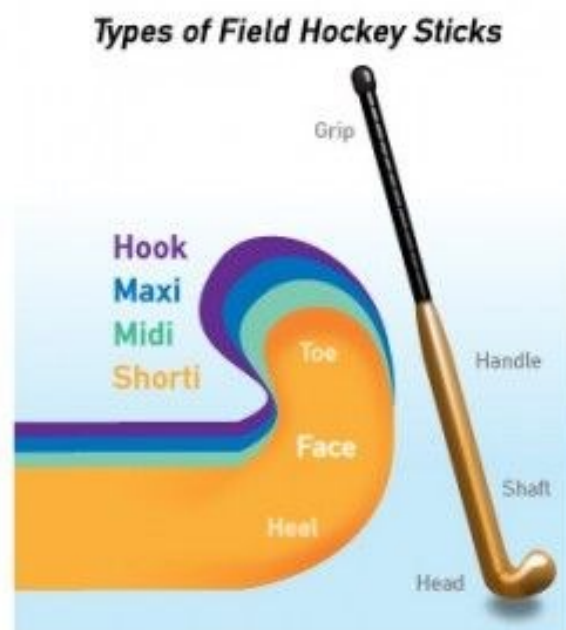
**Head Shape/Toe:** This describes the portion of the stick where it curves. While many companies have unique names for head/toe shapes, here are the most common

**Shorti/Micro:** The smallest of all the shapes, this shape allows for athletes to maneuver the stick quickly for fast stick skills. However, because of the small amount of surface area it is difficult for newer players and not the best option for them.

**Midi:** Larger than the shorti, this shape is ideal for beginners and midfielders. It allows you to have quick dribbling and extreme control.

**Maxi:** Even larger surface area than the Midi, this shape is popular among defenders. It gives you hitting power and still allows you to maneuver the stick quickly.

**J/Hook:** This shape was designed to increase ball control, which can help with skills such as reverse hits and drag flicks.



**Weight:** The weight of the stick is preferential to each individual player although there are some tendencies for certain positions.

**Lightweight :** These sticks allow for quick stickwork, backswing, and wrist movement. It also assists to make great receptions. These sticks are popular among offensive players

**Heavyweight:** These sticks add power to your hits and are popular among defenders as the weight can help out with strong tackles.

**Balance Point:** This term refers to where the weight of the stick is focused, either at the head/toe or equally throughout the stick. You can measure this by finding the point where your stick can balance with both ends suspended in air. The distance between this point of balance and the head of the stick is the balance point.

Higher balance point: The weight is more evenly distributed throughout the stick. This makes it a bit easier to handle.

Lower balance point: The weight is focused at the head/toe. This focus makes the head/toe feel heavier and can make a hit more powerful.

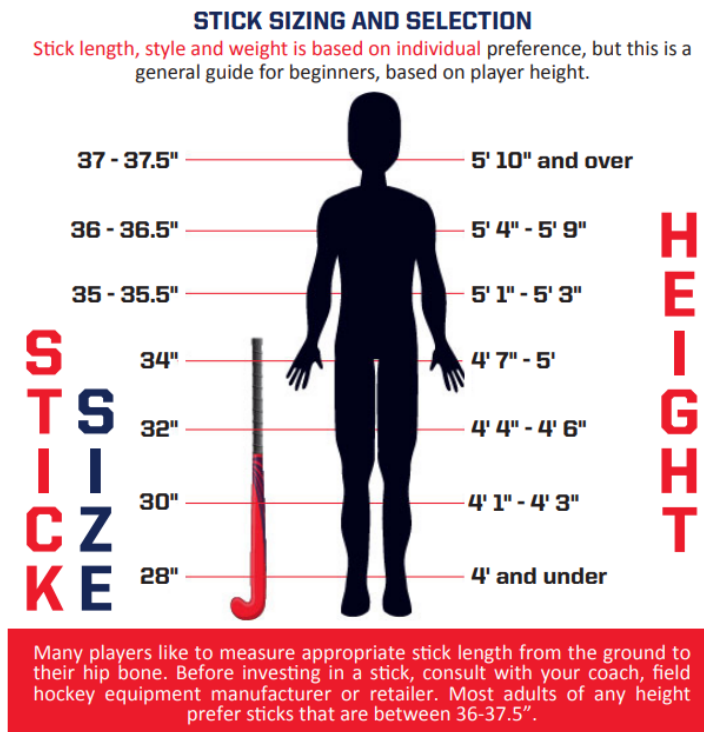
**Composition/Construction:** This details what the stick is made out of, typically using a percentage. The most typical materials are listed below, but some stick companies use a couple of others as well.

Carbon: This material adds stiffness and durability to the stick. Beginners should not purchase a stick with a large amount of carbon and should stay within a 0-30% carbon range. Intermediate players should look for sticks that are 30-60% carbon. Advanced and elite players should look for sticks with 60-100% carbon

Fiberglass: It is usually used alongside carbon to work as a reinforcement. Fiberglass adds durability and strength, enhancing impact resistance.

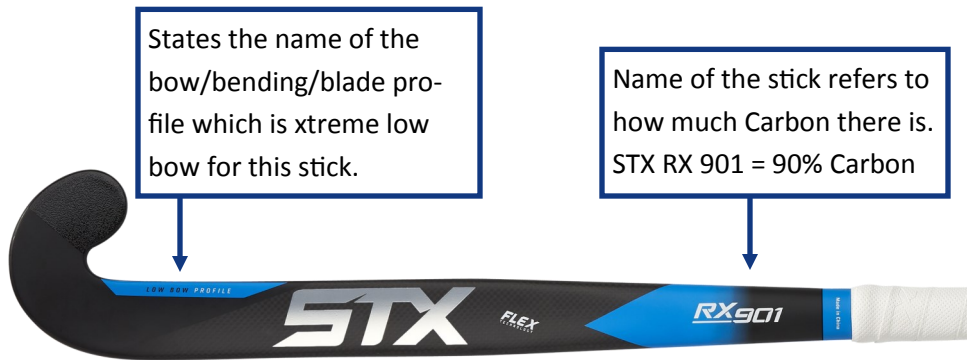
Wood: This material is typically used in sticks made for beginners due to the forgiveness that it gives with receptions and stick skills. It is a great material to learn on, but once you get stronger in hits is not ideal as it breaks easier

**Sizing:** Many players like to measure appropriate stick length from the ground to their hip bone. Before investing in a stick, consult with your coach, field hockey equipment manufacturer or retailer. Most adults of any height prefer sticks that are between 36-37.5". You can also determine which stick height to use based on the player height as show in the graphic below.

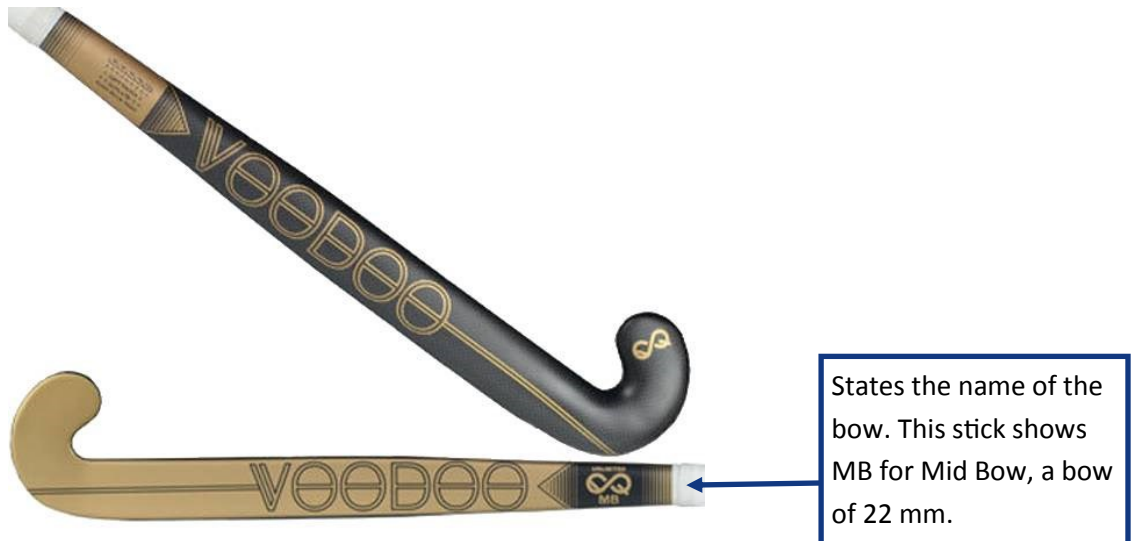


**Information on the Stick:** Many companies provide some information on the actual stick itself or with the name of the stick. Some sticks may display the amount of Carbon, the height, the head/toe shape, and the bending/bow. You can find which information a company tends to display and where on the stick it is located below.

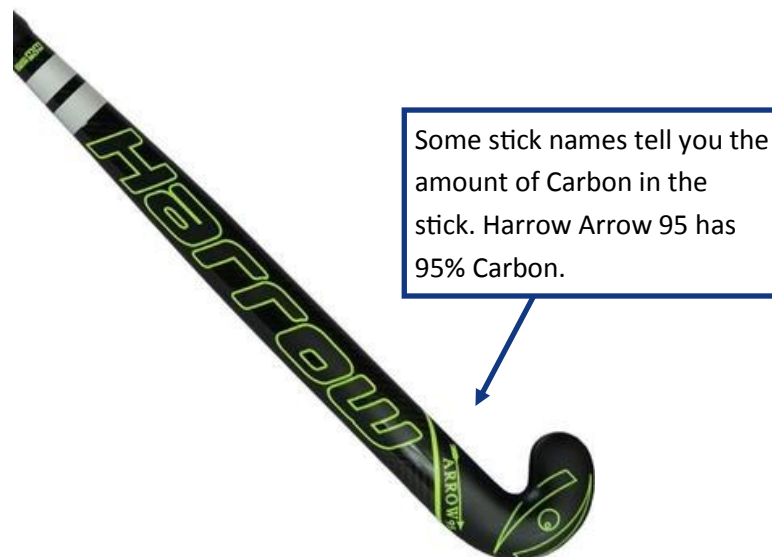
## STX



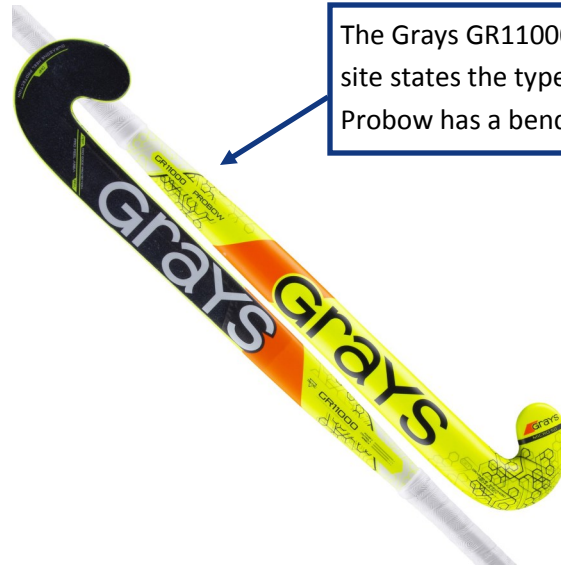
## Voodoo (Longstreth)



## Harrow



## Grays (CranBarry)



The Grays GR110000 Probow Composite states the type of bow here. The Probow has a bend of 24.75mm.

This stick also shows the toe/head shape here, stating that it has a micro shape.

## Ritual (Longstreth)

Again, the stick name can tell you how much Carbon there is in the stick. The Velocity 95 has 95% Carbon. It also appears on the stick here.



## TK (Longstreth)



The amount of Carbon is stated near the toe of the stick. The TK Total One Gravitare has 100% Carbon.

## Osaka

The Osaka Pro Tour 40 Mid Bow shows the type of bow and the amount of Carbon here. This stick has 40% Carbon and a 24 mm bend.



## Dita

The Dita Carbo Tec C90 shows the bow type here. It is an XB, which has a bow of 25 mm.

It also shows the Carbon amount here as well as other areas of the stick. This stick contains 90% Carbon.



## Shin Guards

The biggest thing to note is to make sure that you purchase field hockey shin guards and not soccer ones. Field hockey shin guards have more padding and covers more surface area. For sizing, most shin guards offer S, M, L/XL and companies typically have a sizing chart on their websites. In addition to the shin guard there is another optional piece of equipment called rash guards. Rash guards can be helpful in preventing rashes for athletes that wear shin guards often. Not only can rash guards help prevent rashes, they can extend the life of shin guards.



Field Hockey Shin Guards



Soccer Shin Guards



Hocsox Rash Guards

## Shoes

The type of shoe that you can perform best in is dependent upon the surface that you are playing on. Although regular sneakers can be worn on every surface (field turf, Astroturf, grass, gym, etc.), it is typically not the BEST for those surfaces. You can also base your shoe choice by how often you think that you will be wearing them for field hockey and any other sports that you play.

### Grass

Cleats are the best option for grass as they provide the most grip on what can be a wet, muddy surface.



### Field Turf

For field turf the best footwear can be turf shoes or cleats. Turf shoes are often made with additional protection like toe reinforcement for impacts from the ball and water. The grip allows you to change direction well. If you find yourself alternating between grass and field turf, cleats may be your best option. If you are playing solely on field turf, turf shoes may be your best option.



### Astroturf

Oftentimes, cleats are not allowed on Astroturf fields, so most people wear sneakers or turf shoes. However, turf shoes are the best option because the watered surface can be slippery, and sneakers do not offer the best grip on the surface. See above for an example of turf shoes.



## Gym

The best shoes for the gym surface is an indoor shoe. These shoes provide the best grip for indoor surfaces as well as cushioning and toe guards for additional protection. Indoor shoes may be labeled as used for field hockey or volleyball.



## Gloves

This piece of safety equipment is not required for either indoor or outdoor, however many athletes choose to wear it to perform skills, like tackling, more confidently. There are both left-handed and right-handed gloves. Most players that choose to wear a glove only wear one on the left hand for outdoor and many players choose to wear both for indoor. Typically, there are two types of gloves that companies sell: one that is full coverage and one that cut off after the knuckles. Choosing between the two types is purely preferential as the full coverage offers padding throughout the whole hand, but can be restrictive and the cut off offers more freedom, but leaves the top of your fingers exposed. It would be best to try on the gloves beforehand to figure out which one suits your playing style best.



Full Coverage Gloves



Cut Off Gloves

## Goalie Gear

Goalies require much more equipment than field players. Many companies that sell goalkeeping equipment have in depth descriptions of how their equipment fits and details what specific equipment may be suitable for skill and age level. A general overview of each piece of equipment and some tips about selecting is below.

### Stick

Many goalkeepers believe that they must play with a goalkeeper stick, but that is not the case. Some goalies actually play with a field player stick and deciding which one you are more comfortable playing with is a purely individual choice and may take some trial and error.

### Helmet

A helmet is probably one of the most important pieces of your equipment, so there is a lot that you should take into account when purchasing one. Things to take into consideration include:

**Visibility:** Helmets can vary when it comes to the amount of space in the openings of the cage. You will want to select a helmet that has bigger openings for your eyes to ensure optimum visibility.

**Sizing:** Most helmets come in sizes S-L and most companies will have measurements to help you choose what size is right for you. You want the helmet to be snug enough that it will not come off during play, but not so tight that it is difficult to take off.

**Protection:** This is undoubtedly the most important aspect of choosing a helmet! Not all helmets are created equal, so make sure to look for helmets made of materials used to prevent concussions and protect you from high shots.

### Neck Guard

Goalies must wear a neck guard at all times when playing. Most function the same way, as a wraparound piece of padding. There are others that have an attached 'bib' that goes under the chest guard to make sure it doesn't move and another that is a simple piece of hardened plastic that hangs from the helmet. Most goalies choose a simple, effective form that velcros around the neck, without the 'bib', that is lightweight and covers their neck.

### Gloves/Hands

The left-hand glove and the right-hand glove are designed differently. The left hand is a simple blocker that is used to redirect and clear high shots. The right hand is also used as a blocker but has the added stick. Most blockers now have one side that has a very rigid and flat surface that is used to clear a ball.

For right-hand gloves, look for something that has straps for your hands to hold the stick and a flat Hi-rebound foam space to clear the balls.

For left-hand gloves, there are usually two options: Hi-rebound or Hi-control. Depending on skill level, age, and preference the two offer pros and cons. This will be detailed more with kickers.

## Kickers

Kickers usually have a rounded toe and flat sides to connect with the ball. There are some new forms that have squared off toes and those are designed for highly skilled players. Kickers also have tongues like sneakers that go underneath the leg guard to keep it in place and protect your shins and ankles from rubbing or blisters. You may also want to wear knee-high socks underneath the kickers to further prevent any chafing or blistering.

There are two types of foam: Hi-control and Hi-rebound. Hi-control is better used for beginners because, as in the name, it allows for more control of the ball. This foam relies more on your own strength and skill to handle and clear the ball. This helps beginners hone their skills and technique. The Hi-rebound is better for more skilled players because it propels the ball with little effort. This is typically the choice of players that have more skill and technique because it amplifies and allows for stronger, harder clears which are needed when playing at a higher level.

## Chest Protector

This piece of equipment covers your chest, abdomen, shoulders, and sides. Look for one that comes with elbow guards. If your chest protector does not come with elbow guards, you must purchase them. Elbow guards are essential, especially as you move up in skill and level where you will be doing more groundwork such as diving and sliding. Without them, you will end up getting hurt and not wanting to do certain skills which would hold back your development. You will want a chest protector that is snug, allows for free movement, breathable, and offers great protection.

## Pants

Depending on your level and skill, the selection of pants can differ. If you are a beginner or are facing lighter shots (U10, U12, and lower U14) you can opt for lighter pants that offer less protection in favor of easier movement. This way, you can focus more on improving your comfort in the position and your skills while not sacrificing any protection. If you are more advanced (U14, U16, U19 and above) then you should be opting for a thicker pant and more protection. At this level, if you're not comfortable with the position yet or the skills, you must graduate to a stiffer and thicker pant to protect your body from the higher level of shots and the skills you will be performing.

## Leg Guards

There are many different types of leg guards and everyone has a preference. OBO leg guards are dense and have two types of foam to choose from with many different styles regarding the levels you play at. TK leg guards are slightly less dense and usually thinner, less bulky. It all depends on your skill level, whether you are more of an indoor or outdoor player, and your budget. This is usually one of the most expensive parts of the goalie kit.



Goalkeeper equipment must fit well enabling the goalkeeper maximum mobility and protection.

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