

Goaltender Skating

Skating is a crucial aspect of goaltending. A goaltender *must* be an excellent skater. This isn't to say that he has to skate like a forward or a defenseman does. Instead, a goalie must be comfortable moving around wearing all that bulky equipment.

A goalie moves in short, quick bursts and must be able to move around the net quickly. If a goalie can't get from point A to point B quickly, while maintaining balance and positioning, it doesn't matter how technically sound he is or how quick his reflexes are; the puck will go in the net.

On the flipside, a goalie who can skate and move around the net quickly can get into position faster. And most of the time, just getting into position is half the battle of being a goalie.

Goaltenders have 3 basic skating moves:

The C-Cut – Forward and backward skating that keeps the goaltender square to the shooter and allows goaltender to take ice without opening holes in stance. Goalies also use this to adjust their depth in and out of the net.

The Shuffle – Side to side short distance movement. Shuffling helps the goaltender stay square to the puck while minimizing holes in stance when moving. Used for small adjustments to the angle.

The T-Push – Side to side explosive movement used to cover big and small areas of the crease. The T-Push is used to cover a lot of ice quickly.

For more information about these three techniques & how to teach them, please visit the USA Hockey Goaltending Foundation page at:

http://www.usahockey.com/usahgoalies/default.aspx?NAV=AF_09&ID=238458

They also have video of these movements.

The best video example I've seen on YouTube is here:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4QNoFk6b4so&feature=related>

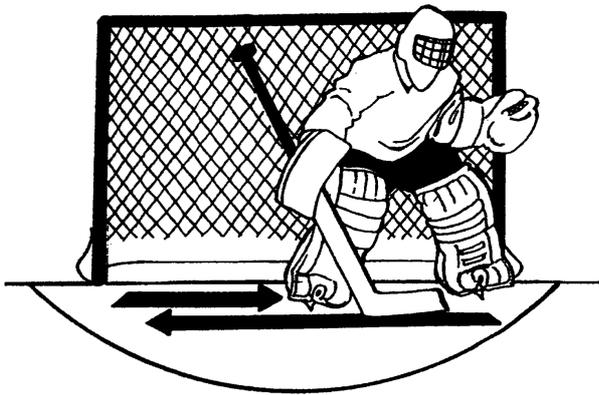
If you do a search for "Zach Tanner goalie drills" the video will come up. At the 1:10 mark, he starts doing T-Pushes. At the 3:17 mark, he starts doing Shuffles. These are great examples.

Work your goalies in skating drills with your skaters. I'm not a big believer in having them do Russian Circles or any drill that requires them to do crossovers. If you must make them do circles, make them c-cut in goalie stance around the circles. However, the goalies should definitely participate in any kind of straight sprinting or edge work that the forwards do.

Any of those 3 skating types can be done in the goal crease or in the face-off circles. There are plenty of drills available on-line that you can run the goalies through, and in fact, the goalies can do themselves.

Shuffles

Goalie shuffles are used for moving quickly to maintain a position between the net and the puck. It requires taking a series of short steps (or pushes) without turning the foot. This allows the goalie to always face forward. Teach the goalies to always control their weight on the inside edge of the skate without turning the foot.



Key elements to the shuffle:

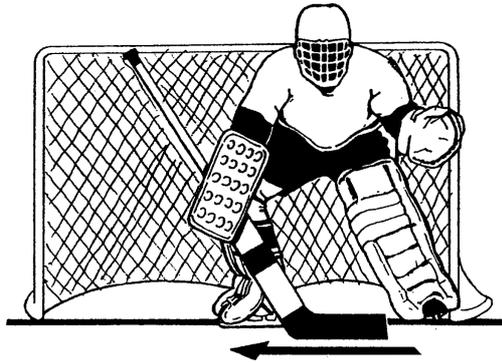
- Maintain the basic stance throughout the move
- Short lateral steps
- Trailing pad must be brought back to start position at end of push.
- Goal stick moves with the lead skate (blade covers the 5 hole between the skates)
- Weight remains on balls of feet.

Young goalies will make common mistakes when first learning to shuffle properly. Sometimes goalies show a tendency to come up high, “bobbing” up and down out of the goalie position. Another common problem is keeping the stick on the ice. Because they break out of their goalie stance, the stick will either be up in the air. Make sure the goalie focuses on keeping his stick on the ice throughout the move.

T-Push (or T-Glide)

When goalies are required to move sideways and cover a long distance (to cover a pass or free-moving puck), they should execute a T-Push. The goalie turns their lead toe in the direction they need to go and push off the inside edge of the trailing skate. This is called a T-Push because the skate position resembles the letter “T” just before the push.

To stop from a T-Push, the lead skate is turned toward the front, placing weight on the inside edge. The trail foot is then brought quickly back into the basic stance position.



Key Elements:

- Maintain basic stance from start to finish
- Look at where you are headed
- Always lead with the goal stick
- Stay low during the glide portion
- Glide on lead skate only
- Stop using the inside edge of the lead skate.

Common mistakes you'll see during a T-Push will include lifting the stick off the ice, failing to lead with the stick, or worse, *trailing the goal stick behind the body* during the glide portion. Goalies head should be up and looking at where he is headed, not down at his feet.