

🎵 Head and shoulders, knees and toes 🎵

At first glance, you might think this is about fitness (btw, a proper pre-game warm-up should consist of a vigorous 5 minute whole body aerobic exercise e.g. running on the spot, followed by sequential top to bottom dynamic stretching - for more info, consider kinesiologist John Morris' excellent "Fit To Curl" guide [yes that Johnny Moe], ending with 1 or 2 on-ice slides preferably without the rock).

🤔 I do seem to have a lot of run-on sentences need to work on that! If you're not sure what the above paragraph entails, consult your friendly, neighborhood, certified curling coach, of which we have several at our club, including yours truly.

Jack Nicklaus published a guide several years ago, (I paraphrase) "How you can improve your golf game even before you tee-up the golf ball". It related to various aspects of course management. In a similar vein, there are several facets of your game that would benefit by reviewing the following checklist:

1. **Broom Head:** Has the fabric crossed over to the dark side? Try the soapy water wash & dry approach then maybe consider a "go fund me" platform to purchase a replacement head. Throughout the season you should change your broom head roughly the number of times you play per week ie. if you play thrice (yes it's a word!) weekly, replace the material 3 times during the season. Your rock and skip will thank you.

Once you've carefully cleaned the running edge of the rock, don't forget to brush away any debris on the ice before you set it down again. Brushing your broom head after sweeping a rock is highly recommended. Consider it dental hygiene for your broom head fabric.

2. **Shoulders:** It always amazes me when I see people performing some form of personal grooming at the sidelines, generally near the hog line while waiting for the other team to throw their rock. Aside from the area in front of the hack, this is the most dangerous part of the rock's slide path as the debris you casually remove from your broom head or clothing gently falls onto the ice, invariably directly in front of the rock causing the inevitable pick.

While on topic avoid wearing fleece or similar type material as these fibres tend to be particularly attracted to granite. Did I mention that hand-knitted curling sweaters are making a comeback?

3. On behalf of the Royal Order of Icemakers everywhere, do not allow any body parts (predominantly hands and **knees**) from making prolonged contact with the ice (less than a nanosecond is acceptable) while marvelling at your own brilliance after releasing the rock. These flat spots will come back to haunt you curling Karma is the worst kind!

4. **Toes** (couldn't find a good segue, so I will leave it at that!)

- First, be kind to yourself. If you're still using the same shoes that you bought second hand ten years ago, have a look underneath: if the teflon feels like sandpaper you are in desperate need of a replacement. Consider upgrading to a thicker slider which will allow you to slide farther providing you do not compromise your balance which is the key building block of a great delivery.
- Whether on-line or at the pro-shop give some serious thought to adding a toe-cover/coating on your trailing shoe (not the slippery one).
- As well, you can significantly reduce any ice friction from the shoe laces of your trailing foot by purchasing a lace cover (duct tape will do in a pinch). It's amazing how much of a difference, these little things can make in your delivery for 'a fistful of dollars' (I think maybe Clint Eastwood would have made a great skip "Get three coffins ready!" 🤪 on second thought, maybe not)
- Last but certainly not least, grippers. Bear with me a moment while I relate to you a humorous story. A few years ago, my father mentioned that the light in the freezer compartment of his refrigerator was staying on all the time. As I was not aware of this option, we investigated further and determined that there was in fact no light bulb involved, but rather over time, a fairly large hole had developed in the back of the freezer letting in the ambient light.

Unless you want to be unceremoniously dumped into the freezer, by persons who shall remain nameless, change your gripper on a regular basis (how often? at least twice a season would seem reasonable). You'll be surprised how much better traction you'll have on the ice which will also reduce your risk of injury.

Before leaving, I'd like to leave you with these words from one of the kindest and most inspirational people I know, Mr. Fred Rogers:

"There is something of yourself that you leave at every meeting with another person"

Just make sure it isn't something on the ice!

From the warm side of the glass Denis Faubert