

The Goaltender's Book of Knowledge

Stretching for Goaltenders

GBOK

(Goaltenders Book of Knowledge)

V.1.1

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The **GBOK is a Knowledge Base of the basic skills and concepts of Ice Hockey Goaltending. These fundamental skills are the foundation that all goalies can use to develop their own personal style.**



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Stretching, warming up & cooling down properly, are areas where I have seen more room for improvement than in any other during the last 5 years while I have been coaching in the USA and Canada. I am not sure what the reasons are behind this trend and why hockey people are overlooking this area. In Europe, I can see room for improvement as well, but in general Europeans pay much more attention on this area.

Let's start to look at some of the issues around stretching and provide you with guidelines and instructions on how you can correct the situation, whether you are a goalie or a coach. I also want to focus on the why part and really explain why we should pay attention to proper stretching.

What will stretching do for you?

Increase the length of relaxed muscles

Increase power and elasticity of our muscles

Increase our endurance and metabolism

Assist in achieving better coordination, muscle control and proper techniques

Reduce the risk of injuries

Enable your body to perform more with less energy

If your muscles are tight, what does it mean?

Decreased mobility

Decreased muscle metabolism

Decreased muscle coordination

Decrease power "output"

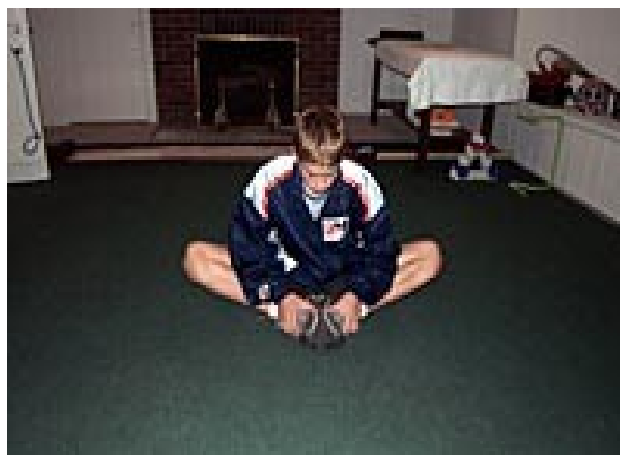
Decreased speed

Increased risk of injuries



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Different stretches

In general we can divide different stretches into different categories based on the length of the stretching moves.

- · Short-term 5-10 seconds
- · Mid-term 10-30 seconds
- · Long-term 30-120 seconds

Use short-term stretches to increase the blood circulation in your muscles and to relax them. These stretches are also good for checking our range of motions (are we achieving enough) before the actual practice or game. Mid and long-term stretches are used when we are trying to achieve better range of motion and increase our mobility in general.

When to stretch?

As a rule of thumb use the short-term stretches before and after the practice (warm-up & cool down) and then perform the mid and long-term stretches as separate workouts with at least 30-60 minutes between the stretching session and your other hockey etc. workout.

Ideal timing for this separate stretching session is 2-4 hrs after your other workout. For example in the evening watching TV before going to sleep etc.

When warm-up and cool down stretches are done for other reasons, the separate stretching exercise is done for the purpose of developing your mobility and widening your range of motion.



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Warm-up & cool down

Never stretch cold muscles as you may do more damage than good. Always start by warming up your body/muscles before stretching them.

5-10 minutes on a stationary bike, jogging or jumping rope are good ways to warm up before starting to stretch.

Before games and practices you want to do good warm-ups and get some sweating going first. Then, move to the stretches and go through all of the major muscle groups using short-term stretches.



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Your cool down stretches should be easy and relaxed just to return your tired muscles back closer to their rest length and help recovery.

The absolute minimum set of stretches you need to do is to go through the following muscle groups:

- Thighs (front and back)
- Buttocks
- Calves
- Upper and lower back
- Groins

But I strongly recommend that you also go through these:

- Arms
- Shoulders
- Sides
- Ankles
- Chest



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Separate stretching exercise

Like I mentioned earlier, it is an excellent habit of finishing your day with good stretching exercises (remember to warm-up as well). If you have time and energy a short stretching session in the morning is a good idea for serious athletes as well.

In this separate stretching session, you really have to focus on mid and long-term stretches so that this session supports your development and helps you obtain a wider range of motion and greater mobility.

If you make this a habit and start following the routine daily you will start to see improvements after a few weeks.

Now on these sessions, make sure that you start to push yourself further and further while really going from 10 second moves all the way to 1-2 minutes on each stretch.



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