

## Warming Up A Goaltender

As a coach, whenever you shoot on a goaltender during practice, you want it to be with a specific purpose in mind. In this case, you are warming up your goaltender. The objective is to prepare the goalie for action.

Just blasting away at goalies without a plan is a bad idea. A worse idea is going right into breakaways, 2-on-1s, or any shots where the shooter skates and stickhandles 5 feet in front of the goalie for 10-15 seconds before shooting. These are all things that have negative effects on a goaltender.

You want to ease the goalie into practices and games. You want to gradually work your goalies up from a level of low intensity to a level of high intensity. One reason for this is to get the blood circulating and get the muscles warmed up. Eventually, the muscles loosen up, relax, and are better prepared for more difficult shots.

Another reason for this type of warm-up is to let the goalie "feel the puck" and also *gain confidence*! Stopping pucks at a low intensity will set him up for game speed much better than jumping straight in. Just stopping pucks, even at low intensity, will boost a goalie's confidence and prime him for more difficult shots.

Think of it this way, if a goalie isn't making saves against easy shots, do you think he's going to be more confident, or less confident, against more difficult shots? Do you want a goalie with low confidence playing in your net?

So, pay attention to warming up your goalies properly. You don't have to do it yourself; you can have an assistant, a team helper, even a player you trust warm up your goalie. The key is to do it early in the practice and to do it properly.

A proper warm-up should go encourage the goaltender to make routine saves using proper form. Start with low intensity shots and then increase the speed/accuracy of the shots as you progress through the warm-up.

With any warm-up, however, you must be mindful of the time you have for the warm-up. There will be times where you have plenty of time for a proper warm-up, and other times where you must get a warm-up in quickly.

*Next is a standard warm-up routine that can be done in a brief moment, or can be done thoroughly if given plenty of time.*

### **Standard warm-up for goalies of any age:**

- Take anywhere from 5 to 10 pucks and stand in the slot, in between the hash marks of the circles. The goalie should stand at the top of his crease.
- With the goalie standing, shoot the pucks at the lower corners of the net, making the goaltender use his stick to deflect pucks towards the corners. Be sure to do these shots at an easy pace so they can track the puck with their eyes through the whole shot.
- Gather the pucks and shoot again, this time aiming for the goalie's catch glove and blocker, about waist high.
- If given enough time, repeat the shots, this time increase the speed & velocity. If given enough time for a 3<sup>rd</sup> series, shoot even faster. Maintain an age appropriate speed with the shots. You want just fast enough to be challenging, but not too fast that the goalie can't keep up with the shot.

**Click the link for a great video highlighting a warm-up session:**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5m6lalpRNoE&feature=related>

### **Modifications for youth goalies:**

- The speed is a little fast for warming up a youth goalie, but the series of shots that the shooter takes at the goalie is spot on. 5-6 shots at each leg, 5-6 shots at each glove, 5-6 shots at the 5-hole, and 5-6 shots at the chest. All 6 major areas and it took less than 2 minutes to perform.
- Given 5 minutes at the beginning of practice, 2 goalies can get a short warm-up, and 1 goalie can get a thorough warm-up in the time it takes teams to do skate the circles or perform whichever skating drill you have your team do at the beginning of practice.